



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

**RESOLUTION NO. 169**

## THE WAR ON TERRORISM

**A GUIDE TO BUILDING PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Adopted by

**The American Legion National Convention**

Honolulu, Hawaii – Aug. 23-25, 2005

*Preamble to the Constitution of  
The American Legion*

For God and Country

We associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

to maintain law and order;

to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars;

to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

to make right the master of might;

to promote peace and good will on earth;

to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

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*“I wish there was not a war, and I wish our young people did not have to fight and die. But I cannot wish away evil men like bin Laden and al-Zarqawi. These men are not wayward children who have gone astray; they are not great men who are simply misunderstood. They are cold-blooded killers, and they will kill you, me and everyone we love and hold dear if we do not kill them first.*

*“You cannot reason with these people. You cannot negotiate with them. And this war will not be over until they are dead. That is the ugly, awful and brutal truth ... The last thing we need here in Iraq is an exit strategy or some damn time table for withdrawal. Thank God there was no time table for withdrawal after the Battle of the Bulge or Iwo Jima. Thank God there was no exit strategy at Valley Forge. Freedom is not easy, and it comes with a terrible price.”*

**— Col. Brett Wyrick, surgeon deployed in Iraq**

# **EIGHTY-SEVENTH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION HONOLULU, HAWAII AUGUST 23, 24, 25, 2005**

## **Resolution No. 169: Support For The War On Terrorism**

### **Origin: National Executive Committee**

*Whereas*, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans created by an act of the United States Congress in 1919; and

*Whereas*, The American Legion's membership is composed of veterans of all wars, the majority of which are Vietnam veterans who have endured the consequences of a nation divided in time of war; and

*Whereas*, Warriors, above all other people, pray for peace, for they must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war; and

*Whereas*, Because of the very nature of war, the warrior cannot be separated from the war itself; and

*Whereas*, The United States of America was suddenly, and without provocation, attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001, resulting in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and members of the military of the United States; and

*Whereas*, This tragic event does not stand alone, but is a continuation of a long series of unprovoked terrorist attacks aimed at destroying American lives, and the very basic core values of freedom, democracy and respect for human life; and

*Whereas*, In response to this despicable act of cowardice, a united Congress in a bipartisan manner authorized the use of armed force against the global armies of terrorism no matter where they reside; and

*Whereas*, Recognizing that the global war on terrorism is as deadly as any war in which the United States has been previously engaged, the President and Congress did authorize military actions in both Afghanistan and Iraq; and

*Whereas*, The global war on terrorism is a just war, aimed at protecting the very foundations of freedom and freedom-loving people everywhere; and

*Whereas*, The American Legion agrees with our Commander in Chief that the acts of terrorism mentioned heretofore were aimed at “the heart and soul of the civilized world, and the world has come together to fight a new and different war, the first, and we hope the only one, of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—a war against all those who seek to export terror, and a war against those governments that support or shelter them”; and

*Whereas*, The National Executive Committee meeting in pre-Convention session on August 22, 2005, in Honolulu, Hawaii, adopted this resolution and recommended that the 87<sup>th</sup> National Convention meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, August 23, 24, 25, 2005, adopt this resolution; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Honolulu, Hawaii, August 23, 24, 25, 2005, That The American Legion fully supports the President of the United States, the United States Congress and the men, women and leadership of our armed forces as they are engaged in the global war on terrorism; and, be it further**

**Resolved, That The American Legion urges all Americans and freedom-loving peoples everywhere to stand *united* in their support of the global war on terrorism, and *united* in their support of the troops who are engaged in protecting our values and way of life; and, be it finally**

**Resolved, That the National Commander be and is hereby authorized to use whatever means at his disposal to disseminate accurate information about this war on terrorism, and to engage whatever means necessary to ensure the *united* support of the American people.**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER

### *The meaning of Resolution 169*

**Terrorists are the enemies.**

**Americans are not. We need to remember that.**

In recent months, that vital distinction has been knocked off focus by a small, media-hungry antiwar movement whose protest campaign feeds hope to the likes of Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and murderous foreign insurgents bent on derailing Iraq's democratic transformation.

The American Legion and proud Americans everywhere who support our troops and the cause of a terror-free world must rally now to show that our nation supports the president, Congress and, most of all, our servicemembers in the global war against terrorism. We respect the First Amendment rights of American people to express their opinions. Now, however, we must exercise our right to publicly disagree with those who speak out against the war and ask that they seriously consider the consequences of their actions.



*Thomas L. Bock – National Commander,  
The American Legion*

Resolution 169, passed by the 87<sup>th</sup> National Convention of The American Legion, is a definitive expression of our support for the war and warrior alike, for they are inseparable. It is likewise a plea to those who protest the war to do so responsibly, in ways that won't imperil the lives or shake the morale of American men and women now stationed in harm's way. It is a firm reiteration of our resolve to not weaken under the shadow of terrorism's pure evil. It is a reminder that terrorism came to our shores on Sept. 11, 2001, and without continued military presence in Iraq – and 130 other countries around the world – terrorism is sure to return.

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, particularly those who served in the Vietnam War, fully understand the power of public opinion in times of battle. North Vietnam fueled the U.S. war protest movement in the 1960s, knowing that a nation divided at home would have a negative impact on the morale of troops fighting in foreign lands. Vietnam War veterans came home after months or years of honorable, courageous service under harsh conditions often to face a public that had turned against them, personally, due to the influences of the antiwar movement.

