
SRI LANKAN PROTEST ON IRAQ INVASION

Signed by 100 University Professors, Lecturers, Professionals, Activists and Leaders of Civil Society

The invasion of Iraq has brought the world to the brink of great uncertainty and instability. The US led invasion, undertaken with the intention of regime change in Baghdad against the international law, wishes of the United Nations and the majority of the people of the world, sets a dangerous precedent. We call upon the US and British governments and their allies to immediately stop their invasion of Iraq, withdraw all their troops from the Gulf region, and work with the United Nations on a negotiated settlement to the original issue of weapons of mass destruction.

Behind the rhetoric of liberating the people of Iraq from Saddam Hussein's regime lie economic as well as global political interests that the Republican establishment in the US has made little attempt to hide. The new US doctrine of preemptive unilateralism is a clear statement of the ruling party's agenda to impose post-Cold-War American domination on the world. In putting the agenda of global domination into action, the Bush Administration and its allies have disregarded the question of the elementary legality of their act of invasion of a sovereign country. Herein lies a great danger to peoples and nations throughout the world: political relations and inter-state relations are increasingly driven by the principle that 'might is right' and international norms, rules and due process are being rendered irrelevant.

The spread of war beyond Iraq will have serious consequences and implications for global order and economic and social development. The poor nations of the world, grappling with uneven development and economic globalization, face increased hardships in an event of protracted and widened conflict in the Gulf region. Another dangerous precedent is that increasingly the production of hi-tech weapons to destroy whole societies and the post-conflict reconstruction industry have become growth sectors in the global economy with serious implications for human security and world development.

The failure of the United Nations to halt the Bush Administration's reckless militarism against Iraq is making powerless the world body's primary mandate of ensuring world peace. The Secretary-General's insistence that the UN would provide humanitarian and post-conflict assistance in Iraq appears to be an admission that the UN has lost sight of its primary mandate to maintain world peace and has thus been willfully ignored by the US government. In the run-up to the planned invasion the UN Secretary-General, instead of continuing the Weapons Inspections process and insisting (as the French, German, Russian and Chinese governments did), that the diplomatic process should continue, withdrew the inspectors from Iraq along with other UN personnel monitoring the food for oil program.

Against this backdrop, we appeal to the people of the world and the leaders of States to rally against the war on Iraq, and for peace. We demand that the US and its allies desist from further aggression against the people of Iraq and let the Iraqi people decide the fate of their government in an atmosphere free of war, external aggression and intimidation. We also appeal to the UN to regain its original mandate and moral authority so that it can once again become the world body that it was meant to be. In order to facilitate that process, the Secretary-General should resume the United Nations' efforts to politically manage and eventually resolve the crisis of Iraq. The issue of the illegality of the invasion of Iraq and its impact on the world should be brought forward to the United Nations General Assembly.

The editors thank friends in Sri Lanka and abroad for sending in material on the Iraq war.