

MEDIA ADVISORY

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For Immediate Release

Event: Peace rally and march planned for third anniversary of war on Iraq.

Date: Sunday, March 19th, 2006

Time 1:30 PM gathering, 2:00 PM rally, 2:30 PM peace march.

Place: Waterfront Park, north of the Morrison Bridge, downtown Portland

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Peace rally and march planned for third anniversary of war on Iraq, calls for bringing the troops home and funding human services.

Over 100 organizations mobilize for March 19 at Waterfront Park

As the third anniversary of the US war and occupation of Iraq approaches, local Oregon/Washington peace and social justice organizations are firming up plans for a large-scale rally and march calling for withdrawal of US troops. This latest mobilization opposing the US policies in Iraq has the overall theme "End the War, Begin the Peace" and is set for Sunday, March 19th, at Waterfront Park, north of the Morrison Bridge, in downtown Portland. Organizers say that there will be literature tables and music, and that folks are invited to gather at 1:30 PM for a rally set to begin at 2:00 PM. A peace march through downtown Portland will begin at 2:30 PM.

"Thousands of our soldiers have lost their lives and limbs, and billions of dollars have been wasted in this unconscionable war, along with a hundred times that loss to the Iraqi people," explained Betsy Toll of *Living Earth*, one of over one hundred local and regional organizations that are co-sponsoring or endorsing the rally and march. "All this has accomplished is to drastically escalate the levels of hatred and terror in the world," said Toll. "We need to end this war, end this corrupt occupation, and bring our troops home."

The groups involved in planning and supporting the rally encompass the broad diversity of opposition to the Iraq war. Many social justice organizations are active in the planning including military families and veterans groups, organized labor, environmentalists, local businesses, the familiar peace and human rights groups, and groups from various spiritual faiths.

"As an Evangelical Quaker, I believe that God does not want us to engage in any war on this earth for any reason," explained Rachel Hampton, a member of the *Peace Committee of the West Hills Friends Church*, another organization involved in planning the mobilization. "Christ admonishes us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us," said Hampton. "We cannot both love our enemies or our neighbors and kill them."

As in the past, this rally and march blends the themes of opposition to wars and occupations abroad with concerns for social justice and human needs at home. "While the devastation and suffering caused by the wars and occupations are foremost in our hearts, we are also deeply concerned with the attacks on the Bill of Rights, the warrantless wiretaps and detentions without trial, the cutbacks in urgently needed social programs and education spending," said William Seaman, of the *Portland Peaceful Response Coalition*. "Our nation's priorities have been hijacked by the rich and powerful at the expense of ordinary working people, as shown by the hurricane Katrina catastrophe, the retaliation against intelligence whistleblower Joseph Wilson, and the outrageous big-money lobbying scandals that have recently come to light," said Seaman. "We know that opposition to our country's current domestic and foreign policies has increased and deepened in the past year, and we hope that those who feel the same will join us on March 19th to be a strong voice for change."

"We're very excited about the variety of organizations coming together to oppose the ongoing war on the Iraqi people," said Dan Handelman of the *Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group*. "This war really began over 15 years ago and continued in the form of bombings and sanctions, with the March, 2003 invasion marking a direct siege of Iraq by the U.S.," said Handelman. "The rally will connect for ordinary Oregonians the high price of gas, which has led to record profits, with the war, which serves to secure U.S. control of oil flow and permanent military bases in the region."

Gabrielle Chavez of *Christ the Healer of the United Church of Christ* explained her dedication to the work opposing the US war and occupation in Iraq. "Jesus took the biblical command to love your neighbor and extended it to loving your enemy too," said Chavez. "Love your enemy as yourself. Do unto others as you would have it, not because it's the law, but because it's you that experiences the consequences," said Chavez. "In my tradition, all war is suicide because I am another you."

Martina Rutledge of the *Justice & Witness Team of Bridgeport United Church of Christ* also expressed her group's involvement in terms of their religious commitments. "As people of faith, we believe that all humanity is connected through bonds of brother- and sisterhood that transcend race, religion and nationality," explained Rutledge. "We

mourn the human rights violations and loss of life that have come about as a direct result of this war. Violence only begets more violence. It is not through war, but through the teachings of compassion and non-violence espoused by Jesus and the world's other great spiritual teachers that our world will begin to heal and live peacefully."

One of those involved in the planning for the March 19th mobilization explained some of the thinking behind the overall theme for the event. "The theme of 'End the War, Begin the Peace' reminds us that we are not just calling for the end to an immoral, illegal, and dangerous war," said Curt Bell of *People of Faith for Peace and Oregonians Against the War*. "We are also affirming the possibility of the wonderful world we could have if we gave our resources and energy to building that world instead of to war."