A generation of Vietnam War veterans still remembers with disgust the images of protesters every night on the news who, though they said they separated the war from the warrior, never did. The true saga of the fight to save a nation from communist rule never made the nightly news. The consequences of that omission contributed substantially to the deaths of more than 6 million human beings – boat people trying to escape the torture and retribution of re-education camps of communist Vietnam, millions who were destined for the killing fields of Cambodia, in Laos and across Southeast Asia – after the last American soldier left in 1975. The bitter, deadly lesson is that the truth was never told after the war protesters overtook our media and sabotaged home-front determination to succeed.

Like many Americans with sons and daughters, friends and relatives serving today in the U.S. Armed Forces, Elaine and I have a personal connection to this war against terrorism. Our son Adam is a U.S. Army captain who pilots Chinook helicopters, transporting troops out of LSA Anaconda, Iraq. Like his fellow servicemembers, he willingly entered the military, a decision he knew carried great risk and responsibility. He often shares with me, via the Internet, stories of his experiences.

There are good days, like when he was promoted to captain on the first rainless day in weeks last March and while flying low over a field was greeted with an enthusiastic wave of thanks from a woman and her daughter working there. There are bad days, like the time his flight was delayed due to action on the base perimeter, where U.S. soldiers had to safely control a group of young boys, guided by terrorists, who were tossing homemade bombs into the compound.

Every day contains another dangerous mission or life-threatening moment for our son. Such is the nature of war. But he believes, as we do, that all those missions and moments are worth it. He sees firsthand the progress and accomplishments, the fact that freedom is winning in Iraq, that the terrorists and insurgents are on the ropes, and a newly liberated nation is beginning to take care of its own business, most often with U.S. military in a support role, rather than the other way around.

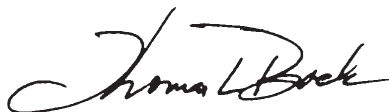
We cannot separate our son from the war, nor do we wish to. He is a part of it, and it is a part of him.

America, likewise, cannot separate any of its troops from the taller order of restoring security in the world and delivering democracy to a failed tyranny. Especially at this point in the process, we, as veterans, are duty bound to counter the antiwar movement with stronger voices of support for our troops and the challenges they face. Our troops are on the right side of this fight. Those who recklessly demonstrate to the contrary put all of us in danger by arming the enemy with inspiration and confidence likely to produce more bloodshed.



Let this booklet serve as a guide to the intentions of Resolution 169 and a statement of The American Legion's rock-solid position in support of the war against terrorism and in support of those who fight to win it. It is, like so many U.S. battles before it, a war we must win both on the battlefield and on the home front.

**For God and Country,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas L. Bock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" being more prominent and the last name "Bock" following in a similar style.

Thomas L. Bock  
National Commander

*“War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight – nothing he cares about more than his own personal safety – is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.”*

**— John Stuart Mill**

## TERRORIST ACTS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES

- 1979:** Iranian students seize the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and hold captive approximately 70 Americans. Some are released, but 52 remain for 444 days.
- 1983:** Sixty-three are killed when a bomb-laden truck crashes into the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon.
- 1983:** A 12,000-pound truck bomb destroys a Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American servicemen.
- 1984:** A suicide bomb attack on the U.S. Embassy in East Beirut kills 23.
- 1985:** A TWA flight is hijacked en route to Rome from Athens. Eight crew members and 145 passengers are held 17 days. A U.S. Navy diver is murdered.
- 1985:** Palestinian Liberation Front terrorists seize Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*. American passenger Leon Klinghoffer, confined to a wheelchair, is killed and his body is thrown overboard. Terrorists escape days later. Ringleader Abu Abbas is captured in 2003 by U.S. forces in Iraq.
- 1986:** Two U.S. soldiers are killed and 79 servicemembers are injured in a Libyan bomb attack of a nightclub frequented by U.S. military members in West Berlin, West Germany.
- 1988:** Marine Lt. Col. William Higgins is kidnapped and hanged by Hezbollah terrorists, while serving with the United Nations in Lebanon.
- 1988:** A Pan Am Boeing 747 is blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland. A bomb is believed to have been placed on the plane by two Libyans at Frankfurt Airport in Germany. All 259 people on the aircraft, including 189 Americans, are killed.
- 1993:** A massive truck bomb explodes in a World Trade Center garage in New York, killing six and injuring more than 1,000. Six Islamic extremists are later convicted of the crime.
- 1993:** Iraqi intelligence service attempts to assassinate President George H.W. Bush during a visit to Kuwait.
- 1996:** Terrorists detonate a truck bomb near a U.S. Air Force housing area in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 servicemembers and injuring 385.
- 1997:** Four U.S. auditors from Union Texas Petroleum Corp. and their Paki-

stani driver are shot to death in Karachi, Pakistan. Radical group Aimal Khufia Action Committee claims responsibility.

**1998:** U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar-es-Salem, Tanzania, are heavily damaged in bomb attacks. Intelligence officials link Osama bin Laden to the attacks.

**1998:** Yemeni militants kidnap a group of Western tourists, including 12 Britons, two Americans and two Australians. Four victims are killed during the rescue attempt.

*“We do not differentiate between those dressed in military uniforms and civilians; they are all targets in this fatwa.”*

**— Osama bin Laden**

**2000:** A dinghy packed with explosives rams the *USS Cole*, killing 17 U.S. sailors in a Yemeni port. Supporters of Osama bin Laden are suspected.

**2000:** A bomb explodes at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, injuring nine. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front is believed responsible.

