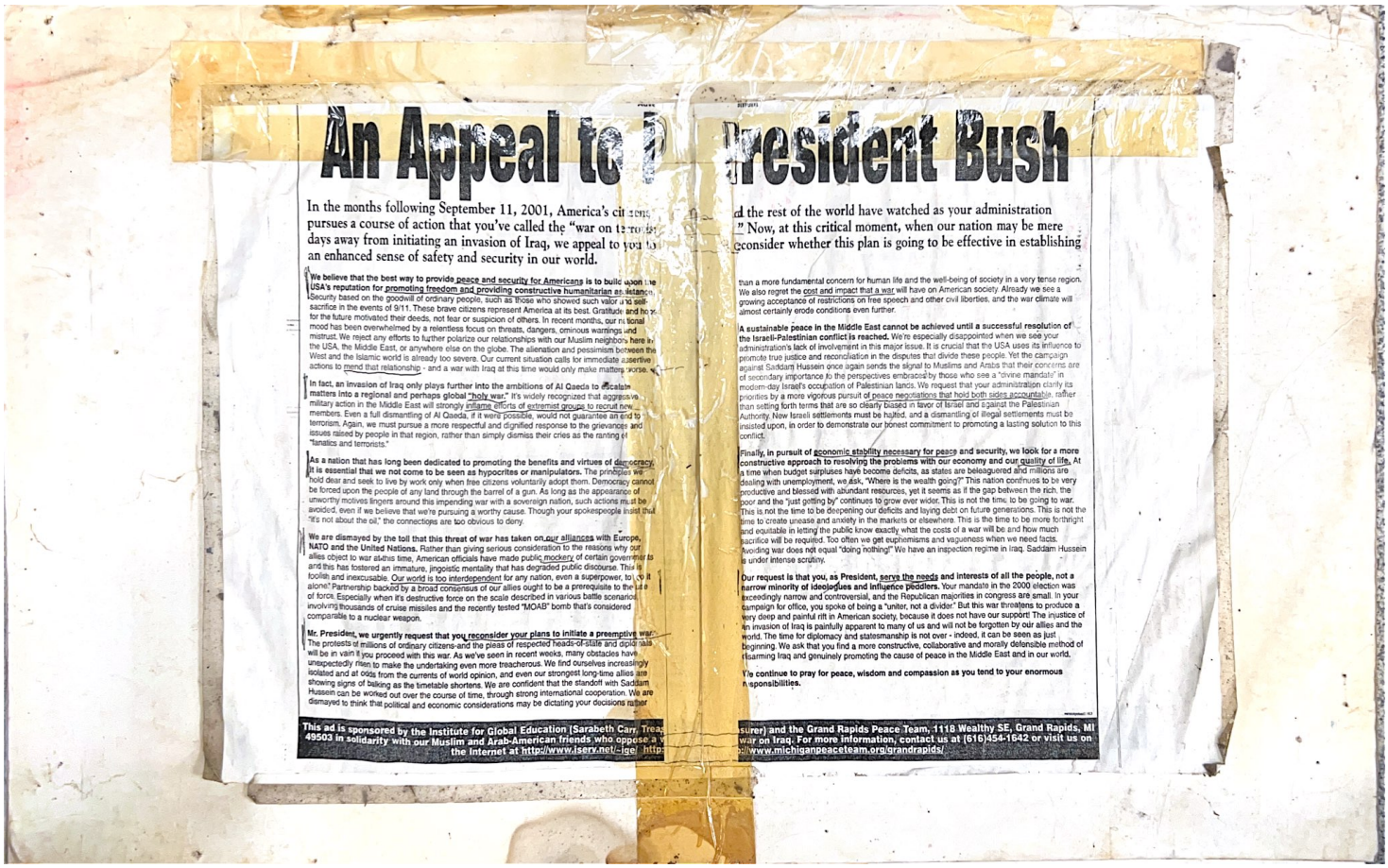

FROM G.R. PRESS
Sunday March 16, '03
SEE WEB
WHY WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER
An Appeal to President Bush
In the months following September 11, 2001, America's citizens and the rest of the world have watched as your administration pursued a course of action that you've called the "war on terrorism." Now, at this critical moment, when our nation may be mere days away from initiating an invasion of Iraq, we appeal to you to reconsider whether this plan is going to be effective in establishing an enhanced sense of safety and security in our world.
We believe that the best way to provide peace and security for Americans is to build upon the consultation for promoting freedom and providing constructive humanitarian assistance based on the goodwill of ordinary people, such as those who showed such generosity in the events of 9/11. These brave citizens represent America at its best. Grounded in hope for the future motivated their deeds, not fear or suspicion of others. In recent months, our collective mood has been overwhelmed by a relentless focus on threats, dangers, ominous warnings and mistrust. We reject any efforts to further polarize our relationships with our Muslim neighbors in the USA, the Middle East, or anywhere else on the globe. The alienation and pessimism in the Middle East and the Islamic world is already too severe. Our current situation calls for immediate actions to mend that relationship - and a war with Iraq at this time would only make matters worse.
In fact, an invasion of Iraq only plays further into the ambitions of Al Qaeda to escalate matters into a regional and perhaps global "holy war." It's widely recognized that military offensive military action in the Middle East will strongly inflame efforts of extremist groups to recruit new members. Even a full dismantling of Al Qaeda, if it were possible, would not guarantee an end to terrorism. Again, we must pursue a more respectful and dignified response to the grievances that are raised by people in that region, rather than simply dismiss their cries as the ranting of fanatics and terrorists."
As a nation that has long been dedicated to promoting the benefits and virtues of democracy, it is essential that we not come to be seen as hypocrites or manipulators. The principles we hold dear and seek to live by rank only when free citizens voluntarily adopt them. Democracy cannot be forced upon the people of any land through the barrel of a gun. As long as the appearance of unworthy motives lingers around this impending war with a sovereign nation, such as terrorism, added, even if we believe that we're pursuing a worthy cause. Though your spokespersons insist "it's not about the oil," the connections are too obvious to deny.
