

Military Families Speak Out

Essex County, NJ Chapter – March 19, 2008

Military Families Speak Out is an organization of people opposed to the war in Iraq who have relatives or loved ones currently in the military or who have served in the military since fall of 2002. Our goal is to bring the troops home NOW and take care of them when they return. Our membership currently includes 4,000 military families, with new families joining daily. If you have a family member or loved one in the military and you are opposed to this war, JOIN us!

3,990 Dead American Troops; \$400 Million/Day; Dead Iraqis – 01/08=199; 02/08=476; 03/08=518

BUSH: ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?

"I must say, I'm a little envious. If I were slightly younger and not employed here, I think it would be a fantastic experience to be on the front lines of helping this young democracy succeed. It must be exciting for you ... in some ways romantic, in some ways, you know, confronting danger. You're really making history, and thanks."

George W. Bush (who chose not to go to Vietnam) made these comments last week during a video conference with US military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan briefing him from the war-torn nation. [Reuters, Mar 14, 2008]

Afghanistan Veterans Express Disbelief at President's Comments on War

Below are just some of the reactions coming in to VoteVets.org, from those who served:

"We finally have empirical evidence proving that President Bush has absolutely no idea what war is all about. A Commander-in-Chief with such a child-like view of combat is in no way fit to lead America's Armed Forces during a time of conflict. Having served in eastern Afghanistan myself, I can assure you that there is nothing romantic about being decisively engaged with Taliban and al Qaeda elements for 15 months at a time. While President Bush thinks it would be a "fantastic experience" to fight in Afghanistan, it is anything but fantastic for our troops currently there. They are undermanned and under resourced because of the war in Iraq--a war for which he is responsible. If President Bush had any decency at all, he'd refocus our military efforts away from Iraq, so that we could once again take the fight to Osama bin Laden and those who attacked us on 9/11. Unlike the Commander-in-Chief, those of us in the military haven't forgotten our national priorities." -Brandon Friedman, OEF Veteran (2001 and 2002, Army)

"As a combat wounded veteran who served in Afghanistan, I have to disagree with the President's assertion that the war in Afghanistan is romantic. There was nothing romantic about having to dig through our trash during operation Anaconda because we ran out of food and were awaiting a resupply. As American soldiers always do, we accomplished the mission; but there was nothing romantic about it." -Brian Mcgough, OEF Veteran (2001-2002, Army)

"I didn't feel like there was anything romantic in not seeing my daughter grow up, in watching Afghan children starve to death, in explaining repeated deployment extensions to my soldiers, in explaining to Afghans that we were there to keep them safe - while knowing that we would never have enough troops to actually do so. No, Mr. President, there's nothing romantic about being sent on an important mission and not being given the tools to accomplish it." -Jim Morin, OEF Veteran (2003, Army)

"President Bush is wrong. I seriously doubt any of us Infantryman in Operation Anaconda found it exciting or romantic when the Taliban and al Qaeda were firing mortar rounds at us and our fellow soldiers." -Will King, OEF Veteran, (2002, Army)

VoteVets.org is a pro-military organization committed to the destruction of terror networks around the world, with force when necessary. It represents the Voice of America's 21 Century Patriots - those who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. It primarily focuses on nonpartisan education and advocacy on behalf of troops, veterans and their families.

In the News:

Pentagon Stifles Release Of Sensitive Report - The Pentagon Changed Plans For The Release Of A Report That Found No Link Between Saddam Hussein And Al-Qaeda [*Miami Herald*, Mar 13, 2008] The Pentagon has canceled plans for broad public release of a study that found no pre-Iraq War link between Saddam Hussein and the al-Qaida terrorist network.

Answers Sought On Contractor 'Tax Dodge' - Democrats Want Gates To Explain [*Boston Globe*, Mar 14, 2008] A group of democratic members of Congress want an explanation from DoD Secretary Gates as to why the Pentagon allowed a top defense contractor in Iraq to avoid paying Social Security and Medicare taxes for thousands of American workers by hiring them through two Cayman Island subsidiaries.

Bush Vetoes Intelligence Authorization Bill [*Congress.org*, Mar 10, 2008] Over the weekend President Bush vetoed H.R. 2082, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. The reason given for the veto was that the bill includes language prohibiting the use of harsh interrogation tactics such as waterboarding. More specifically, intelligence agents would be restricted to using the interrogation techniques included in the Army Field Manual.

President Weakens Espionage Oversight - Board Created By Ford Loses Most Of Its Power [*Boston Globe*, Mar 14, 2008] President Bush has issued an order that strips the independent Intelligence Oversight Board of much of its authority. Critics say Bush's order is consistent with a pattern of steps by the administration that have systematically scaled back Watergate-era intelligence reform.

Iraq, 5 Years On, a Nation of Refugees [*Wall Street Journal*, March 17, 2008] An estimated four million Iraqis — over 14 percent of the country's population -- have been displaced inside Iraq or to neighboring countries, largely due to the chaotic aftermath of the American-led invasion that began on March 19, 2003.

Inside The Ring - Anti-Bush [*Washington Times*, Ma 14, 2008] Richard Immerman, the assistant deputy director of national intelligence for analytical integrity, has written a journal article harshly critical of President Bush and his administration for what he charges is their role in the "politicization" of intelligence.

White House Denies Quashing Military Dissent [CNN, Mar 12, 2008] The question is: Will the less than voluntary resignation of Adm. Fallon have chilling effect on other military officers who might not agree with the president? The White House says it should not.

Petraeus: Iraqi Leaders Not Making 'Sufficient Progress' [*Washington Post*, Mar 14, 2008] Iraqi leaders have failed to take advantage of a reduction in violence to make adequate progress toward resolving their political differences, Gen. David Petraeus said.

McCain Advisers Lobbied For Europeans To Win Air Force Tanker Deal [*New York Times*, March 12, 2008] A co-chairman of Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign and other campaign advisers and supporters were lobbyists for EADS, part of a group that beat out Boeing for the Air Force tanker contract.

Future Actions:

Vigil Every Wednesday: 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. (Winter Hours): Join our South Orange rally at Spiotta Park on South Orange Avenue (across from Blockbuster). Show your support for our troops! Bring them home NOW!

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