**2001:** Two hijacked airliners crash into the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Shortly after, a third crashes into the Pentagon and a fourth in a field in Pennsylvania. Approximately 3,000 Americans and other nationals are killed, a death toll higher by nearly 600 than the attack on Pearl Harbor that sent the United States into World War II. Al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, is widely believed to be responsible and later claims responsibility.

**2001:** Richard Reid, a member of a radical mosque, is overpowered by passengers on an American Airlines flight to Miami for attempting to detonate a “shoe-bomb” that would have killed hundreds.

**2002:** Al Qaeda member José Padilla is arrested in Chicago, where authorities believe he was planning to detonate a nuclear “dirty” bomb.

**Dozens of Americans have been taken hostage and some murdered, in separate kidnappings by Islamic radicals throughout the 1980s until the present day.**

## ANATOMY OF RESOLUTION 169

*Whereas*, The American Legion is an organization of wartime veterans created by an act of the United States Congress in 1919; and *Whereas*, The American Legion's membership is composed of veterans of all wars, the majority of which are Vietnam veterans who have endured the consequences of a nation divided in time of war; and

Today's U.S. soldiers fight terrorists, insurgents and criminals half a world away. They risk their lives in a harsh, foreign environment to deliver freedom and stability to an oppressed people and to prevent future attacks against America. Their challenges and goals closely resemble those faced by veterans of past American wars, particularly the Vietnam War, where battle-hardened enemy combatants were often indistinguishable from civilians.

Also like the Vietnam War, today's soldiers serving their country in the Middle East do so against the backdrop of a small antiwar movement at home that has generated widespread international publicity. Such publicity can be deadly. Intense media coverage of antiwar demonstrations conveys confidence to the enemy and hope that continued pressure – in Iraq's case a lengthier insurgency – will defeat a U.S. military affected by home-front divisions.

Ho Chi Minh openly used U.S. war protests in the 1960s to demoralize American POWs and to bolster the hopes of his army. Today, Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorism network likewise see and use the new antiwar movement in America as a psychological weapon against the U.S. military and soldiers in it. Intense media emphasis on antiwar demonstrations, in the absence or at the exclusion of similar demonstrations in support of the troops and the war, can have a negative impact on morale. Furthermore, such portrayals are an inaccurate reflection of the war and the many positive accomplishments of the world's most formidable fighting force. Enemy confidence and altered troop morale, however, can be a lethal combination, lengthening the war, causing more casualties over time, which was the net effect and lesson of the Vietnam War protest movement.

Troops at war need to know America stands behind them and behind the cause for which they are risking their lives – freedom. The privations of war and threats of enemy attack are strenuous enough without home-front protests that symbolically impugn both the war and the warrior.

The solution is not to stifle honest public dissent, but to challenge war opponents to exercise their freedom responsibly in the arena of ideas and not in ways that threaten or harm U.S. troops fulfilling their duties.

As a counter-measure to the antiwar movement, Americans who support the troops and the cause of freedom must build public awareness of the enemy's nature and the justness of the war. Home-front support can be rendered through public displays, rallies, parades, letters and e-mails to the troops, public forums, Web sites, fundraisers for troops and their families, communications with elected officials and candidates; and by using key holidays and anniversaries such as Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Patriot Day (Sept. 11), Veterans Day and Pearl Harbor Day as opportunities to assure the public that the troops and their cause are supported by the majority at home.

*Whereas*, Warriors, above all other people, pray for peace, for they must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war; and

Since 1979, thousands of American troops have been killed and tens of thousands wounded – from Beirut to the Khobar Towers, from the *U.S.S. Cole* to the slums of Mogadishu, the Philippines, Afghanistan and Iraq – at the hands of our terrorist enemies. Soldiers today, like veterans who fought before them, know the suffering and brutality that can come of war. Veterans also know that the price of rewards like freedom, independence and security is often paid in American blood. All who serve in the U.S. military are keenly aware of the stakes.

Those who appreciate the comfort and security of living in a well-protected, free nation must never forget the human sacrifices necessary to get here. The least we can do is honor our troops by acting in support of them. That is why The American Legion has launched the American Legacy Scholarship Fund for the children of those who have fallen in our defense since Sept. 11, 2001. That is why The American Legion has developed the TS2 (Troop Support Services) program to comfort those who are deployed and to assist their families at home. That is why The American Legion revived Blue Star banners to proudly recognize families who have loved ones at war.

America's commitment to this just war should not be mistaken for insensitivity to the plight of our troops or the burdens their families bear. We stand, in spirit and in practice, alongside the troops and their families, bound by the same desire to successfully complete the mission as quickly and safely as possible.

*Whereas*, Because of the very nature of war, the warrior cannot be separated from the war itself; and

To support the soldier is to support the cause for which he fights. In the war against terrorism, traditional battle lines and definitions are blurred, but the connection is clear between the fighter and the fight. As more National Guard and Reserve citizen soldiers are deployed and see their deployments extended, the warrior is also more often than before a co-worker, a neighbor, a father or a mother in a local community.

*Whereas*, The United States of America was suddenly, and without provocation, attacked by terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001, resulting in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and members of the military of the United States; and

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, distinguished this war from most others in history because it claimed thousands of American civilians' lives. Terrorism, by definition, feeds on successfully frightening and harming the people – not the armies – of its enemies. Bin Laden once said that al-Qaeda does not “differentiate between those dressed in military uniforms and civilians; they are all targets.”<sup>1</sup>

The war against terrorism is, therefore, a war for the security and safety of innocent, free people around the planet who, through their elected officials, have summoned their militaries to conquer terrorism and regimes that provide safe haven for its existence.