We are dismayed by the toll that this threat of war has taken on our alliances with Europe, NATO and the United Nations. Rather than giving serious consideration to the reasons why countries object to war at this time, American officials have made public mockery of certain countries, and this has fostered an immature, jingoistic mentality that has degraded public discourse. The British and inexcusable. Our world is too interdependent for any nation, even a superpower, to "go it alone." Partnership backed by a broad consensus of our allies ought to be a prerequisite for military force. Especially when it's destructive force on the scale described in various battle scenarios involving thousands of cruise missiles and the recently tested "MOAB" bomb that's dramatically comparable to a nuclear weapon.
Finally, President, we urgently request that you reconsider your plans to initiate a preemptive war. The protests of millions of ordinary citizens-and this pleas of respected heads-of-state and religious will be in vain if you proceed with this war. As we've seen in recent weeks, many obstacles have unexpectedly risen to make the undertaking even more treacherous. We find ourselves increasingly isolated and at odds from the currents of world opinion, and even our strongest long-time allies are showing signs of balking as the timetable shortens. We are confident that the standoff with Saddam Hussein can be worked out over the course of time, through strong international cooperation. We are dismayed to think that political and economic considerations may be dictating your decisions rather
...ultimate fundamental concern for human life and the well-being of society in a very tense region. ...the cost and impact that a war will have on American society. Already we see a ...acceptance of restrictions on free speech and other civil liberties, and the war climate will ...further erode conditions even further.
...lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved until a successful resolution of ...Palestinian conflict is reached. We're especially disappointed when we see your ...ion's lack of involvement in this major issue. It is crucial that the USA uses its influence for ...sue justice and reconciliation in the disputes that divide these people. Yet the campaign ...Saddam Hussein once again sends the signal to Muslims and Arabs that their concerns are ...ary importance to the perspectives embraces by those who see a "divine mandate" in ...rael's occupation of Palestinian lands. We request that your administration clarify its ...more vigorous pursuit of peace negotiations that hold both sides accountable, rather ...with terms that are so clearly biased in favor of Israel and against the Palestinian ...Israeli settlements must be halted, and a dismantling of illegal settlements must ...in order to demonstrate our honest commitment to promoting a lasting solution to this
