

NATIONAL PSR STATEMENT ON MILITARY INTERVENTION IN IRAQ

June 2002

Physicians for Social Responsibility is opposed to U.S. military intervention in Iraq, as threatened by the Bush administration. While PSR is concerned about Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction, we believe that there are viable alternatives to war to reduce and contain the Iraqi threat. Any intervention must follow the guidelines of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

PSR is concerned that civilian casualties will be high in any armed conflict. Further damage to the infrastructure of Iraq, including power, water supplies and sanitation, as well as disruption of the critical food distribution program, will have both short-term and long-term consequences to the Iraqi people, especially to their most vulnerable citizens: children, the sick and the elderly. We are concerned that a military effort to change the regime in Iraq will further alienate people of the Arab world at a time when bridges of understanding and mutual respect are sorely needed. Furthermore, PSR believes that war with Iraq could escalate into a wider regional conflict involving Israel and other nations, threatening the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The priority for U.S. policy must be to work within the UN framework to return weapons inspectors to Iraq, as this strategy offers the best hope for detecting and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The diplomatic key to persuading Iraq to accept renewed weapons inspections is more likely to be a multilateral, effective carrots-and-sticks bargaining strategy.

PSR endorses policy options for reducing and containing the Iraqi weapons threat without resorting to military force. These options include:

1. The U.N. Security Council should restructure sanctions and approve a new Goods Review List (GRL). Under this proposal weapons imports would continue to be banned, and the dual-use technologies list would be subject to review, but all other civilian imports would be allowed to flow freely into Iraq.
2. The UN should permit foreign investment for civilian businesses, subject to UN review and approval.
3. The UN should lift sanctions on non-oil exports from Iraq.
4. UN financial controls should continue as a means of preserving current restrictions on Iraq's ability to purchase military-related goods and components for weapons of mass destruction.
5. Because the Baghdad government may not permit resumed UN weapons inspections, it may be necessary to create an externally based, vigorously enforced system of containment to restrict the flow of weapons-related goods into Iraq. Currently Iraq's borders are porous, and it will take a significant political and

- diplomatic initiative to gain the cooperation of the states bordering Iraq. The goal is to establish a long-term capability for blocking Iraqi rearmament through strict controls on the import of weapons and dual-use military goods. Building a visible and credible containment system might help to convince the Iraqi regime to accept the option of complying with UN weapons inspections.
6. The restrictions on oil revenues and UN financial controls would be lifted if the Iraqi government complies with UN Resolutions. PSR believes that these measures, together with diplomatic dialogue with Iraq and its neighboring states, represent preferable options to armed conflict. We believe these proposals offer far less human, political, financial and ethical risks than military force against the regime in Iraq. We urge the Bush administration to carefully consider the implementation of these measures in place of military intervention. (Approved by the executive committee June 2002).