

## **No War in Iraq**

Friends of the Earth International

Friends of the Earth International strongly condemns the looming war against Iraq and deplores the loss of human life and the disastrous environmental and social impacts that will result from such a war.

Friends of the Earth International supports global treaties, diplomacy, and negotiation to resolve disputes and to promote human rights, environmental protection, and sustainable societies. The proposed first-strike war fundamentally contradicts our approach to foreign policy.

A major motivation for the proposed war against Iraq, led by the US and the UK, is the perceived need to safeguard access to oil in the region. FoEI believes that the only solution to the problem of oil dependency by highly industrialized countries like the US is an increased reliance on clean and sustainable energy sources. Furthermore, national security would be better served by enabling sustainable livelihoods for people everywhere rather than increasing the nuclear and military industrial complex and provoking armed conflicts.

Friends of the Earth International is a federation of 68 non-governmental organizations that make up the world's largest grassroots environmental network campaigning to protect the environment and to create sustainable societies.

notes:

The Friends of the Earth International Gulf War Task Force, headed by former Canadian Ambassador James George, documented the tremendous environmental destruction caused by the 1991 Gulf War:

- more than 168 million gallons of oil spilled into the Persian Gulf
- 200 miles of Saudi Arabian coastline smothered in oil, ruining all the wetlands marshes along the shore and killing thousands of birds and aquatic creatures
- massive uncontrolled fires from some 600 sabotaged oil wells, releasing half a billion tons of carbon dioxide and spreading air pollution as far away as India
- devastation of desert ecosystems caused by the movement of heavy equipment and massive lakes of oil, the world's largest oil spill onland.

Other statistics about the impact of war:

- A US-led attack on Iraq could kill between 48,000 and 260,000 civilians and combatants in just the first three months of conflict, according to a study by medical and public health experts. Post-war health effects could take an

additional 200,000 lives, says the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) ([www.ippnw.org/CollateralDamage.html](http://www.ippnw.org/CollateralDamage.html))

- The health impacts of the Gulf War of 1991 on US troops was massive, with 160,000 of the 573,000 present in the Gulf War now having been certified with service-related medical problems, many due to exposure to chemicals, depleted uranium, biological agents, or nerve gas. This constitutes a frightening 28% of the total — far worse than US troops experienced in World War II (6.6%), Korean War (5%), and the Vietnam War (9.6%). (Washington Post, December 30, 2002). The Pentagon has denied for years that there is any “Gulf War Syndrome” affecting soldiers’ health, but the new figures reveal the magnitude of the health impact.
- Since 1945, 84% of the people killed in war have been civilians (Grossrieder, P. 2002. The human costs of war. Lecture at Lancaster University 13th July. ([www.preparingforpeace.org/grossrieder\\_the\\_human\\_costs\\_of\\_war.html](http://www.preparingforpeace.org/grossrieder_the_human_costs_of_war.html)).
- According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 80% of displaced people are women and children (cited by Grossreider, 2002).
- Perhaps the most significant environmental health concern regarding current weapons technology is that of depleted uranium (DU) projectiles: According to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) ‘threat paper’ on Kuwait, 50 tons of DU inhaled could cause 500,000 additional cancer deaths over several decades based on International Committee on Radiological Protection risk factors (Fisk, 1998).

***Friends of the Earth International***

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