...pursuit of economic stability necessary for peace and security, we look for a ...approach to resolving the problems with our economy and our quality of life ...budget surpluses have become deficits, as states are beleaguered and millions are ...unemployment, we ask, "Where is the wealth going?" This nation continues to be very ...blessed with abundant resources, yet it seems as if the gap between the rich, the ...getting by" continues to grow ever wider. This is not the time to be going to war. ...time to be deepening our deficits and laying debt on future generations. This is not the ...unease and anxiety in the markets or elsewhere. This is the time to be more forthright ...letting the public know exactly what the costs of a war will be and how much ...required. Too often we get euphemisms and vagueness when we need facts. ...does not equal "doing nothing". We have an inspection regime in Iraq. Saddam Hussein ...this scrutiny.
...that you, as President, serve the needs and interests of all the people, not a ...coalition of ideologues and influence peddlers. Your mandate in the 2000 election was ...very narrow and controversial, and the Republican majorities in congress are small. In your ...to office, you spoke of being a "uniter, not a divider." But this war threatens to produce a ...and painful rift in American society, because it does not have our support! The injustice of ...war on Iraq is painfully apparent to many of us and will not be forgotten by our allies and the ...The case for diplomacy and statesmanship is not over - indeed, it can be seen as just ...We ask that you find a more constructive, collaborative and morally defensible method of ...disarming Iraq and genuinely promoting the cause of peace in the Middle East and in our world.
...We continue to pray for peace, wisdom and compassion as you tend to your enormous ...responsibilities.
This ad is sponsored by the Institute for Global Education (Sarabeth Cary, ...ures) and the Grand Rapids Peace Team, 1118 Wealthy SE, Grand Rapids, MI ...9503 (in solidarity with our Muslim and Arab-American friends who oppose a war on Iraq. For more information, contact us at (616)454-1642 or visit us on the Internet at http://www.library.nl/1/gpl/...http://www.michiganpeaceteam.org/grandrapids/
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We believe that the best way to provide peace and security for Americans is to build upon the USA's reputation for promoting freedom and providing constructive humanitarian assistance, Security based on the goodwill of ordinary people, such as those who showed such valor and self-sacrifice in the events of 9/11. These brave citizens represent America at its best. Gratitude and hope for the future motivated their deeds, not fear or suspicion of others. In recent months, our national mood has been overwhelmed by a relentless focus on threats, dangers, ominous warnings and mistrust. We reject any efforts to further polarize our relationships with our Muslim neighbors here in the USA, the Middle East, or anywhere else on the globe. The alienation and pessimism between the West and the Islamic world is already too severe. Our current situation calls for immediate assertive actions to mend that relationship - and a war with Iraq at this time would only make matters worse.