For more information, or to find out how your organization can add its name to the list of co-sponsors or endorsers for this rally and march, please call *Peace & Justice Works* at (503) 236-3065.

A full list of cosponsors is posted at <<http://www.pjw.info>>. Cosponsors and endorsers of March 19 2006 march and rally, "End the War, Begin the Peace" in Portland, Oregon, now include (109 groups as of February 15, 2006):

Cosponsors (64 listed): Peace & Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group (503-236-3065), Portland Peaceful Response Coalition (503-344-5078), Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, East Timor Action Network/Portland (503-235-4986), Sisters of the Road, American Friends Service Committee, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, Veterans for Peace Chapter 72, Palestine Arab-American Association, Portland Labor for Peace and Justice, People of Faith for Peace, Oregonians Against the War, Peace Justice and Environment Committee-Mennonite Church, Code Pink Portland, White Feather House (Catholic Worker), Christ the Healer - United Church of Christ, Living Earth, Oregon Peace Institute, Pax Christi Portland, Alliance for Democracy - Portland Chapter, Metanoia Peace Community-United Methodist Church, Portland Rainbow Coalition, Vancouver For Peace, Portland Buddhist Peace Fellowship, West Hills Friends Church, St. Philip Neri Catholic Church Peace and Justice Commission, Americans United for Palestinian Human Rights, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-Portland Branch, War Resisters League-Portland (503-238-0605), Cascadia Magical Activists, Women in Black, East Side Democratic Club, School of the Americas Watch Oregon (SOA Watch), Portland Solidarity (portlandsolidarity@post.com), Friends of Sabeel-North America, Friends of Voices in the Wilderness/Portland, NW VEG (Northwest Vegetarian Education and

Empowerment Group), Portland International Socialist Organization <pdxiso@yahoo.com>, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Voz (Worker Rights Education Project), Oregon PeaceWorks (503-585-2767-Salem), Board of Peace and Social Concerns of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends, Justice & Witness Team of Bridgeport United Church of Christ, Department of Peace Campaign, Portland Alliance (media cosponsor), Albany/Corvallis Women in Black, Oregon Fellowship of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace Commission of St Ignatius Catholic Church, DemocracyforAmerica - Old Friends Coffeehouse Meetup, Peace Action Group - First Unitarian Church Portland, Families for Peace, Rural Organizing Project, Portland Central America Solidarity Committee (PCASC), Christ the Reconciler-United Methodist Church, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Multnomah Monthly Meeting of Friends (Quakers), JubileeUSA Oregon, Center for Intercultural Organizing, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-Washington County, Portland Area Rethinking Schools, AFSCME local 88, Latino Network, Amnesty International Group 48, Democracy for Oregon and others.

Endorsers (45 listed): Northwest Veterans for Peace, PSU Progressive Student Union, PSU Socialist Party, Concerned Students of PSU, SUSTAIN (Stop US Tax-funded Aid to Israel Now), Friends of Lucinda Tate for City Council, No War Drum Corps - Portland Drum Collective (www.pdxdrums.org), Portland Anti-Military Recruitment Coalition, Furniture Craft, Environmental Justice Action Group, Ash Creek Press, People's Activist Cafe (www.peoples-activist-cafe.info), Bumberlam, Oregon Wildlife Federation, Back 2 the WALL, Northwest Progressive Community, Jews for Global Justice, Reedwood Friends Church, Black Monday Committee, Virginia Lopez and the Mambo Queens, Dones X Dones (Barcelona-Spain), Shelly's Garden-Honkin' Huge Burritos, Freedom Socialist Party, Love Makes a Family Inc, WILPF/Ann Arbor-Michigan, Lane County Taxes for Peace Not War, Portland Jobs with Justice (503-236-5573), Corvallis Alternatives 2 War, West Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Social Action Committee, Lesbian Community Project, Tienda Tikal, Centro Proceso Social (Lima-Peru), Eugene Justice Not War Coalition, Portland Nurses For Peace, Women in Black-London, Mirador, Portland Industrial Workers of the World-General Membership Branch, Central Coast Patriots for Peace, Coastal Progressives, Oregon Coast Peace Wave, Flying Focus Video Collective (media endorser), Augustana Lutheran Church, World Socialist Party, It's a Beautiful Pizza, Portland Insight Meditation Community Social Action Committee and others.

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