



USAction resolution on war with Iraq

Adopted, 2/20/03

USAction, a progressive consumer organization with thirty-three affiliates representing over three million members, has focused exclusively on domestic policy issues such as health care and public schools for all, and promotion of civic participation. We break from that tradition at this time because we view the course that President Bush has proposed concerning Iraq as being a grave danger to our national security, our security from terrorism at home and abroad, to our economy and to civil liberties and rights.

We share the deep concerns of those around the world that Iraq has not fulfilled its responsibility to the world community to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction. For this reason, we support full compliance with United Nations resolutions regarding weapons inspections and the dismantling of any weapons of mass destruction. The United States should not engage in any unilateral action to enforce this policy that is not approved specifically by the United Nations. We believe that the inspection process needs to be given adequate time to fully inform the international community of the full situation in Iraq.

The terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001 necessitated a swift response, based on a worldwide coalition, so that the radical fundamentalist network responsible for these attacks, Al Qaeda, would be destroyed and the perpetrators of these attacks brought to justice.

The Bush Administration would be making a tragic mistake if it pursued unilateral action, whether political or military, against the present government of Iraq. Such action would take the focus away from the main danger – the Al Qaeda network – and would threaten to tear apart the worldwide coalition so necessary in the continuing fight against terrorism. We do not believe that the Administration has made an incontrovertible case that the Iraqi government presents an immediate clear and present danger to the United States, and we believe, as Bishop Tutu and the Pope have stated, that war can only be just when it is used as a last resort.

We believe that going to war against a country that has not attacked ours, without the full support of the United Nations, would be, itself, a threat to future world stability and a departure from the UN Charter and accepted world practice. And we note that the victims of such a war could include both many members of the American military – men and women who volunteered to serve their country – and millions of Iraqis, a majority of whom are children under fifteen years old. Our opposition to unilateral action against Iraq is a patriotic act, and in no way contradicts our support for those who choose to serve in our nation's military. We believe that it is inappropriate to send young people into harm's way for a cause whose purpose has not been justified, whose mission and duration are not clear, and whose impact may worsen the very terrorism it is designed to limit.

At the same time, we fear that this war will further erode the ability of the United States government to meet pressing social needs here at home. The President's budget does not even include funding for this war, but it already shortchanges security at home, funding for health care and schools and jobs. The cost of securing a peaceful post-war Iraq will be tens or hundreds of billions, and, unlike after the Gulf War, far less likely to be shared by our allies since they are not largely supporting war itself. We

1825 K Street NW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20006

Phone: (202) 263-4520 Fax: (202) 263-4530

www.usaction.org



believe that peace is not possible without justice, at home or abroad, and we fear that this war will make justice harder to come by, not easier. We note that the President continues to propose massive tax cuts to the richest Americans – the only time in our history when the wealthy have been given such tax cuts in wartime. Such tax cuts amount to a slap in the face of those who will actually fight this war, and the heavily low-income, rural and of-color communities from which they come.

Finally, we fear that the Administration's rhetoric, and that of its Congressional allies, further divide Americans by race, ethnicity and country of origin – and separate us from others in the rest of the world on those bases. Promoting fear often is accompanied by reductions of our civil liberties, and the President has done little to assure us that his Administration is sensitive to these bedrock liberties of our democracy.

In conclusion, we want to stress our strongest concern that unilateral action by the United States would not only detract from pursuing terrorism but is likely to provoke a reaction against the United States that will foster terrorism and world instability. With globalization of the economy, environment, communication, and cultures, unilateral actions are unworkable and harmful and will have long-term, negative consequences beyond this war against Iraq. The threat to our citizens' lives and to the economy from unilateral action is extreme.

We urge our affiliates to take positions as they see fit about this looming conflict, and to work with our allies in the movement for peace and justice to preserve freedom, democracy and justice through peaceful means.