In fact, an invasion of Iraq only plays further into the ambitions of Al Qaeda to escalate matters into a regional and perhaps global "holy war." It's widely recognized that aggressive military action in the Middle East will strongly inflame efforts of extremist groups to recruit new members. Even a full dismantling of Al Qaeda, if it were possible, would not guarantee an end to terrorism. Again, we must pursue a more respectful and dignified response to the grievances and issues raised by people in that region, rather than simply dismiss their cries as the ranting of "fanatics and terrorists."

As a nation that has long been dedicated to promoting the benefits and virtues of democracy, it is essential that we not come to be seen as hypocrites or manipulators. The principles we hold dear and seek to live by work only when free citizens voluntarily adopt them. Democracy cannot be forced upon the people of any land through the barrel of a gun. As long as the appearance of unworthy motives lingers around this impending war with a sovereign nation, such actions must be avoided, even if we believe that we're pursuing a worthy cause. Though your spokespeople insist that "it's not about the oil," the connections are too obvious to deny.

We are dismayed by the toll that this threat of war has taken on our alliances with Europe, NATO and the United Nations. Rather than giving serious consideration to the reasons why our allies object to war at this time, American officials have made public mockery of certain governments and this has fostered an immature, jingoistic mentality that has degraded public discourse. This is foolish and inexcusable. Our world is too interdependent for any nation, even a superpower, to go it alone? Partnership backed by a broad consensus of our allies ought to be a prerequisite to the use of force. Especially when it's destructive force on the scale described in various battle scenarios involving thousands of cruise missiles and the recently tested "MOAB" bomb that's considered comparable to a nuclear weapon.

Mr. President, we urgently request that you reconsider your plans to initiate a preemptive war. The protests of millions of ordinary citizens-and the pleas of respected heads-of-state and diplomats will be in vain if you proceed with this war. As we've seen in recent weeks, many obstacles have unexpectedly risen to make the undertaking even more treacherous. We find ourselves increasingly isolated and at odds from the currents of world opinion, and even our strongest long-time allies are showing signs of balking as the timetable shortens. We are confident that the standoff with Saddam Hussein can be worked out over the course of time, through strong international cooperation. We are dismayed to think that political and economic considerations may be dictating your decisions rather

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A sustainable peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved until a successful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is reached. We're especially disappointed when we see your administration's lack of involvement in this major issue. It is crucial that the USA uses its influence to promote true justice and reconciliation in the disputes that divide these people. Yet the campaign against Saddam Hussein once again sends the signal to Muslims and Arabs that their concerns are of secondary importance to the perspectives embraced by those who see a "divine mandate" in modern-day Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands. We request that your administration clarify its priorities by a more vigorous pursuit of peace negotiations that hold both sides accountable, rather than setting forth terms that are so clearly biased in favor of Israel and against the Palestinian Authority. New Israeli settlements must be halted, and a dismantling of illegal settlements must be insisted upon, in order to demonstrate our honest commitment to promoting a lasting solution to this conflict.

Finally, in pursuit of economic stability necessary for peace and security, we look for a more constructive approach to resolving the problems with our economy and our quality of life. At a time when budget surpluses have become deficits, as states are beleaguered and millions are dealing with unemployment, we ask, "Where is the wealth going?" This nation continues to be very productive and blessed with abundant resources, yet it seems as if the gap between the rich, the poor and the "just getting by" continues to grow ever wider. This is not the time to be going to war. This is not the time to be deepening our deficits and laying debt on future generations. This is not the time to create unease and anxiety in the markets or elsewhere. This is the time to be more forthright and equitable in letting the public know exactly what the costs of a war will be and how much sacrifice will be required. Too often we get euphemisms and vagueness when we need facts. "Avoiding war does not equal "doing nothing!" We have an inspection regime in Iraq. Saddam Hussein is under intense scrutiny.

Our request is that you, as President, serve the needs and interests of all the people, not a narrow minority of ideologues and influence peddlers. Your mandate in the 2000 election was exceedingly narrow and controversial, and the Republican majorities in congress are small. In your campaign for office, you spoke of being a "uniter, not a divider." But this war threatens to produce a very deep and painful rift in American society, because it does not have our support. The injustice of an invasion of Iraq is painfully apparent to many of us and will not be forgotten by our allies and the world. The time for diplomacy and statesmanship is not over - indeed, it can be seen as just beginning. We ask that you find a more constructive, collaborative and morally defensible method of disarming Iraq and genuinely promoting the cause of peace in the Middle East and in our world.

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