

NATIONAL PSR STATEMENT ON IRAQ

The resolution was formally passed by the National PSR Board in November 2005.

Physicians for Social Responsibility,

Recognizing that two credible reports with different methodology released since November 2004 have indicated that the U.S.-led military conflict in Iraq since March 2003 has resulted in the estimated death of approximately 25,000 (1), and 100,000 Iraqi civilians, respectively (2), with untold (and deliberately uncounted) numbers of Iraqi civilian casualties, and with well-documented human rights violations against Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib and other U.S.-controlled facilities; and,

Observing that the military conflict since 2003 has resulted in the extensive destruction of Iraqi society and public health infrastructure, with widespread environmental damage, including the still-unaccounted for dispersal of depleted uranium (DU) in many populated areas of Iraq (3); and,

Noting that the continued U.S. military occupation of Iraq, and reported Pentagon plans to establish “enduring bases” in Iraq (4), has provoked widespread opposition among broad sectors of Iraqi society, engendering continued support for a growing insurgency, currently estimated at 40,000 active paramilitary insurgents with a base of at least 160,000 supporters (5); and,

Noting that the continued U.S. military occupation has undermined U.S. national security by providing fertile ground for the recruitment of global terrorist forces, by building increased hostility to the US throughout the Islamic world, and by damaging US relations with longstanding friends throughout the world; and,

Noting that the military conflict has already resulted in the deaths of over 1,800 U.S. and allied soldiers (6), as well as hundreds of forces serving as private contractors hired by Foreign Military Firms (FMFs) (4); and, Observing that the military conflict has resulted in over 12,000 reported casualties to aforementioned U.S. and allied forces, many of which have been documented as resulting in very serious and debilitating injuries, with likely consequential long-term serious disability and need for rehabilitation services (7); and,

Noting that the military conflict has already resulted in a total estimated \$200 billion in supplemental appropriations beyond the annual approximately \$425 billion U.S. military budget (8); and,

Recognizing that the fiscal costs of the continued military conflict in Iraq, occurring in the context of large and rising domestic U.S. budget deficits, have already led to proposed slashing of programs necessary to the public and environmental health needs of the American people, including the care of U.S. veterans suffering from the consequences of

the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as previous wars; and, Noting that the current and anticipated future expanded fiscal costs of the military conflict in Iraq represent resources that could better be used to address current and future global public and environmental health needs, including developing alternative and sustainable energy sources that could address the looming crisis of global climate change while reducing the risks of terrorism; and, Understanding PSR's core commitment to the ethical and moral imperatives of physicians to "First, Do No Harm,"

Therefore, be it resolved that Physicians for Social Responsibility:

Calls on the U.S. government to immediately develop and announce a timeline, with clear deadline dates of phased military withdrawal, whereby all U.S. and allied foreign forces would be removed from Iraq as soon as possible, with commensurate selected deployment of replacement international peacekeeping troops under the command of the United Nations in areas of potential significant risk for inter-ethnic conflict or civil war; and,

Calls on the U.S. government to halt plans to establish "enduring" military bases in Iraq; and,

Calls on the U.S. government to support a United Nations-led process to oversee the continued efforts to develop an Iraqi constitution that respects the rights and interests of all domestic ethnic and political groupings, generally based on established UN principles of international human and economic rights; and,

Calls on the U.S. government to support a United Nations-initiated effort to convene a Mideast conference involving all regional powers to support nascent Iraqi government-determined needs for reconstruction and security assistance; and,

Calls on the U.S. government to guarantee the security for, and priority of, the reconstruction of vital health care infrastructure in Iraq and to ensure safe access to this infrastructure by the Iraqi people, while also guaranteeing that adequate resources are provided for the care and rehabilitation of US military forces and their families physically and psychologically harmed by the conflict; and

Calls on the U.S. government, NATO nations, and regional Mideast allies to provide needed funds for aforementioned reconstruction and security assistance, to be disbursed by UN agencies and Iraqi-acceptable NGOs, with adequate funds to specifically include monies transferred from U.S. companies, private contractors and NGOs currently operating in, and to be withdrawn from Iraq; and,

Calls on the U.S. government and allied forces in Iraq to immediately allow UN agencies such as the UN Environmental Programme to begin to characterize the extent of environmental contamination in Iraq caused by the military conflict, including that caused by DU, and to assist, with adequate funding, in efforts to protect Iraqi civilians

and all soldiers involved in the conflict from the consequences of any established or potential environmental exposures.

SOURCES

1. Fattah HM. Civilian Toll in Iraq Is Placed at Nearly 25,000. *New York Times*, July 20, 2005; <http://www.iraqbodycount.net> (Last accessed September 19, 2005).
2. Roberts L, Lafta R, Garfield R, Khudhairi J, Burnham G, Mortality before and after the 2003 invasion of Iraq: cluster sample survey *The Lancet*, Vol. 364, Issue 9448, 20 November 2004, Pages 1857-1864.
3. See, for example, articles from the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/national/133581_du04.html; the BBC http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/2860759.stm; and the International Security Network http://www.isn.ch/news/sw/details_print.cfm?id=7393.
4. Singer PW, Outsourcing War. *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2005
5. *Times of London*, Jan 4, 2005.
6. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/nation> on June 28, 2005.
7. "More Than 10,000 U.S. Troops Hurt in Iraq" (AP) *NYT* January 4, 2005 and data from <http://www.defenselink.mil> (the DoD website) compiled at <http://icasualties.org/oif/> on June 28, 2005.
8. Budget figures: FY06 Defense Budget at \$419.2 bn, + \$6bn for DOE nukes, Council for Liveable World. April 2005. Three supplemental appropriations for Iraq war (\$30bn + \$75bn +\$82bn) may more details can be found at <http://www.clw.org> in the Military Spending section of the website.