*Whereas*, This tragic event does not stand alone, but is a continuation of a long series of unprovoked terrorist attacks aimed at destroying American lives, and the very basic core values of freedom, democracy and respect for human life; and

While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact date this war began – some experts say 1979, with the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Tehran; others say 1983, with the attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut – America's terrorist enemies have been at work for many years. It all came home on Sept. 11, 2001. And regardless of the banners under which they wage their war, they share a common goal to destroy the United States. (See “Terrorist Acts Against the United States” page 6)

*Whereas*, In response to this despicable act of cowardice, a united Congress in a bipartisan manner authorized the use of armed force against the global armies of terrorism no matter where they reside; and

On Sept. 14, 2001, Congress authorized the president to use “all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons.” Soon after, President George W. Bush concluded: “Any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”

The president’s position was shared by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who observed, “Those that harbor or help (terrorists) have a choice: either to cease their protection of our enemies, or be treated as an enemy.” In 1998, President Bill Clinton made the same point: “Countries that persistently host terrorists have no right to be safe havens.”

*Whereas*, Recognizing that the global war on terrorism is as deadly as any war in which the United States has been previously engaged, the President and Congress did authorize military actions in both Afghanistan and Iraq; and

In Afghanistan, the president acted under the Sept. 14, 2001, resolution, and after the Taliban government of Afghanistan refused to turn over Osama bin Laden and elements of the al-Qaeda terror network, President Bush ordered U.S. forces to destroy bin Laden’s terror sanctuaries and remove the Taliban government.

The president sought a separate resolution to authorize the use of military force in Iraq; he received that authorization on Oct. 11, 2002. The Iraq war resolution passed the Senate 77-23 and the House 296-133.

*Whereas*, The global war on terrorism is a just war, aimed at protecting the very foundations of freedom and freedom-loving people everywhere; and

Today’s war is no less a fight for our civilization and way of life than were the struggles against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, or the long Cold

War against the Soviet Union. Osama bin Laden has promised to wage war against all unbelievers “in every part of the world,” to overthrow Islamic and Arab governments that oppose his radical view of Islam and to create a new, pan-Islamic power that would dominate much of the eastern hemisphere.<sup>2</sup>

Bin Laden has condemned the United States for not “ruling by the shariah of Allah” and for separating “religion from your policies.”<sup>3</sup>

As one Harvard University professor has observed, “The ultimate objective is to ‘purify’ the world – replacing the ‘new world order’ with a caliphate of terror based on a fantasized simpler, purer past.”<sup>4</sup> Such a vision is not far removed from Hitler’s promised “Thousand-Year Reich” and Japan’s “Co-Prosperity Sphere.”

*Whereas*, The American Legion agrees with our Commander in Chief that the acts of terrorism mentioned heretofore were aimed at “the heart and soul of the civilized world, and the world has come together to fight a new and different war, the first, and we hope the only one, of the 21st century – a war against all those who seek to export terror, and a war against those governments that support or shelter them”; and

Just as 9/11 was not the beginning of this war, the overthrow of the Taliban government in Afghanistan was not the end.

Soon after the attacks of Sept. 11, President Bush braced the nation for “a very long and difficult struggle.” Likewise, President Clinton warned in the 1990s, “This will be a long, ongoing struggle between freedom and fanaticism.” Sir Michael Boyce, Chief of the British Defense Staff, predicted the campaign against terrorism “may last 50 years.”<sup>5</sup>

The failure of many governments in the Islamic world to address the underlying causes of terrorism indicates this struggle will not be short. As a consequence, the American people must summon the same tenacity, fortitude and endurance they displayed in waging and winning the Cold War. The American Legion can help steel the resolve of the American people by sharing information about the war, supporting the troops and promoting U.S. interests and values to offset the vocal minority of the antiwar movement.



**Whereas**, the National Executive Committee meeting in pre-Convention session on August 22, 2005, in Honolulu, Hawaii, adopted this resolution and recommended that the 87th National Convention meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, August 23, 24, 25, 2005, adopt this resolution; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved**, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 23, 24, 25, 2005, That The American Legion fully supports the President of the United States, the United States Congress and the men, women and leadership of our armed forces as they are engaged in the global war on terrorism; and, be it further

This is not a matter of politics; it is a matter of national security. The American Legion is a nonpartisan organization, and during this war – if it lasts as long as our enemies seem prepared to fight – the White House and Congress will pass between both major political parties several times. Nor does this resolution call on Legionnaires to blindly support the president and Congress in every matter. Instead, it asks the Legion family to support the president, Congress and our armed forces as they prosecute the war on terrorism.

**Resolved**, That The American Legion urges all Americans and freedom-loving peoples everywhere to stand united in their support of the global war on terrorism, and united in their support of the troops who are engaged in protecting our values and way of life; and, be it finally

The American Legion strongly believes in the right to free speech, even in times of war. As veterans of military service, Legionnaires know that freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and the many other freedoms enshrined in our Constitution are to be treasured and protected – and sometimes defended by force of arms.

Legion members have seen firsthand the awful consequences of government unchecked and unchallenged. We have heard the siren song of peace in our time, of peace at any cost. We know what it costs to liberate and defend places and people unwilling or unable to fight for their own freedom. As President Clinton explained in 1998, “No campaign for peace can succeed without a determination to fight terrorism.”

**Resolved**, That the National Commander be and is hereby authorized to use whatever means at his disposal to disseminate accurate information about this war on terrorism, and to engage whatever means necessary to ensure the united support of the American people.

Legionnaires recognize that in a country as diverse and as free as ours, there are differences of opinion about the war. As the great American war correspondent Edward R. Murrow once observed, "We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty."

