

## A Frank Response to an Enlistee

The time is January 2008. The Iraq war is nearly five years old. We have killed over a million Iraqi civilians so far. It is well known that Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. It is well known that Iraq was not accumulating weapons of mass destruction. It is well known that the American people were lied to in order to take us to war. In this context the son of a close friend has decided to enlist.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We are not going to pull any punches. We do NOT support you in this decision. You may well see what you are doing in other terms, promoted by your recruiter, no doubt, but the bottom line is, whether you get a desk job or personally pull the trigger or drop the bombs, you are volunteering to participate in the slaughter of innocent people in their own homeland in the furtherance of an unjust cause.

- The US is *not* “fighting for freedom,” for ourselves or anyone else;
  - we are *blatantly* fighting for world domination through control of the world's oil supplies.
  - we are *depriving* Iraqis of their freedom, subjecting them to prolonged anarchy and suffering, stealing their wealth and resources, and ultimately imposing on them an illegitimate government of *our* choosing.
  - at home, the war and the constantly hyped threat of terrorism, is being used to roll back our freedoms and the very Constitution itself.
- We are not preventing violence in Iraq; that's a baseless excuse; we are the direct cause of the violence. (It is documented that when the British pulled out of Basra, violence decreased.)
- We are not there to protect human rights; we are abusing human rights; the prestige of the US is at an all time low in the eyes of the world because of our flagrant disregard for human rights.
- We are fighting an illegal war of aggression (itself a war crime), motivated by the greed of corporations and wealthy elites, and in total disregard for the rights or welfare of the people of the world.
- We were not only lied to in order to start the war, we are being continually lied to, not only by the government, but by the press, which is owned by the same corporate interests who are benefiting from this war. But the truth is still easily available, through independent news sources, especially through the Internet.
- The mandate to “Support the Troops” is a red herring: it is an orchestrated propaganda campaign to de-legitimize dissent.
  - It is one thing to wish the best for our loved ones. We all wish the best for our loved ones. That is not and never has been the issue.
  - It is something else to wish them success in carrying out an unjust mission.
- If the government “supported the troops” in the first sense,
  - It would have provided them with the armor and supplies they need to protect themselves.
  - It would not be forcing them into multiple tours of duty in order to avoid the public outcry that would accompany a draft (a strategy for conducting a war the people

- would not support if they were paying attention).
- It would take better care of veterans rather than dumping them onto the street and denying them services.
- It would provide a REAL GI Bill, rather than the fraudulent system now in place.
- But should we support the troops in their mission if their mission is wrong? If what our government is doing is evil, should we not wish for it to fail in its attempted wrongdoing? Yet we are torn when our own loved ones are involved.
  - Is it not wrong to volunteer to participate in the nation's wrongdoing?
  - If one volunteers out of ignorance, is that a valid excuse when the truth is widely available? Is that not willful ignorance?
  - Is it ever legitimate to *blindly* volunteer to kill? Do we not have a moral obligation to rise above ignorance?
- Is it legitimate to volunteer to kill in the hope of personal gain? Even if it is to...
  - ...get an education?
  - ...get job training?
  - ...grow up?
- Is it even *wise* to seek these benefits in the military?
  - Most veterans end up years behind their peers in education and job advancement.
  - Most jobs learned in the military don't transfer to civilian life.
  - What passes for "growing up" is more often trauma, abuse, disillusionment, and emotional scarring. Veterans have greatly elevated suicide rates and are subjected to conditioning for violence that often scars the next generation.
- Even if one avoids direct combat, aren't all who willingly participate in an unjust war guilty of the evil that is done?
- Aren't civilians who support an unjust war effort, either by their actions or by their silence, also guilty of the evil that is done?

So no, we don't support the war, and no, we don't support you in your decision to join the military. Even though you are young, we are calling on you to act as a responsible adult, to educate yourself, to discern truth from propaganda, to look at the ugly reality of militarism and violence, and to make an informed moral choice. Your choice will not affect our love for you as a person, but we will continue to voice our opposition to the war whether you become enmeshed in it or not.

Your Friends, ....