

# NOWAR

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### GOVERNMENT FOLLOWS VIETNAM PATTERN IN IRAQ

The second anniversary of the invasion of Iraq is approaching, and there is no end in sight to the occupation and the deaths brought about by this war. NOWAR spokesperson Mike Khizam said "the Federal government has marked this date by committing 450 more troops to Iraq. This is following the same bloody and futile path of escalation its predecessors followed in Vietnam."

**NOWAR, along with the global peace movement is marking the anniversary, through a rally outside Alexander Downer and Robert Hill's office at 100 King William Street, Adelaide, on Palm Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> March at 12 noon.** This comes as the resistance in Iraq is becoming ever more effective, the false euphoria generated by dubious elections is already fading, and anti-war sentiment is growing within the US military itself. Recruitment targets are failing, war resisters are rising in numbers, and the US government doesn't dare evoke the spectre of Vietnam further by bringing in conscription.

"Another grim number has also been reached: the 1500<sup>th</sup> US serviceperson to die in Iraq. *The Lancet* estimates Iraqi civilian deaths as at least 100,000. What kind of moral and political blind faith leads the government to increase our role in this quagmire, when other US allies are limiting or ending their commitment, such as the Dutch, who the 450 Australian troops are replacing?" asked Khizam.

The elections haven't changed the grim futility of the occupation, and the US declared it was staying for at least 2 more years even before the so-called sovereign Iraqi people voted. Khizam commented "we don't believe the US has any intention of establishing real democracy or allowing self-determination for Iraq. Democracy is not possible under occupation so we call for the immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces."

Speakers at the NOWAR rally will address both the political death-trap and the human tragedy of Iraq, outside the offices of two of the chief architects of this deadly escalation, and the dead both military and civilian will be commemorated through the reading of their names.

**NOWAR spokespersons Mike Khizam (0439 401 090), Anne McMenamin (0416 116 532), Stephen Darley (8242 5121) or Ruth Russell (0414974755) are available for media interviews.**