

**Joint Statement in Response to Threat of War with Iraq
From the General and Executive Secretaries of Five Quaker Organizations
Ninth Month, 24, 2002**

“I told them that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars...I told them I was come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strife were...”

George Fox, Founder of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 1651.

The United States government stands on the verge of launching a major war against Iraq. At the same time, U.S. political leaders are promulgating a doctrine that asserts the United States' right to launch unilateral, preemptive military strikes on any nation or group to counter a perceived threat. The peace and security of all peoples are threatened by these developments.

If ever there were a time for Friends to take action based upon our historic peace testimony, that time is now. We call upon Friends to witness and work to prevent this war, to reverse this new military doctrine, to call upon our governments to implement multilateral, diplomatic responses to the threats posed by the government of Iraq, and to continue developing positive, nonviolent approaches to resolving international conflicts. We know that there are millions of people of good will with whom we can join in this work.

We find many compelling reasons for all people of faith and reason to oppose this war and this dangerous new military policy. Among them are:

- A war with Iraq is likely to cause tremendous loss of human lives, vast destruction, and terrible human suffering.
- The aftermath of a war with Iraq is likely to include years of chaos and suffering in Iraq, instability and violence in the Middle East and South Asia, hatred of the United States for generations to come, and an increase in acts of terrorism against countries deemed responsible for the war.
- Such a war, and the policy that underlies it, would legitimize preemptive military strikes by nations that feel threatened by others. Such a terrible precedent would undermine international law and the U.N. Charter and could lead to a tremendous increase in wars and violence in the future.

We know from history that acts of violence only breed further violence.

We also know that the terrifying spiral of violence and hatred can be interrupted by acts of creative nonviolence, conflict resolution and courageous love. The real path to global security lies in a stronger global civil society based on increasing trust and respect, the rule of international law, and the removal of the roots of violence and war.

There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.

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