

# ANSWERing Bush's big myths about Iraq

## Myth # 1

### **The United States has the right to wage preemptive war against Iraq**

Preemptive war is war of aggression.

Under international law, a preemptive war may be justified as an act of self-defense only where there exists a genuine and imminent threat of physical attack.

Bush's preemptive war against Iraq doesn't even purport to preempt a physical attack. It purports to preempt a threat that is neither issued nor posed.

Iraq is not issuing threats of attack against the United States. It is only the United States that threatens war.

There has been no evidence that Iraq is capable of an attack on the U.S., let alone possessing the intention of carrying out such an attack.

## Myth # 2

### **The U.N. Security Council can lawfully authorize preemptive war**

The United Nations Security Council cannot authorize a potential nuclear U.S. first strike and war of aggression that violates the U.N. Charter, international law and the law prohibiting war crimes, crimes against the peace and crimes against humanity.

The U.N. Charter—which creates the Security Council and which grants the Council its authority—requires the “Security Council to act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.” (Article 24)

The U.N. Charter requires international disputes or situations that might lead to a breach of peace to be resolved by peaceful means. (Article 1 and Chapter VI)

In other words, a nation may not wage war based on the claim that it seeks to prevent war. A nation may use force unilaterally in self-defense only “if an armed attack occurs” against it. (Article 51)

## Myth # 3

### **The United States Congress can lawfully authorize preemptive war against Iraq**

Article VI of the U.S. Constitution establishes that ratified treaties, such as the U.N. Charter, are the “supreme law of the land.”

The U.N. Charter has been ratified by the United States, and the Congress may not take actions—including wars of aggression—in violation of the Charter.



Wars of aggression, and even the making of the threat of a war of aggression, violates the international humanitarian law to which all nations are bound.

Neither Congress nor the President has the right to engage the U.S. in a war of aggression and any vote of endorsement, far from legalizing or legitimizing global war plans, serves only as ratification of war crimes.

## Myth # 4

### **The U.S. government intends to "liberate" the Iraqi people**

The October 11, 2002, *New York Times* revealed the true plans of the United States: “The White House is developing a detailed plan, modeled on the postwar occupation of Japan, to install an American-led military government in Iraq if the United States topples Saddam Hussein, senior administration

officials said today.... In the initial phase, Iraq would be governed by an American military commander—perhaps Gen. Tommy R. Franks, commander of the United States forces in the Persian Gulf, or one of his subordinates—who would assume the role that Gen. Douglas MacArthur served in Japan after its surrender in 1945.” (“U.S. has a plan to occupy Iraq, officials report”)

The true intention of the U.S. government is to recolonize Iraq. Prior to the 1960s, U.S. corporations made 50 percent of their foreign profits from investments in oil from this region. The Bush administration wants Iraq to denationalize its oil wealth—10% of the world's supply. This war is an attempt to reconquer Iraq and all of its natural resources. The Bush administration wants to reshuffle the deck in the Middle East and undo all of the achievements of the national liberation movements from the last sixty years. They want to eliminate independence for all countries in the region and assert their domination and control—not in the interest of the vast majority of people—but for access to oil.

## Myth # 5

### **Iraq is a military threat to the world**

There is no record to support this claim. During the Gulf War of 1991, while the United States bombed Iraq with a barrage that included 110,000 sorties, Iraq did not destroy even one U.S. tank or plane.

Desert Storm destroyed, according to U.N. weapons inspectors, 80% of Iraq's weaponry. As part of the inspections that followed, 90% of Iraq's remaining military capability was destroyed.

Iraq has been paying indemnities to Kuwait and U.S. oil corporations since 1991 and has not had the financial capacity to build another arsenal.

In addition, there has not been a threat by Iraq of any kind against any other country.

## Myth # 6

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### **Iraq threw out the weapons inspectors**

Iraq did not tell the inspectors to leave. The weapons inspectors withdrew in December 1998 because the United States told them to pull out so that the U.S. could launch a bombing campaign on Baghdad.