The war protester has a right to speak against this war, but he must do so responsibly. And he must know that the same First Amendment which protects his right to protest this war was brought to him by men and women who gave their lives for our country. Further, that same First Amendment also protects our right to support the war, to speak, to share information, to assemble, to organize, and to ask the protester what motivates him and to explain what motivates us.

All Legionnaires and, indeed, all Americans have an important role to play in protecting the home front, and perhaps most important of all, in supporting the men and women who defend us.

This resolution is a message to those fighting today, that those of us who fought in wars past won't let the antiwar movement nullify the many achievements America has made in the war against terrorism. Nor will America's veterans fail to provide 100-percent support for today's troops and their families, and we will not let the lives lost in this battle be for naught.

#### Endnotes

- 1 As quoted by President Bill Clinton, Aug. 20, 1998.
- 2 See Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "Osama's Big Lie," Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, December 2004.
- 3 Osama bin Laden letter, November 2002, as published by *The Observer*.
- 4 Jessica Stern, "Caliphate of terror," *Harvard Magazine*, July-August 2004.
- 5 BBC News, "War on terror may last 50 years," news.bbc.co.uk, Oct. 27, 2001.

*"(The American antiwar movement) was essential to our strategy... Every day our leadership would listen to world news over the radio at 9 a.m. to follow the growth of the American antiwar movement... America lost because of its democracy; through dissent and protest it lost the ability to mobilize a will to win."*

**— Col. Bui Tin, North Vietnamese Army**

## THE WAR'S RATIONALE

On Oct. 11, 2002, Congress passed a bipartisan resolution authorizing military action in Iraq. The Senate voted 77-23 in favor. The House approved it 296-133. Among other points, the resolution:

- Recalled that Iraq entered into a cease-fire agreement with the United Nations and promised to eliminate its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs, and to end its support for international terrorism;
- Detailed how Baghdad was “in direct and flagrant violation of the ceasefire, attempted to thwart the efforts of weapons inspectors to identify and destroy Iraq’s weapons-of-mass-destruction stockpiles and development capabilities, which finally resulted in the withdrawal of inspectors from Iraq on Oct. 31, 1998”;
- Recalled how Congress (on Aug. 14, 1998) urged President Clinton “to take appropriate action, in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws of the United States, to bring Iraq into compliance with its international obligations”;
- Concluded that Iraq posed a continuing threat to the national security of the United States and international peace and security by “continuing to possess and develop a significant chemical and biological weapons capability, actively seeking a nuclear weapons capability, and supporting and harboring terrorist organizations”;
- Noted that Baghdad demonstrated “its continuing hostility toward, and willingness to attack, the United States, including by attempting in 1993 to assassinate former President Bush and, on thousands

## IMPACT OF 9/11

**2,823**

Number of people killed in the attack on the World Trade Center

**2,390**

Number of Americans killed in the bombing of Pearl Harbor

**157**

Number killed aboard the airplanes that felled the towers

**291**

Number of bodies found intact

**69**

Number of days subterranean fires burned in Manhattan after the attack

**45**

Number of people killed aboard Flight 93 when its passengers mounted a heroic effort to wrest control of the doomed plane

**125**

Number killed in the Pentagon

**64**

Number killed aboard Flight 77 when it slammed into the Pentagon

**1,300**

Number of children left orphaned after the attacks

of occasions, by firing on U.S. and Coalition Armed Forces engaged in enforcing the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council”;

- Recognized that members of al Qaeda were known to be in Iraq and that Iraq continued to aid and harbor other international terrorist organizations;
- Recalled that “the attacks on the United States of Sept. 11, 2001, underscored the gravity of the threat posed by the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by international terrorist organizations”;
- Noted that Saddam Hussein was in violation of several U.N. resolutions and that Congress had already authorized the president “to use United States Armed Forces pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 (1990) in order to achieve implementation of Security Council Resolution 660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 674, and 677”;
- Recalled that the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 “expressed the sense of Congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove from power the current Iraqi regime and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime”;
- Concluded that “Iraq’s ongoing support for international terrorist groups, combined with its development of weapons of mass destruction in direct violation of its obligations under the 1991 cease-fire and other United Nations Security Council resolutions, make clear that it is in the national security interests of the United States and in furtherance of the war on terrorism that all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions be enforced, including through the use of force if necessary.”

**100,000**

Approximate number of jobs lost in Manhattan in the year following the attacks

**1,800,000**

Approximate number of jobs lost nationwide in the first year after 9/11

**\$500,000,000,000:**

Estimated losses in gross domestic product between Sept. 11, 2001, and the end of 2003.

## SADDAM HUSSEIN: TERRORIST

Numerous events connect international terrorism with the regime of Saddam Hussein. Among them, Hussein:

- Made cash payments to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers
- Provided terror scholarships that led to 223 murders, including 12 American deaths
- Provided safe haven to the Palestinian Liberation Front, Arab Liberation Front, Mujahedin-e-Khalq, and Abu Nidal Organization, which supplied Libyan terrorists with bomb-making materials that brought down Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988, killing 189 Americans
- Provided a safe house for Abdul Rahman, co-conspirator of Ramzi Yousef, who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993 and came to the United States on an Iraqi passport; Rahman constructed the bomb used during the attack
- Sent an ambassador, as far back as 1994, to Turkey to meet with al-Qaeda operatives
- Reached an understanding, according to a 1998 indictment by the Clinton Administration, that al Qaeda and Iraq would work cooperatively on weapons development
- Had an Iraqi emissary escort two of the Sept. 11 hijackers in early 2000 to a meeting with al-Qaeda planners in Malaysia
- Provided medical treatment in Iraq after the Taliban fell, for al-Qaeda terrorist Abu Musab Zarqawi
- Withdrew huge sums of money just before the Coalition's attack on Baghdad in March 2003 to fund terrorist attacks inside Iraq

