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Dear Editor,

In short, around 90 per cent of victims of modern warfare are civilians. The 1991 Gulf War resulted in the deaths of 111,000 civilians, 70,000 of whom were aged under 15. This appalling amount of suffering and wastage of human life must not be repeated.

The Iraqi people have already suffered enormously under the UN-backed economic sanctions that have been imposed since the Gulf War in 1991. They should not suffer the fear, misery and pain of a renewed war as well.

The UN weapons inspections, consequent upon UN Resolution 1441, have not yet found evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. If the US and UK have such evidence, they should produce it – or withdraw their threatening stance towards Iraq.

The UNMOVIC team should be allowed adequate time to complete their weapon inspections, even if this takes a year, as Dr Hans Blix has suggested it might.

Unity Party WA maintains that it is essential that consistency apply to implementing UN Resolutions. For example, UN Res. 687 seeks a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction throughout the Middle East. To implement that, Israel, with the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, would have to relinquish such weapons – as would Iraq also (if it indeed possesses WMDs.)

The US itself has the **world's greatest stockpiles of WMDs**, and is signatory to binding international obligations to eliminate its nuclear weapons, **but fails to implement those agreements**. Through its Nuclear Posture Review 2002, it shows its determination to rely on its nukes well into this new century. Such **double standards** are not sustainable.

Diplomatic avenues have by no means been exhausted in resolving the questions surrounding Iraq's possible possession of WMDs.

There is a danger that the US might take action without the sanction of the United Nations. To do so would undermine the authority of the UN – and consequently lead to a “law of the jungle” with nations acting in their own self-interest instead of moderating their actions according to the common good. Unity Party WA believes that international law should be strengthened, not weakened.

There is no hard evidence that Iraq has any links with the terrorists who perpetrated the terrible events of 11 September 2001. This impending war is not about terrorism – but about maintaining an assured **oil** supply to fuel the US economy. Iraq poses no threat to Australia – and this is not our war.

The war, being against an Islamic country, would be a great recruitment opportunity for Islamic extremists.

If Saddam Hussein indeed has any clandestine WMDs at his disposal, he could be goaded to use them if Iraq is attacked. That is, the war could cause the use of the very weapons it is supposedly aimed at destroying.

A war on Iraq would stimulate a new exodus of refugees from that beleaguered country. Already the global refugee problem proves to be extremely difficult. We should not engage in action that increases this problem.

The war with Iraq could cost the U.S. \$100 - \$200 billion, according to an estimate by Lawrence Lindsay, President George Bush's chief economic advisor. There are endless pro-social uses for such money – and which would do a great deal to make the world a fairer place. This would defuse much of the fundamentalism that is rife in today's world.

Even without contributing a single soldier, Australia is implicated in this impending war. The joint facility at Pine Gap (near Alice Springs, NT) was used in the Gulf War 1991, and in the war in Afghanistan 2001-02, and would be employed again to implement a new war against Iraq. The Sea Swap arrangement (in which the crews of US warships are to be exchanged, repairs and maintenance of US warships undertaken and the Lancelin Defence Training Area used by the US Navy for bombing practice, all in south-west W.A.) is another means by which Australia is supporting the US to fight Iraq.

Australia should withdraw all support for the US in its war against Iraq.

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