

**July 10 2008,
San Francisco California**

Dear Neighbors,

DIRECT ACTION TO STOP THE WAR

**CONTACT US:
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The United States has been at war continuously for the last 7 years, over 5 of them with a dual front in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and there is no end in sight. On the contrary, we are hearing the clash of sabers rattling madly in the direction of Iran. The "War on Terrorism" is a war with no end. These wars are holding our economy hostage and cast a heavy cloud over the future of this generation and the ones to follow.

Examine the case of America's Army, the first computer video game to make recruitment an explicit goal and the first well-known overt use of computer gaming for political aims.

The game is the property and brainchild of The US Army, who admit freely, and with pride, that it is one of their principal recruitment tools.

America's Army has been available since 2002 as free download or as a CD available in recruiting stations. Now they are expanding into the console and small screen markets in order to access a wider, less privileged and younger market. The game has been granted a "teen" rating, allowing 13-year-olds to play.

The military recruitment of children under the age of 17, however, is a clear violation of international law (the U.N. Optional Protocol). No attempt to recruit children 13-16 is allowed in the United States, pursuant to treaty.

An informal study showed that 4 out of 100 soldiers at Fort Benning, Georgia credit America's Army as the primary factor in convincing them to join the military. While the bulk of the players is between the ages of 17-22, many are 13-16 or even younger. America's Army action figures based on combat veterans are now being sold in Toys 'R' Us across the nation. These toys are advertised for children 13 and above but action figures typically appeal to children as young as four.

America's Army is published and distributed by Ubisoft right here in South Park. Ubisoft is not the only South Park neighbor engaged in its development: Gameloft is working on the cell phone application and Secret Level was a designer of the 2005 version of the game. Is child recruitment, recruitment to fight the cause of dubious wars the proper business of these companies and those of you in their employ?

Now consider the story of Joseph Rotblat. He was a nuclear physicist working on the development of the atom bomb at Los Alamos in 1944 when he recognized that he could no longer in good conscience continue his work there. He understood that the danger of the Nazis developing an atomic bomb was past and that bomb that he was working on had larger and dreadful purposes. When he left

attempts were made to paint him as a Soviet spy and he was banished from the US, not to return for twenty years. After the bomb was deployed to horrible effect in Hiroshima and Nagasaki Rotblat determined that his future work would be channeled only toward peaceful ends. He directed his research towards the effects of radiation. He became a lifelong activist for peace and nuclear disarmament and received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1995 as part of the Pugwash Conferences.

America's Army is hardly a nuclear weapon. It is only a game And, it's a job right? But, Is the only way forward for America through the permanent militarization of our society or are there other solutions that talented, creative and intelligent people such as those working on this game might discover if they turned their sights in another direction?

Let us remember Joseph Rotblat's example of personal integrity and come together this August 6, on the 63rd Anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima and ask the producers and developers of America's Army to reconsider their work and either step aside or at least place a warning on the product, like we have on cigarette packages:

Warning: this video game has been developed by the United States Army to recruit children under the age of 17 in violation of the U.N. Optional Protocol and international law. Combat service has been known to cause death,irreparable injuries, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and lifelong feelings of overwhelming guilt.

We are asking you and your company to consider these three steps:

1. Support our America's Army campaign to combat the militarism of American culture
2. Sign this letter and endorse this campaign.
3. Participate in our upcoming event on Hiroshima Day (Wed., Aug. 6), at noon, in South Park, asking these companies to either withdraw from their Army contracts or provide a warning label.

Sincerely,