

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **December 19, 2001**

DON'T turn the War on Terrorism into an 'endless, worldwide war'

Not without credible evidence and a Declaration of War, say Libertarians

WASHINGTON, DC — As the Bush administration weighs whether to expand the War on Terrorism into nations like Somalia, Iraq, and the Philippines, Libertarians are offering one word of advice: *Don't*.

"What the president is considering isn't mission creep; it's mission leap," said Steve Dasbach, the party's national director. "The U.S. government has an obligation to track down the terrorists who attacked our nation — but it does not have the right, nor the obligation, to launch an endless, worldwide war."

As the U.S. military continues to mop up in Afghanistan and search for Osama bin Laden, many Republicans are advising Bush to launch "Phase II" of the war on terrorism.

Possible military targets include Iraq, Somalia, North Korea, Colombia, Libya, and Iran. And the State Department has released a list of 45 nations where al Qaeda groups reportedly have cells, including Malaysia and the Philippines.

But attacking dozens of nations with flimsy links to terrorism will do little to bring justice to the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks, said Dasbach — and may only make the United States more susceptible to future acts of terrorism.

"There is a difference between justice and revenge," he said. "Justice was taking action against the terrorist criminals directly responsible for the 9-11 attacks, and the outlaw regime that sheltered them.

"Revenge would be attacking other nations when there is no specific evidence linking them to the September 11 attacks. If we attack such nations, it will only inflame anti-American sentiment, and may inspire the next generation of murderous terrorists."

That's why Libertarians are saying "don't," he said: Don't broaden the war unless Congress passes a declaration of war; and don't take action against any other nation unless there is specific, credible information directly linking them to the attack on America.

So what should be done to destroy terrorist cells around the world?

"Unless the United States is at war with a nation, apprehending terrorists inside that nation is an internal law enforcement problem," said Dasbach. "If, on the other hand, the president believes a foreign nation is harboring terrorists who killed Americans — as Afghanistan is — he should take his case before Congress and seek a declaration of war.

"With the future security of this nation at stake, Bush should resist the impulse to turn the War on Terrorism into an endlessly expanding government program."