

Call to Conscience from Veterans to Active Duty Troops and Reservists

We are veterans of the United States armed forces. We stand with the majority of humanity, including millions in our own country, in opposition to the United States' all out war on Iraq. We span many wars and eras, have many political views and we all agree that this war is wrong. Many of us believed serving in the military was our duty, and our job was to defend this country. Our experiences in the military caused us to question much of what we were taught. Now we see our REAL duty is to encourage you as members of the U.S. armed forces to find out what you are being sent to fight and die for and what the consequences of your actions will be for humanity. We call upon you, the active duty and reservists, to follow your conscience and do the right thing.

In the last Gulf War, as troops, we were ordered to murder from a safe distance. We destroyed much of Iraq from the air, killing hundreds of thousands, including civilians. We remember the road to Basra—the Highway of Death—where we were ordered to kill fleeing Iraqis. We bulldozed trenches, burying people alive. The use of depleted uranium weapons left the battlefields radioactive. Massive use of pesticides, experimental drugs, burning chemical weapons depots and oil fires combined to create a toxic cocktail affecting both the Iraqi people and Gulf War veterans today. One in four Gulf War veterans is disabled.

During the Vietnam War we were ordered to destroy Vietnam from the air and on the ground. At My Lai we massacred over 500 women, children and old men.

This was not an aberration, it's how we fought the war. We used Agent Orange on the *enemy* and then experienced first hand its effects. We know what Post Traumatic Stress Disorder looks, feels and tastes like because the ghosts of over two million men, women and children still haunt our dreams. More of us took our own lives after returning home than died in battle.

If you choose to participate in the invasion of Iraq you will be part of an occupying army. Do you know what it is like to look into the eyes of a people that hate you to your core? You should think about what your "mission" really is. You are being sent to invade and occupy a people who, like you and me, are only trying to live their lives and raise their kids. They pose no threat to the United States even though they have a brutal dictator as their leader. Who is the U.S. to tell the Iraqi people how to run their country when many in the U.S. don't even believe their own President was legally elected?

Saddam is being vilified for gassing his own people and

Resources:

If you have questions or doubts about your role in the military (for any reason) or in this war, help is available. Contact one of the organizations listed below. They can discuss your situation and concerns, give you information on your legal rights, and help you sort out your possible choices. (For information only, listed organizations are not responsible for this veterans' statement.)

For questions, or for discharge or other GI rights information, visit: www.girights.org or call: GI Rights Hotline: (800) FYI-95GI

For Local Help Contact:



trying to develop weapons of mass destruction. However, when Saddam committed his worst crimes the U.S. was supporting him. This support included providing the means to produce chemical and biological weapons. Contrast this with the horrendous results of the U.S. led economic sanctions. More than a million Iraqis, mainly children and infants, have died because of these sanctions. After having destroyed the entire infrastructure of their country including hospitals, electricity generators, and water treatment plants, the U.S. then, with the sanctions, stopped the import of goods, medicines, parts, and chemicals necessary to restore even the most basic necessities of life.

There is no honor in murder. This war is murder by another name. When, in an unjust war, an errant bomb dropped kills a mother and her child it is not "collateral damage," it is murder. When, in an unjust war, a child dies of dysentery because a bomb damaged a sewage treatment plant, it is not "destroying enemy infrastructure," it is murder. When, in an unjust war, a father dies of a heart attack because a bomb disrupted the phone lines so he could not call an ambulance, it is not "neutralizing command and control facilities," it is murder. When, in an unjust war, a thousand poor farmer conscripts die in a trench defending a town they have lived in their whole lives, it is not victory, it is murder.

There will be veterans leading protests against this war on Iraq and your participation in it. During the Vietnam War thousands in Vietnam and in the U.S. refused to follow orders. Many resisted and rebelled. Many became conscientious objectors and others went to prison rather than bear arms against the so-called enemy. During the last Gulf War many GIs resisted in various ways and for many different reasons. Many of us came out of these wars and joined with the anti-war movement.

If the people of the world are ever to be free, there must come a time when being a citizen of the world takes precedence over being the soldier of a nation. Now is that time. When orders come to ship out, your response will profoundly impact the lives of millions of people in the Middle East and here at home. Your response will help set the course of our future. You will have choices all along the way. Your commanders want you to obey. We urge you to think. We urge you to make your choices based on your conscience. If you choose to resist, we will support you and stand with you because we have come to understand that our REAL duty is to the people of the world and to our common future.

This statement is signed by hundreds of veterans, please see the web site or the following pages for the most up-to-date list of signers.

Funds Urgently Needed!

There has been overwhelming response to this statement from all over the world. It has gotten into the hands of large numbers of active duty troops. Funds are needed to print large quantities of leaflets and to get the statement printed in newspapers. We also need an organization who can process these donations as "non-profit" for tax purposes. Checks to VCC c/o VVAWI.

Organizers Needed!

We need volunteers to get this statement into the hands of as many troops and reservists as possible—all over the world. Please post this statement on the web, especially on sites that GI's & Soldiers visit. Anti-war, peace & justice groups, and religious groups that are situated close to bases and locations where troops live, including National Guard units and other reservists who are being called up.

Name _____ Branch _____ Dates served _____
Address _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
Email _____

Δ I want to be a VCC organizer and help get this statement in the hands of GIs and published.

Δ I am sending a donation to help.

Veterans Call to Conscience (or VCC)
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