*"We praise the American peace champions.  
The movement of the American people to protest  
against the war of aggression has really become  
the second front against the U.S. imperialists."*

**— Vietnam News Agency, 1966**

## VOICES

"There are innumerable differences between the Iraq and Vietnam experiences. But there also are valid similarities – they just aren't the ones the critics cite... Few military authorities would any longer dispute that the vaunted Tet Offensive of 1968 was a significant military defeat for the North Vietnamese, or that well into the early '70s the military balance on the ground had shifted in favor of the Americans and South Vietnamese. Covering the Tet Offensive, I, too, was stunned into initially seeing it as a communist triumph. Traveling the Vietnamese countryside in the years that followed, I came to see the military progress we were making. But even as the balance of power on the ground shifted in one direction, the balance of politics at home was shifting in the other. And so, by the early '70s, with antiwar protests mounting in the streets and antiwar sentiment seething in Washington, we accelerated our military withdrawals, Congress cut off military aid to a South Vietnamese government we had committed to support, and the U.S. was left to negotiate a fig-leaf surrender. We then stood by to watch the 1975 collapse of South Vietnam under a massive North Vietnamese assault."

— **Peter R. Kann**, *Wall Street Journal*, **Sept. 8, 2005**

"Hey Mom...

Everything is going fine over here. I don't want you to worry about me. Can I just ask you a favor though? Obviously this is completely hypothetical and is stemming more so from personal feelings, but if anything ever did happen to me over here, or anytime in my military service for that matter, please don't take Cindy Sheehan's approach and start rallying against the government or anything. I'm proud of what I do, and I want you (and all of my family) to support that regardless of what happens, good or bad. I know Cindy Sheehan lost a son in Iraq, but I don't think what she's doing is very respectful. It's her right to speak her mind, but her calling for the end of the war in Iraq seems pretty ridiculous, especially since, if the troops were called (home), all the ones who have died over there, including her son, would have died for nothing. At least if we finish our job, they will have died for a good cause...

Love, Jared"

— ***From an e-mail between a U.S. soldier stationed in Afghanistan and his mother***

“Ms. Sheehan,

Now that your supporters have given you a broad forum from which to be heard, making you a national figure, it's time you considered your responsibilities to all of us. I have a daughter set to deploy to Fallujah in two weeks and I have a serious concern with how your irresponsible and shortsighted actions might impact on her. She is, after all, a volunteer, like your son, and she is going in harm's way because she believes it is her responsibility to protect your rights and freedoms.

Well-meaning people like you always seem to forget the law of unintended consequences and in your vanity and arrogant self-righteousness never bother to think through what it is you are trying to do versus what you may actually accomplish. Your actions and words will further embolden a ruthless and evil enemy and more American blood will be shed and some of it will be on your hands. I pray that my daughter will not be one of them. If she is, then I will hold you and those like you partly responsible. Yes, my daughter's fate will depend mostly on her own courageous decision to serve, but only the most naive among us can deny the impact our own words and actions here in America have in a world grown smaller by the revolution in communications technology.”

— **Brantley Smith, “An Open Letter to Cindy Sheehan,  
From the Proud Father of a U.S. Marine”**

“My job is mostly to be the driver of my platoon's lead Humvee. I see the missions our Army is performing, and I interact closely with the Iraqi people. Because of this, I know how successful and important our work is. My battalion carries out dozens of missions all over the city – missions that are improving peoples' lives. We have restored schools and universities, hospitals, power plants and water systems. We have engineered new infrastructure projects and much more. We have also brought security and order to many of Baghdad's worst areas – areas once afflicted with chaos and brutality. Our efforts to train vast numbers of Iraqis to police and secure the city's basic law and order are bearing fruit. Our mission is vital. We are transforming a once very sick society into a hopeful place. Dozens of newspapers and the concepts of freedom of religious worship and expression are flowering here. So, too, are educational improvements.

This is the work of the U.S. military.”

— **Joe Roche, U.S. Army, 16th Combat Engineer Battalion, Iraq**

“The inaccurate picture they paint has distorted the world view of the daily realities in Iraq. The result is a further erosion of international support for the United States’ efforts there, and a strengthening of the insurgents’ resolve and recruiting efforts while weakening our own. Through their incomplete, uninformed and unbalanced reporting, many members of the media covering the war in Iraq are aiding and abetting the enemy.”

— ***Lt. Col. Tim Ryan, Commander, Task Force 2-12 Cavalry,  
First Cavalry Division, Iraq***

“Just like other Legionnaires, I enlisted, trained and fought with the ideal and willingness to protect and defend the rights of all Americans, not only those who agree with me. The American Legion has an obligation to take an official stand on issues that affect not only veterans, but also all Americans, including our active-duty service men and women.”

— ***Bud Beck, veteran, Legionnaire and author***

“The American Legion, it seems to me, was making an excellent point. We have, in this country, the mechanism to make our voices of protest known through our elected officials – quietly, non-publicly. We can do this when we disagree with war policies without providing public support for our enemies – enemies who seek to kill as many Americans as possible in the days ahead, enemies who seek the wholesale slaughter of ‘infidels’ the world over.”

