



Fight Bush's War: At Home and Abroad!

A war against Iraq will result in large-scale civilian casualties without in any way enhancing international peace and security. It would divert more than \$200 billion of U.S. tax revenues from needed social programs already starved for resources by Bush's tax-giveaways to the rich. A war might well see a desperate Saddam Hussein use chemical or biological weapons resulting in an American nuclear response. **This war is not necessary.** The inspectors provide an adequate mechanism to limit the weapons systems of the Saddam Hussein dictatorship and there is no credible evidence that Iraq has aided Al Qaeda. If deterrence and diplomacy can contain a nuclear-armed North Korea, similar measures can be effective regarding Iraq, as they have no imminent nuclear weapons capabilities.

The right-wing ideologues were arguing that the United States should practice unilateral global leadership and project its military might well before September 11th. And now they are cynically using people's genuine concerns about security to curtail the civil liberties that are crucial to a real democracy. Their goal is to make the world safe for the "American way of life," ensuring the domination of free market ideology, free trade and unfettered access to markets for transnational corporations. Wolfowitz, Cheney, Kristol and the other right-wing utopians equate markets and democracy—something that would surprise repressed trade unionists in Pinochet's Chile or today's China, to name just a couple of cases.

This warped vision is what lies behind Bush's dangerous new strategic doctrine of *preemption*. It explains why Iraq is the focus of American attention when most experts believe the tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the escalating violence which has destroyed the Mid-East peace process, and the territorial dispute between (nuclear armed) India and Pakistan are all far more pressing problems. But none of them lend themselves to a simplistic U.S. military solution, so they are largely ignored.

All democrats reject the cruel tyranny of the Iraqi regime. The *Pax Americana* the ideologues want is not

designed to support human rights but to make the world safer for transnational corporate interests. Their vision—global peace through free markets—undermines the possibility of equitable economic development and the creation of truly international institutions that can move the globe towards social and economic justice.

Thirty years ago as the Vietnam War dragged to its end, the mass anti-war movement missed an opportunity to become a permanent force in American politics. Now is the time to remind progressive activists that while justice knows no boundaries, a movement to change American foreign policy must also transform the relationships of political and economic power at home.

Ignoring the millions of us who have spoken out against this war, the Bush Administration brings us closer to war with each passing day. A few Democrats are speaking out. Some like, Senator Kennedy, have been consistent opponents of Bush's rush to war; but the mainstream centrist leadership hoped that the issue would "go away" when they wrongly voted, in August of 2002, to give the President the authority to launch the war he now seeks.

The polling data show that a majority of Americans are unconvinced that the case for war has been made. Most want what we demand: **that the inspectors be allowed to finish their job.** Most want the United States to obtain what it has failed to obtain: **genuine, wide spread international support.** Most Americans, the polls say, understand that **a war allegedly waged in the name of our security will only make us less safe.**

So why is the Bush Administration unafraid to wage an unpopular war? It is not just cowboy diplomacy. It is not just that stealing an election makes them bold. It is not just that they know their "numbers" will go up once they put American troops in harm's way. In part they can disregard public opinion because corporate money now dominates American politics and in part because there is no mass movement strong enough to organize the discontent that exists in the country and transform politics.

In the early 1970s corporations constrained by the rising cost of natural resources and the strength of the trade union and environmental movements acted to change the balance of political power in the United States.

They organized new institutions like the Business Roundtable and reinvigorated others like the Chamber of Commerce. They poured billions of dollars into politics and they built right wing think tanks (such as the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the Cato Institute) that acted to reshape political dialogue by feeding the mainstream media conservative ideology masquerading as “facts.” Corporate America not only pushed the Republican Party to the right but moved the Democrats to the right too!

Since 1968 each succeeding Republican administration has been more extreme. With the cynical use of racial, religious and cultural “wedge issues” and massive campaign expenditures, corporate America destroyed the old New Deal left-of-center coalition. And propaganda which highlights the flaws of underfunded public services but ignores the successes of well funded public services has convinced many middle and working class people that there is no government solution to rampant inequality. Today there is a right and a center in mainstream American politics, but no left. Any social justice movement with a future must address this aspect of American politics; we have paid a heavy price for it over the last thirty years:

- Environmental and workplace safety programs have been gutted;
- Billions upon billions of dollars in tax cuts have been given to the rich;
- The right to organize has been severely undermined and the unionized segment of the private sector work force is now less than ten percent;
- Banking deregulation and repeal of regulatory acts like the Glass-Steagall Act helped create the scandals at Enron and other corporations. Most of their scandalous acts were perfectly legal;
- Affirmative Action and other Civil Rights protections have been seriously eroded, as has been women’s right to choice in regards to their own reproduction and sexuality;
- The mal-distribution of wealth and power has increased exponentially. Now the top 1% controls the vast majority of the wealth and power.

Movements for a just and democratic foreign policy have to flow from strong movements for social and economic justice at home. We



cannot expect to be successful on the international front if we ignore the task of building a strong democratic left in the United States. In addition to fighting against this war we must fight against:

- Privatization of Social Security and Medicare;
- More tax-giveaways to the rich;
- Assaults on welfare and the poor;
- Efforts to restrict a woman’s right to choose an abortion;
- Costly and unfeasible missile defense schemes.

And we must fight for:

- A comprehensive and just national health system;
- Living wage legislation and minimum wage increases which increase living standards;
- Strengthened protections for the right of workers to organize;
- Significant reductions in the military budget;
- Significant changes to our immigration laws that promote family reunification, legalization and an end to workplace enforcement measures.

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is proud to be a part of *United for Peace and Justice* and other campaigns that support this approach to building a movement for social and economic justice and peace. If you agree with us please join!

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