

# Questioning the Wars?

## You are not alone.

**Military resistance against unjust occupations like those of Iraq and Afghanistan is anything that gives service members and veterans a voice to raise matters of conscience and to challenge the politicians and top brass that advocate these occupations. It ranges from reading anti-war literature to refusing an order to refusing deployment to a war zone.**

### Afghanistan is not a “better war” than Iraq

Barack Obama and Kevin Rudd both say that Afghanistan is a “just” war and that somehow Americans and Australians are safer for it. This is despite the overwhelming opinion of the majority of US, UK and Australian military analysts and intelligence experts’ analysis that the invasions and occupations of both Iraq and Afghanistan have increased the threat of terrorism in the countries involved.

Obama and Rudd are quick to highlight the situation under the Taliban. With straight faces as if they actually care they say, “The people of Afghanistan lived in an environment of oppression and extreme poverty with the constant threat of violence.” This is true but the situation is now worse. The US-backed government of Afghanistan controls little more than Kabul, with the warlords ruling the rest with an iron fist. Under the rule of warlords and opium barons, the people of Afghanistan face even greater oppression and poverty than they did under the Taliban. They not only have to endure the constant threat of violence from local warlords and their militias, but also from foreign occupation forces that carry out indiscriminate attacks on their villages.

With no evidence of weapons of mass destruction and no evidence of links between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda most people around the world recognise that the invasion of Iraq was for oil but less realise that this is a big reason for the invasion of Afghanistan. Former Whitehouse staffers have revealed that immediately after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks Bush and Cheney were pushing to use the attacks for an invasion of Iraq. It was Colin Powell who managed to convince them that an invasion of Afghanistan was needed first to ‘soften up’ public opinion for Iraq. Cheney as head of Halliburton in 1999 described Middle East oil as “the ultimate prize” for American interests, but, big business had plenty to gain from Afghanistan as well.

Soldiers are sacrificing their lives and civilians are being killed so that big-business interests in the West will be able to earn huge profits from controlling the energy resources of Central Asia. The continued occupation of Afghanistan is aimed at securing US oil corporations’ access to the huge gasfields in Turkmenistan and the oilfields in Kazakhstan, to the north of



Afghanistan, including a possible pipeline from these fields through Afghanistan to lucrative markets in Pakistan and India.

Initially the Taliban was easily defeated because they didn’t have the support of most Afghans. Now their ranks are being swelled, not by people who have suddenly been won over to the Taliban’s view of the world, but by people who oppose US-backed Karzai regime of warlords and opium barons whose rule US and Australian troops help impose.

### The hidden casualties of war

There are US and Australian casualties occurring everyday in Iraq and Afghanistan that no one sees or hears about.

No one who sees active service comes back the same. Recent figures from America have shown that troops coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan are suffering 3 times more Post Traumatic Stress Disorder than their counterparts did on return from Vietnam.

But it doesn’t just effect those who’ve been directly involved, it effects their children and even their grandchildren. A recent survey of 2500 children and grandchildren of Australian Vietnam veterans has found 70% of children and 30% of grandchildren suffer psychiatric or psychological problems. The average for Australia is 18%.

So currently the tens of thousands of US and Australian troops sent to Iraq and Afghanistan each year equates to hundreds of thousands of lives adversely effected either directly or indirectly by mental health problems that has a flow on effect through generations to come.

So military personnel are risking their minds as well as their bodies and for what are we as people and as communities paying this high price for? For what are Iraqi and Afghani civilians paying with their bodies and their minds for? It is being done for oil, in the interests of multi-national corporations and it is being done for strategic real estate for the U.S. military.

**Military resistance is not dishonorable, and it will not put the lives of your mates at risk. Rather, it is a concrete way to end war and bring the troops home. Military resistance played an important role in ending the war in Vietnam. Faced with determined resistance from the Vietnamese people and having a fighting force that was difficult to control were key factors in forcing the U.S. government and allies to pull out.**



## More info:

Veterans and serving members;

## AUSTRALIA



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## U.S.



[www.ivaw.org](http://www.ivaw.org)



[www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)

For information on why Talisman Sabre exercises in particular are protested;



[www.peaceconvergence.com](http://www.peaceconvergence.com)

## Here are some things U.S. troops have done to stand up against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan:

- Reading alternative analyses of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Talking with friends and/or fellow military service people about your doubts about the wars.
- Learning about how thousands have already resisted by checking out [couragetoresist.org](http://couragetoresist.org)
- Starting a blog.
- Educating yourself about your rights in the military.
- Getting in touch with organizations in the peace and anti-war movement.
- Many have joined Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), in Australia there is Stand Fast - veterans and service personnel who oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Speaking out about crimes and atrocities being perpetrated.
- Filing for a medical discharge, refusing to allow the military to use you up and destroy your mind and body.
- Refusing illegal or immoral orders on base.
- Refusing illegal or immoral orders in a war zone.
- Going AWOL.

The TS09 military exercise poses high level physical and toxic risks for the Shoalwater Bay, the largest wilderness area on the central Queensland coast, a world heritage area abutting the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, containing Indigenous sites and wetlands.

Military activities threaten the habitat of dugong and green turtles, 26 species of dolphins and whales, including humpbacks.

The presence of nuclear powered and nuclear weapons capable ocean vessels poses a major risk to Shoalwater and Australia. In 2006, radiation was detected in the water surrounding a nuclear powered submarine in Tokyo Harbour (the USS Honolulu).