— ***Joseph Farah, “Between the Lines.”***

*“Among democratic nations, the private soldiers remain most like civilians. Upon them, the habits of the nation have the firmest hold and public opinion has the most influence.”*

— ***Alexis de Tocqueville***



## RESPONSIBLE PROTEST IN TIME OF WAR

Our system of government is built on the notion of majority rule and minority rights. One of the most important of these rights is the right to disagree with the government, even on issues of war and peace. As veterans, Legionnaires know how precious are the rights to disagree and to dissent. We have defended them with our lives.

Yet we also know from experience the impact that war protests can have on troops in the field. For instance, thousands of Americans demonstrated against the Vietnam War, both here at home and overseas. Those who branded Vietnam War veterans as “baby killers” may not have realized the long-term impact and pain that their words would cause many veterans, not to mention the short-term propaganda value that some of their antics would provide the enemy.

In other words, the issue of *how* to voice dissent in a time of war is a complex one. It's complex because the members of the Legion family, like most Americans, believe in freedom just as much as we believe in the men and women who defend our freedom. As folk singer Bob Dylan once said, “I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom.” Our troops understand this responsibility.

Antiwar groups began demonstrating against military action even before U.S. troops began to strike back at our enemies. The antiwar group Act Now to Stop War and End Racism actually held its first antiwar rally on Sept. 29, 2001 – before U.S. forces began the liberation of Afghanistan, before the first terrorist was jailed at Guantanamo Bay, before the war in Iraq, even before the fires stopped smoldering in Manhattan.

Because of their methods, history will not judge these protesters kindly. They are not only causing additional pain and anguish to America's heroes, they are also encouraging the enemy, thereby lengthening the war.

In our view, war is painful enough without adding anguish to its veterans and their families. What do we mean by anguish? Walter Reed Medical Center, where many of America's injured warriors are being treated, has been targeted by war protesters. Some demonstrators have gone as far as protesting at funerals for America's fallen heroes. Some opponents of the war have even called the terrorists “freedom fighters.” These terrorists are people who murder religious pilgrims, behead humanitarian aid workers, kill unarmed U.N. officials and bomb U.S. troops as they rebuild broken cities. Simply put, they are not freedom fighters. They are killers without conscience or compunction. That was obvious to most Americans on 9/11, and it remains obvious today.

Indeed, one of the main reasons the Legion family has urged Americans to support the war effort is the nature of the enemy and the nature of this war: The War on Terrorism began in earnest only after the U.S. homeland was attacked on Sept. 11, 2001. This undeniable fact makes the War on Terrorism different from previous wars that drew protests inside the United States, such as the Gulf War, the invasions of Panama and Grenada, the Vietnam War, or the Korean War. Although each of these military actions was important to the defense of America's national interests, none of them came in response to a direct assault on America's homeland.

Another important difference between this war and earlier wars is the fact that the men and women who are waging the War on Terrorism are all volunteers. Not one soldier, sailor, airman, Marine or Coast Guardsman has been drafted into this war. Although there can be little doubt that our troops would rather be home than stay on the frontlines, no one can say that the troops are serving against their will or being forced to fight.

No one in the Legion family wants to stifle the right to public dissent; however, it is fair to ask those who disagree with this war to do so responsibly. Opponents of the War on Terrorism can voice their dissent in several ways that are not harmful to the troops or helpful to America's enemies. For example, they can:

- Run for political office
- Vote and campaign against candidates whose policies they find objectionable
- Write newspaper editorials and letters to the editor
- Volunteer in election campaigns
- Contact their representatives in Congress

This is the sort of dissent that is responsible in a time of war. It also happens to be the sort of political action that has the most impact where it counts – with our elected officials. Indeed, it's important to note that a majority of U.S. citizens has already expressed support for the War on Terrorism through the political process. The War on Terrorism has been the central issue in one presidential election and two congressional election cycles. Since we live under a representative system of government, these elections have a significant bearing on the nature and extent of our nation's involvement in this war.

Resolution 169, which clearly states The American Legion's support for the War on Terrorism, including U.S. military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, is an effort to support the majority of Americans as they support our troops.

## BUILDING PUBLIC SUPPORT

This booklet arms you with information to build public support for our troops, our nation's cause in the war against terrorism and to counter war protesters. Foremost, our troops must receive a clear message that their country, especially veterans of wars before them, stands squarely behind them and their efforts. Individual Legionnaires, posts, districts and departments can use this information to mobilize communities to rally in support of our men and women in uniform and drown out politically motivated negative messages carried by the media, to the detriment of our war effort.

Using a number of proven public-relations techniques, any American Legion post can garner local support and media attention to the organization's positions on the war, the troops and responsibility on the home front.

- 1. Be vigilant and seek equal time and opportunity when local anti-war demonstrations occur.** Respond with a press release to local media using the information in this booklet and provided message points. Be available for interviews by news reporters, both at your post and by telephone. Don't let any negative information go by without correcting it. Antiwar, anti-troop messages can be countered with voices of hope and support for our armed forces.
- 2. Establish a troop-support council in town.** Involve local elected officials, business leaders, churches and civic groups. Meet to discuss how your community can best rally support for the troops and deliver the message to them, wherever they are stationed.
- 3. Coordinate a community troop-support event using the main themes in this booklet.** Involve schools, churches, volunteers, Boy and Girl Scouts, and other organizations. Post the information on both The American Legion ([www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)) and DefendAmerica ([www.defendamerica.mil](http://www.defendamerica.mil)) Web sites.
- 4. Establish your post as a news-media resource for interviews when protests arise.** Become the positive voice of troop support in your community.
- 5. Write letters to the editor of the local newspapers.** Encourage everyone to do the same. Use message points provided in this booklet. Cite personal experience, and write from the heart, but keep it under 250 words.
- 6. Write a guest editorial for the local newspaper.** Contact the opinion-page editor to find out the feasibility and the number of words the paper will accept. Be amenable to editing of your piece as long as the

meaning is not changed. Frequently, editors are able to shorten and tighten up your editorial. A guest editorial enables you to write a longer piece than would a letter to the editor. Frequently, newspapers will ask to run a photo of the writer, so it's important to have one readily available, with Legion cap on.

