

# Challenge Corporate Power, Assert the People's Rights Campaign Statement on War Against Iraq

*The Campaign Leadership Team*

**T**he proposed war against Iraq would make a mockery of democratic decision-making while furthering a U.S. corporate agenda.

**Who decides what action should be taken by the government of the United States of America?** By what authority does the President claim the right to take the country to war? By what right do elected representatives in Congress abdicate their responsibility to their constituents, who are communicating their opposition to this proposed invasion by overwhelming majorities? The corporate media have uncritically repeated the warmongers' lies and propaganda. They have reported that the administration is "lobbying the American public," which is exactly the opposite of the appropriate relationship between a president and "We the People" in a real democracy. It is the people who are responsible for discussing, debating, deciding, and instructing our elected officials. This rush to war benefits corporate interests while violating the consent of the governed; it eviscerates civil rights; it further highjacks resources essential

for meeting human needs; and it compounds the death and destruction wrought upon the Iraqi people for more than a decade.

**War is profitable for military contractors and other parasites.** How are corporate interests served by making war in Iraq? A military victory would immediately enable the U.S. government to control Iraq's oil reserves, including the power to abrogate Russian and French contracts to purchase Iraqi oil. Establishing permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq would expand and further solidify U.S. power and influence in the Middle East and Central Asia, much as it has in Europe and elsewhere since the end of World War II, with U.S. bases in Germany, Japan, and more than 100 other countries. The progression of U.S. unilateralism—including the current administration's unprecedented statement of its intention to "go it alone," if necessary, with a "pre-emptive strike"—exposes its goal. Namely, to impose its hegemonic designs wherever and whenever the U.S. Empire chooses to strike for the benefit of corporate interests. ❖

## "War Is Just a Racket"

*Major Gen. Smedley Butler, U.S. Marine Corps*

**W**ar is just a racket. A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of people. Only a small inside group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the masses.

I believe in adequate defense at the coastline and nothing else. If a nation comes over here to fight, then we'll fight. The trouble with America is that when the dollar only earns 6 percent over here, then it gets restless and goes overseas to get 100 percent. Then the flag follows the dollar and the soldiers follow the flag....

There isn't a trick in the racketeering bag that the military gang is blind to. It has its "finger men" to point out enemies, its "muscle men" to destroy enemies, its "brain men" to plan war preparations, and a "big boss," super-nationalistic capitalism.

It may seem odd for me, a military man, to adopt such a comparison. Truthfulness compels me to. I spent thirty-three years and four months in active military service as a member of this country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from second lieutenant to major general.

And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for big business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism....

I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912 .... I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.



*Major General Butler (1881-1940), pictured above, was awarded two Medals of Honor.*

— Excerpts from a passage in *America's Armed Forces, Part 2: In Time of Peace: The Army* (1935).