

Asian and Pacific Islanders Against the War
Statement of Purpose
adopted 2/27/91

As Asian Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders in the New York area, we oppose the U.S. war in the Persian Gulf on moral, humanitarian and political grounds.

The Bush Administration rushed to war, refusing to pursue, let alone exhaust, peaceful means to resolve the Gulf crisis; and now, even after Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, refuses to stop the war. The massive destruction of civilian life by tens of thousands of U.S. sorties; rapid buildup and deployment of half a million U.S. troops; and the present military spending of \$1 billion per day are unconscionable. A war of this scale is already raising the spectre of nuclear holocaust.

We, as Asian and Pacific Islanders, join with all peace-loving people in the United States and the world to demand an end to the insane tragedy unfolding in the Middle East. As Asians and Pacific Islanders, we have long struggled for world peace and against U.S. intervention throughout the Asia-Pacific region. We have also experienced the horror of nuclear war in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and nuclear testing in Micronesia and the South Pacific.

U.S. military bases, created as a result of U.S. intervention, continue to occupy territory from the Philippines to Korea and throughout the Pacific, including Hawaii. The genocide committed by the United States in Indochina has shown the inhumanity -- and ultimately the futility -- of war as national foreign policy.

U.S. bases in the Philippines are now being used as a staging area for the Gulf War. One little-known reality of the war is that troops from the Philippines and U.S.-controlled Pacific Islands have been "integrated" into the U.S. Desert Storm force. Furthermore, Filipino women are being exploited as "R&R" by U.S. troops in the Philippines and are being shipped along with Thai women to "service" troops in the Gulf.

Here in the U.S., this war means deepening racism, poverty and social inequalities. As victims ourselves of racism, we condemn the U.S. government and media stereotyping of Arab people as "inhuman" and "deranged" and "terrorists". We are appalled and outraged at the dehumanization of Iraqis and all Arabs. Such racism serves to justify the genocide now taking place in the Persian Gulf, as well as the harassment and civil rights violations against Arab Americans here at home. Such war-fed hysteria led to the racist incarceration of Japanese Americans during the Second World War and the harassment of Chinese American communities during the Korean War.

The domestic cost of the war also means further disaster for our communities in the U.S. We need our people at home to build our communities, not at war. Due to a decade of government cutbacks in education and other social programs which have devastated our communities, many of our youth enlisted into the military as a means to stabilize their lives and have a better future, not to go to war. The so-called volunteer army is, in fact, a poverty draft for the working class and people of color. We demand that military spending be redirected to building schools, libraries, health and child care, jobs and homes -- not war. We need a culture that promotes life, cooperation and mutual respect.

We Asian Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders join with other people of color to condemn this racist war. Asian and Pacific Islanders Against the War will focus our efforts in educating, organizing and mobilizing all sectors of our communities to stop the war and address its consequences. We will bring an Asian and Pacific Islander perspective as we join with others in building a peace movement to stop this war.

We call for the following 6 demands:

1. Stop the war now! Immediate unconditional ceasefire. No U.S. occupation of Iraq or permanent military bases in the Middle East.
2. Being negotiations. An international peace conference to address all conflicts in the Middle East.
3. Oppose U.S. intervention and end global militarism.
4. Redirect military spending for social needs.
5. Stop racist genocide. End the disproportionate deployment of people of color in the front. Stop anti-Arab harassment. End sexual exploitation and violence against women.
6. Oppose the reinstatement of the military draft.