7. **Call into local talk-radio programs and tell them about The American Legion Resolution 169 initiative.** Encourage listeners to get involved for the sake of our troops. Avoid confrontational hosts.
8. **Seek out local sponsors to co-host troop-support activities.** Consider partnering with a local radio station that will provide free promotion of a troop-support event. Ask local businesses to help cover the cost of the event and provide handouts, giveaways, or other materials.
9. **Consider coordinating a pro-troop rally to counter any planned antiwar demonstrations in the area.** Ensure your numbers will significantly exceed the opposition. Be vocal and positive in talking with media while emphasizing why America needs to send our troops the message of support, not division.
10. **Be creative.** Organize, coordinate and carry out rallies, events, petitions, contests – anything that will show support for our troops in the war. Use The American Legion Public Relations Handbook. Visit The American Legion Web site and download public relations products that you can tailor for your local use: **[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)**. Call the public-relations staff for advice and assistance at (317) 630-1253 or send an email to **[pr@legion.org](mailto:pr@legion.org)**.

***ABOVE ALL,  
DO NOT LET THE WAR PROTESTERS  
GO UNCHALLENGED.***

## KEY MESSAGE POINTS ON RESOLUTION 169

**The right to protest must be carefully weighed and responsibly exercised to avoid providing enemy propaganda that can harm our troops.**

The right to protest was gained and maintained by Americans willing to fight and die for it. Veterans of The American Legion do not wish to see the right denied to anyone. But The American Legion implores those who oppose the war to exercise their rights responsibly, without feeding enemy propaganda machines and without jeopardizing troop morale or safety. Ho Chi Minh called the U.S. antiwar movement in the 1960s a second front in the Vietnam War. Osama bin Laden has made similar claims, that American public opinion could and would be turned against the government and the troops.

**The global war against terrorism has been a matter of vital national interest accentuated by the terrorist attacks on America on Sept. 11, 2001.**

The war reached our shores when terrorists murdered 3,000 civilians and military personnel and have since continued to kill, in Madrid, Istanbul, Jakarta, Casablanca and London. Withdrawal from Iraq would leave a fertile haven for terrorist organizations that could be expected to kill again in their jihad against America.

**The war against terrorism and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have proven successful so far.**

So far, since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, more than 50 million people have been liberated from two of the world's most brutal and aggressive regimes. Afghanistan and Iraq both are undergoing massive social, civil and governmental changes that bring new freedoms to women, students, media, worshipers and democratically elected officials. This development replaces regimes proven to have committed genocide against their own people and public executions of innocents who defied their oppressors.

**Coalition efforts in the war against terrorism have international support.**

Approximately 70 nations worldwide support U.S. efforts in Iraq and in the war against terrorism. New allies in the effort include Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Indonesia. Libya has voluntarily agreed to end its weapons of mass destruction program since the war began.

**Sacrifice is a fact of war.**

While the death of any soldier is a tragedy, it is a risk calculated by all who serve in an all-volunteer military. A mother named Tammy Pruett in Idaho has four sons serving in Iraq right now with the Idaho National Guard. Tammy says that if something happens to one of her boys, they would leave this world doing what they believe, what they think is right for our country. "And I guess you couldn't ask for a better way of life than giving it for something you believe in."

## **Progress and success in the war receive little attention compared to the human cost.**

U.S. troops in theater are universally astonished when people at home say they think the war is going poorly. Images of bloodshed and fighting more often make the news than less dynamic scenes of new schools, roads and clinics being built. Activities from the war showing progress and thanks by the Iraqi people are under-reported.

## **Home-front support is essential to victory and troop safety.**

U.S. forces serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are committed to completing their mission successfully, transforming tyrannies to democracies and defeating organized terrorism in places where it has been allowed to exist. Those U.S. forces need to know that most Americans share their passion to succeed and that those who oppose the war represent a media-hungry minority whose efforts inspire the enemy. Troops everywhere must know that the people at home support them and their mission. They cannot be separated from each other, and support for both is the fast track to bringing our troops home safely. The protest movement, meanwhile, gives hope to the insurgency, to terrorists and other criminals around the world, energizing their campaigns to destroy America and all its values.

### **RESOURCES ON THE WEB**

To learn more about U.S. progress in the global war on terrorism and how our troops feel about their mission, visit:

[www.defendamerica.mil](http://www.defendamerica.mil)

[www.americasupportsyou.mil](http://www.americasupportsyou.mil)

[www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)

[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

To learn how the antiwar movement views the cause of defeating terrorism and seeks the withdrawal of those fighting for that cause, visit:

[www.discoverthenetwork.org](http://www.discoverthenetwork.org)

[www.worldtribunal.org](http://www.worldtribunal.org)

[www.antiwar.com](http://www.antiwar.com)

# AMERICAN TROOPS IN A JUST WAR

*These photos show how U.S. troops are having a positive impact in areas affected by the War on Terrorism. Contrary to what some believe, U.S. presence is warranted and welcomed in these regions.*

## Operation Enduring Freedom



## Operation Iraqi Freedom



*Photos Courtesy DoD*



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