



Military Families Speak Out

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MAY 2009 TALKING POINTS

- Military Families Speak Out began in 2002 to prevent a U.S. invasion of Iraq. When our loved ones were sent to fight in an illegal war in Iraq, we spoke out and helped build a movement to bring the war to an end. In November, 2008 our country elected a President who promised to end that war and bring our troops home. But President Obama is not only continuing the war in Iraq, he is sending even more of our troops to take part in a disastrous military occupation in Afghanistan. He needs to hear from Congress and the American people that that is not what he was elected to do! We have been speaking out for over six years, and our message is still the same -- We want our troops home now!
- Our loved ones took an oath to defend our country and our Constitution. Instead, they have been sent and re-sent to wars of occupation. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are denying the Iraq and Afghan people the ability to determine their own future. The best way for Congress and the President to uphold our country's values and honor our troops' commitment and sacrifice is to bring the troops home now and let the Iraqi and the Afghan people decide their own course.
- The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have wrought a tremendous toll on our troops, our military, our country, and the Iraqi and Afghan people. In order to begin healing the damage that has been done, we have to end the occupations by bringing our troops home now. There is no right way to fight a wrong war.
- Our troops are fighting in wars of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan where the lines between combatants and civilians are often dangerously blurred and threats can come suddenly and from any direction. They are witnessing and doing things no human being should ever have to experience. Some are on their third, fourth, fifth, and sixth deployments. It should come as no surprise that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is reaching epidemic proportions among veterans and active duty troops. We need to bring all our troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan before more damage is done, and provide them with the care they need and deserve!

- As the war in Afghanistan intensifies, it has claimed the lives of many thousands of Afghans -- many of them civilians killed in air strikes. The grief and rage caused by the rising civilian death toll is driving many to turn against foreign troops including U.S. service members. Our troops on the ground all too often become the targets of that anger and pain; some are paying with their lives.
- There is no military solution to the social, political, and economic crises in Iraq and Afghanistan. Continuing the occupations is only creating more resentment, more suffering, and more death. It is long past time to bring our troops home!
- Continuing to occupy Iraq and Afghanistan is stretching our military past the breaking point. In addition to the toll that this is taking on our troops and their families, stretching our military so thin diminishes the country's ability to defend ourselves.
- The Senate has the power and the responsibility to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by rejecting President Obama's request for another \$75.8 billion in "emergency" war funding. Funding the wars is killing our troops – and the people of Iraq and Afghanistan! The only money we should be spending in these wars is the money to bring our troops home quickly and safely!

Remember – when speaking to the press or public:

- Always speak from your experience and your heart. Your personal stories of how the wars in Iraq and/or Afghanistan have impacted your loved one(s) and family contain the most compelling reasons for ending the wars and bringing our troops home now!
- Always mention your membership in Military Families Speak Out when you speak, write, or give interviews – it lets other families know that they are not alone and that there is an organization that can help their voices be heard.