

Statement by the Smedley D. Butler Brigade, Chapter 9 of Veterans For Peace to Senator John Kerry on February 27, 2007

“We have come here, not to the President, because we believe that this body can be responsive to the will of the people, and we believe that the will of the people says that we should be out of Vietnam now.” substitute Iraq for Vietnam

John Kerry, April 1971

“we are here to ask vehemently, where are the leaders of our country? Where is the leadership?”

John Kerry, April 1971

“we should start now to talk about filibustering for the saving of lives and of our country.”

John Kerry, April 1971

“This war was really just as wrong, immoral, and unrelated to our national interests 5 years ago as it is today”

John Kerry, April 1971

“How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?”

John Kerry, April 1971

Senator, Veterans For Peace believes these words to be as true and as applicable today as they were in 1971 when, as a leader of Vietnam Veterans Against The War, you testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Back then, you went to Congress to stand up for your Brothers and Sisters who were dying in Vietnam for no good reason. Your Brothers and Sisters are dying in the occupation of Iraq, and they need you to stand up again for them before Congress. Please help us stop this insanity as quickly as possible.

We now ask you to be a *profile in courage* and work to defeat the supplemental appropriation because this is the only way to end the war. Various bills in Congress are good, but need a 2/3 veto-proof majority which they will never get. The appropriation can be defeated by a simple majority, and in fact by a filibuster of 41 courageous Senators. ***You cannot be against the war and vote to fund it. If you fund the war, you own the war.*** The words of Sen. George McGovern on the floor of the Senate in 1970 ring true today:

“Every senator in this chamber is partly responsible for sending 50,000 young Americans to an early grave. This chamber reeks of blood. Every Senator here is partly responsible for that human wreckage at Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval and all across our land - young men without legs, or arms, or genitals, or faces or hopes.”

George Bush will never end the war in Iraq and in fact threatens to now expand it to attack Iran. The only way to end the war is for Congress to use the power of the purse and defund the war. Again and again the Republicans attack you on not “supporting the troops” if you defund the war and the Democrats are silent. Why are you not attacking back, with the following?

- It *is* supporting the troops to bring them home from an illegal, immoral war based on lies and deception so no more of them are killed.
- It *is* supporting the troops to have no more broken men and women return home with maimed bodies, missing limbs, PTSD, suicides, homelessness, broken marriages and lives. The casualty count is far beyond the 3157 number reported dead.

- It *is* supporting the troops to bring back members of the Reserves and National Guard who are getting sent for 2 or 3 tours in Iraq when these people never signed up for this. It *is* supporting these troops and their families to bring them home.
- What kind of “support” of the troops gets them exposed to toxic depleted uranium weapons in Iraq? These horrible weapons affect the Iraqi people even more, as they are the people who have to live among their effects.
- How can the Republicans claim to “support the troops” when they do not support the returning veterans? The Bush administration is trying to cut funding for the VA at a time when there are a massive increase in the number of people with PTSD who need treatment and resources.

Senator Kerry, you announced that your Presidential aspirations are over. This gives you the freedom and the opportunity to take the courageous stand as a United States Senator, the right stand, the one that 27 year–old John Kerry would have taken in 1971. We need moral leadership and courage among our Senators and Representatives. Congressmen Markey and Meehan have already signed this pledge. We need *courageous* elected officials who stand up to scurrilous attacks by Republicans who say you are not “supporting the troops” if you defund the war. We need *courageous* Senators who realize that the war will not end unless Congress ends it by stopping the funding for it. We need courage from you, Mr. Kerry — just like fearless Senators that preceded you like Wayne Morse, William Fulbright, Mark Hatfield, and George McGovern. Senator Kerry, you and 40 others in the Senate can stop the war now. You are in a unique leadership position in the Democratic Party. We call on you to sign our pledge.