The next day, on December 16, the U.S. unleashed Operation Desert Fox, which included dropping 1,100 bombs and Cruise missiles on Iraq.

After the bombing campaign, a *Washington Post* report confirmed the assertions of Iraq that the inspections were intelligence-gathering exercises conducted on the orders of the Defense Intelligence Agency. The Pentagon used the information collected from the so-called inspections to set up coordinates for its bombing operations. After this revelation, the Iraqi government quite understandably did not let the inspectors back in.

## Myth # 7

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### **Sanctions are a kinder, gentler way to deal with Iraq**

The plan for sanctions on Iraq came from the Pentagon, not the Department of Health and Human Services. It was a central part of the Pentagon's war strategy against the Iraqi people.

Sanctions have been more devastating than the Gulf War itself.

"UNICEF confirms that five to six thousand Iraqi children are dying unnecessarily every month due to the impact of the sanctions, and that figure is probably modest," Denis Halliday told a Congressional hearing in October 1998. Halliday, who had just resigned his post as U.N. Assistant Secretary General and head of the U.N. humanitarian mission in Iraq, spoke of the "tragic incompatibility of sanctions with the U.N. Charter and the Convention on Human Rights."

## Myth # 8

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### **The UN allows U.S. and U.K. planes to bomb the "No Fly Zones"**

The United States agreed to a ceasefire with Iraq in February 1991. The no-flight zones over two-thirds of Iraq were imposed by the U.S., Britain and France 18 months after the Gulf War. The United Nations has never sanctioned the no-flight zones.

France has since condemned them. The so-called no-flight zones are in violation of international law.

Iraq has every right under international law and all known laws in the world to defend itself in these U.S.-declared no-flight zones. According to Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, Iraq has the right of self-defense in all of its country, including these "no-flight zones."

## Myth # 9

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### **The people support a war on Iraq**

Not even opinion polls support this phony assertion. The polls confirm that there is wide opposition to a war. Normally there is wide support for a president who is about to launch a war. Instead, Congressional offices report overwhelming constituent opposition to a unilateral war on Iraq.

Worldwide, the opposition is even bigger. While British Prime Minister Tony Blair is a vocal acolyte of Bush, few in Britain support a war on Iraq. Already, a march against war of 400,000 was held in London.

Similar demonstrations have been held in Rome and Madrid. The general sentiment in Europe was summed up by the Greek Development Minister who said, "We are totally opposed to any military conflict ... even if there is a UN Resolution."

Around the world, the sentiment is no different. New Zealand's government opposes the war. No country in the

Middle East supports a war on Iraq. Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates all oppose a war. As do France, Russia and China.

## Myth # 10

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### **War will be good for the economy**

It already costs U.S. taxpayers \$50 billion per year to keep U.S. armed forces in the Persian Gulf. The estimated \$200 billion for a war on Iraq will come straight out of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education and welfare. The average working-class taxpayer will foot the bill. The upper classes have already had their taxes greatly reduced so that they pay only a small part of the bill.

## Myth # 11

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### **This war will be quick and painless**

War is rarely quick, never painless. A new war will be neither. The 4.8 million people in Baghdad face an invasion by the most modern and lethally equipped military in the world. Iraq is a nation of 22 million people. They will bear the brunt of the pain and the deaths of the war.

## Myth # 12

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### **Gulf War Syndrome is a myth**

The Veterans Benefits Administration Office noted that 36% of Desert Storm vets have filed claims for service-related disabilities. A primary reason is because the U.S. used Depleted Uranium. In July 1990, "The U.S. Army Armaments Munitions and Chemical Command admitted DU posed longterm risks to natives and combat veterans.... Low doses have been linked to cancer."

Gulf War vets have a 500% greater incidence of Lou Gehrig's disease than the general population. Desert Storm female vets have a 300% greater incidence of bearing children with birth defects. For male vets the figure is 200%.

## **International A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition** **Act Now to Stop War & End Racism**

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