



IRAQ

[Human Rights Campaigns](#) > [Iraq](#) > Top Ten Reasons Why the US Should Not Invade Iraq

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economic rights

human rights

- Brazil
- Colombia
- Cuba
- Mexico
- Palestine

• Iraq

Background
Act Now
Resources
Latest News
Links

- Afghanistan
- United States

update

travel with reality tours

Top Ten Reasons

Why the US Should Not Invade Iraq

Global Exchange
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The White House is set to launch a war against Iraq. Yet there has been no convincing explanation of why a war is needed. The international community is strongly opposed to a US attack on Iraq, leaving the United States with few real allies. A full-scale war against Iraq would isolate the US from the rest of the world, undermine the effort against terrorism, and senselessly kill tens of thousands of civilians. The Bush Administration is determined to initiate an illegal and ill-considered invasion. We the people must be just as determined to stop a war that threatens to tear the world apart.

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1) There Is No Justification for Going to War.

What was Iraq's act of aggression against us that justifies war? There has been no attack on the US, no Iraqi threat of war, no Iraqi connection to September 11.

War should be a last recourse of self-defense, a step to be taken only when all other alternatives have been exhausted. What the Bush Administration is planning is an act of aggression, not an act of self-defense. The international coalition that fought the first Gulf War was cemented by the principle that one country cannot invade another without provocation. Now the White House is poised to dismiss the coalition to launch an unprovoked invasion of Iraq. This would violate the US's historic policy against using force preemptively. We should not go to war against a distant country that has not attacked us.

2) Iraq Does Not Pose a Clear and Present Danger

The White House says we should invade Iraq to prevent Saddam Hussein from using weapons of mass destruction. But during the 1990s United Nations weapons inspectors dismantled all of Iraq's major chemical, biological and nuclear weapons facilities and destroyed nearly all of Iraq's weapons and long-range missiles. In terms of conventional arms, Iraq's military is now at one-third of its pre-Gulf War strength. According to Ex-Marine and former UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter, Iraq presents "absolutely nothing" of a military threat. And given Hussein's natural desire for self-preservation, it is highly unlikely he would launch any attack that would result in his destruction. Since deterrence is working, why should the US start a bloody war that would undoubtedly lead to massive human suffering? (1)

3) When It Comes to Invading Iraq, the US Has Few Allies

The international community supports sending weapons inspectors to Iraq to disarm Saddam Hussein's regime, but it does not support the White House's goal of "regime change." Many countries in the Middle East are opposed to a war with Iraq. Our allies in Europe think an invasion is foolhardy. Anti-war marches in England and Italy have drawn hundreds of thousands of people. An invasion of Iraq would isolate the US from the rest of the world and shatter the principles of international cooperation and mutual defense that are key to US and global security. (2)

4) An Attack on Iraq Would Make Us Less Safe

An isolated US is an unsafe country. Attacking Iraq without provocation will ignite anti-American sentiment around the world, disrupting efforts to weaken terrorist networks. Any attack would also further destabilize a Middle East already inflamed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the benefits of invading Iraq are murky, the costs are all-too-clear.

5) A Costly Invasion Would Take Resources Away from Much Needed Priorities at Home

This is a war of choice, not a war of necessity. And it's a poorly thought out choice, one that will distract from the social problems here at home. It is estimated that any full-scale invasion of Iraq will cost up to \$200 billion. During the first Gulf War, allies like Japan covered 80 percent of the cost. This won't happen again, leaving US taxpayers—already facing budget deficits—to pick up the costs. Instead of spending \$200 billion on an unnecessary war, we should be investing in our nation's overcrowded schools and failing health care system. (3)

6) Invading Iraq Would Be Extremely Difficult and Without a Clear Victory

An invasion of Iraq will not be nearly as easy as kicking the Taliban out of Kabul. Although Hussein's army has been weakened, Iraq's forces remain large enough to put up a formidable defense. And it is likely that Iraqi forces will be far more determined to defend Baghdad than they were to defend Kuwait City, dragging US forces into a bloody fight in heavily populated areas. And even if the US does overthrow Hussein, what next? As the experience in Afghanistan shows, throwing out a government is easier than putting a new one together. An invasion without allies would leave the US to enforce a peace in a chaotic country fractured by ethnic conflicts.

7) A War Would Kill Thousands of People

An assault on Baghdad would result in far more American casualties than the war in Afghanistan. And the toll on Iraqis would be far higher. According to an estimate by Physicians for Social Responsibility, a full scale invasion of Iraq could lead to the deaths of as many as 80,000 innocent civilians, or approximately 100 times the number of people killed during the US bombing of Afghanistan. (4)

8) We Should Not Wage a War for Oil

The Bush Administration says we must invade Iraq because Saddam Hussein has violated UN Security Council resolutions, is abusing his own people, and pursuing weapons of mass destruction. Yet the US supports the nuclear-armed dictator of Pakistan and provides billions of dollars in aid to the governments of Turkey and nuclear-armed Israel, both of which are in violation of multiple UN resolutions. The blatant double standard makes one wonder: What is this war really about? The short answer is oil. Iraq has the second largest proven reserves of petroleum, and US oil companies, which exercise immense influence over the current administration, are eager to tap into Iraqi oil. This is wrong. We should not attack people in a far-off country to take their resources.

9) Other Options Besides War Are Available

When North Korea announced that it was close to constructing a nuclear weapon, the Bush Administration didn't threaten war—instead, it started cooperating with our allies in Asia to defuse the situation. The North Korean experience shows a way of dealing with weapons of mass destruction and proves that negotiations are preferable to war. If the White House's end goal is to enhance our security, then dialogue is preferable to conflict.

10) Opposition to the War Is Growing

Americans know deep down that this impending war makes no sense. According to recent polls, 40 percent of Americans are against a war with Iraq.

Our task is to turn the public's latent misgivings into blatant opposition. If the citizens say loud and clear that we don't want a war against Iraq, it will be more difficult for the president to go through with his scheme. We have to educate our fellow citizens about why war with Iraq is wrong, and then hold our elected representatives accountable to the will of the people.

Please contact the White House today and say you don't want the US to invade Iraq. The White House switchboard is 202-456-1111 and the fax number is 202-456-2461. For information about what you can do to stop the White House's planned war against Iraq, contact Global Exchange at 1-800-497-1994 or peace@globalexchange.org, or visit our website at www.globalexchange.org.

NOTES:

1) For more on former UN Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter's analysis of Iraqi military capabilities, see: "Is Iraq a True Threat to the US?" by Scott Ritter Boston Globe [www.bostonglobe.com], July 20, 2002. OR Ritter's Testimony before the US Congress, May 3, 2000.

2) Phyllis Bennis, a researcher with the Institute for Policy Studies [www.ips-dc.org], a Washington think tank, says that rather than

having assembled a "coalition of the willing," the White House can only boast of a "coalition of the coerced." Chas W. Freeman Jr., who served as US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the first Bush Administration, refers to "a Coalition of the Sullenly Acquiescent." (see "Even a Superpower Needs Help," New York Times, February 26, 2003). In its drive to unseat Saddam Hussein, the White House has only reluctant allies, not genuine friends.

3) The \$200 billion war cost estimate comes courtesy of Lawrence Lindsey, the former head of the White House's National Economic Council. Lindsey offered the number in a September, 2002 interview with The Wall Street Journal, and the figure was widely reported thereafter.

4) This figure comes from a report by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The report is available online at: www.ippnw.org.

[TOP ▲](#)

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