

Iraq/Afghan War Veterans Support WikiLeaks

by baz *Wednesday, Oct 27 2010, 7:41am*

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The soldier fighting the (dirty) war on the ground is a far more reliable witness to war than the lying Politicians and Corporate elitists that placed him/her in the line of fire. Veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars have come out in support of WikiLeaks, while the rabid political right demands that founder member, Julian Assange, is apprehended and packed off to Guantanamo Bay for informing the public of the war crimes and atrocities the US was witness and/or party to! Fortunately, the demented demand to arrest and incarcerate Assange vindicates WikiLeaks' actions; what utter lunacy lies behind a demand to arrest a man for exposing war criminals?

The US political right confirms, by their insane actions, the GUILT of Pentagon officials and US politicians! The US is now behaving exactly like the sordid, criminal nation that it is. The entire WORLD now witnesses its pathological lunacy in real time.

The USA is not fit to lead geese let alone any action involving military force against other nations. Is not a nation that promotes the ideology of permanent war, evil and perverse, I ask YOU?

Demand that ALL, not only 'enemy,' war criminals be held accountable. And of course SUPPORT the brave individuals that risk everything to keep the public informed of the TRUTH!

Peace.

IVAW Statement on the Iraq War Logs - A Call for Accountability

by Iraq Veterans Against the War

The recent Wikileaks release--The Iraq War Logs--has shed important light on the high rate of civilian death and widespread atrocities, including torture, that are endemic to the war in Iraq. As veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are outraged that the U.S. government sought to hide this information from the U.S. public, instead presenting a sanitized and deceptive version of war, and we think it is vital for this and further information to get out. Members of IVAW have experienced firsthand the realities of war on the ground, and since our inception we have spoken out about similar atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are asking the U.S. public to join us in calling on our government to end the occupations and bring our brothers and sisters home.

The U.S. government has been claiming for years that they do not keep count of civilian death tolls, yet the recent releases show that they do, in fact, keep count. Between 2004 and 2009, according to these newly disclosed records, at least 109,032 Iraqis died, 66,081 of whom were civilians. The Guardian reports that the Iraq War Logs show that the U.S. military and government gave de facto approval for hundreds of reports of abuse, torture, rape, and murder by Iraqi soldiers and police officers. These recent revelations, along with the Afghan War Diaries and Collateral Murder footage, weave a picture of wars in which the rules of engagement allow for excessive violence, woven into the fabric of daily life with the U.S. military presence acting as a destabilizing and brutalizing force. The Iraq War Logs, while crucial, are reports produced in real time and themselves may be slanted to minimize the culpability of U.S. forces. Still, they represent an important part of evidence in

assessing the reality of the Iraq war, evidence that can only be improved by the further release of documents and information and corroboration by individuals involved. To this end, our members are reviewing both Wikileaks' Afghanistan War Diaries and the Iraq War Logs to identify incidents we were part of and to shed more light on what really happened.

IVAW has been speaking out about these atrocities and abuses since our inception. Our organization is comprised of over 2,000 veterans and active duty troops who have served since September 11, 2001. We demand immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, reparations for the people of those countries, and full benefits for returning veterans, including mental healthcare. At our March 2008 Winter Soldier hearings in Maryland, more than fifty veterans and active-duty service members publicly testified about the orders they were told to carry out in these countries, sharing stories of excessive violence, trauma, and abuse.

Josh Stieber and Ethan McCord, two IVAW members who were in the unit captured in the Wikileaks "Collateral Murder" video, have spoken out about how the incidents caught on film are not isolated cases of 'a few bad soldiers' but rather, part of the nature of these wars. "There has been little accountability in the wars that my friends and I once thought represented everything that was noble about our country," wrote Stieber in anticipation of the Iraq War Logs. In an open letter, Stieber calls for policy makers to "take accountability for these wars and the full truth about them."

As veterans, we know that the violence documented in the Iraq War Logs traumatizes the people living under occupation. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan also have been marked by staggering rates of military trauma and suicide among the troops tasked with carrying out these orders. Last year, 239 soldiers killed themselves and 1,713 soldiers survived suicide attempts; 146 soldiers died from high-risk activities, including 74 drug overdoses. A third of returning troops report mental health problems, and 18.5 percent of all returning service members are battling either Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or depression, according to a study by the Rand Corporation. Our Operation Recovery campaign, launched on October 7, seeks to end the cruel and inhumane practice of redeploying troops suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Military Sexual Trauma, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other mental and physical wounds--a practice that underlies the continued occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Critics attacking Wikileaks founder Julian Assange's character are attempting to use ad hominem arguments to detract from the real issues and divert public attention from the content of the Iraq War Logs. We urge honest and thorough discussion of the content of these documents, and we think this discussion must not be sidelined. Furthermore, with past Wikileaks revelations, U.S. administration and military authorities were quick to vilify Army Specialist Bradley Manning who is being accused of leaking these documents to the public. Yet we insist that it is the right of the U.S. public to have accurate information about wars that are being fought in our name and funded by our tax dollars, and we support the public sharing of this information. Exposing war crimes is not a crime.

Government deception is inexcusable. Authorities have kept this information secret in the name of 'national security,' but what they really are afraid of is public opinion, which they know will turn against them if the truth about these wars gets out in the mainstream. An accurate count of Iraqi dead, acknowledgment of torture, and full disclosure of the role of private contractors are facts that should be made public in a democracy. We believe that real national security is created where government transparency and accountability, free press, and an end to spending on illegal wars and occupations are the norm. Continued silence and secrecy is a grave threat to the security of the Iraqi and Afghan people, and we demand openness, accountability, and real discussion of these revelations.

We grieve for the Iraqi and Afghan lives that were lost and destroyed in these wars. We also grieve for our brothers and sisters in arms, who have been lost to battle or suicide. The Iraq War Logs bring home part of the harsh reality of these wars, a reality that we--as veterans--live with everyday. We demand a real end to both wars, including immediate withdrawal of the 50,000 "non-combat" troops who remain in the Iraq. The Iraq War Logs underscore the urgent need for peace, healing, and reparations for all who have been harmed by these wars. The first step is to bring our brothers and sisters home.

Please forward this [link](#) to friends:

In Solidarity,

Iraq Veterans Against the War.

From the [Independent UK](#):

Pack Assange Off to Guantanamo, US Conservatives Tell Obama

by David Osborne in New York

The White House and the Pentagon have failed to confront and contain the threat to national security posed by WikiLeaks and its founder Julian Assange who should be arrested as an "enemy combatant", voices on the US conservative right insisted yesterday.

Frustration with the failure of President Barack Obama to combat WikiLeaks has grown since the release of almost 400,000 secret documents that exposed the extent of abuse of prisoners in Iraq by US and Iraqi personnel.

One Fox commentator went so far as to call for the WikiLeaks figurehead to be treated as a prisoner of war. Christian Whiton, a former State Department official, demanded that America seize Mr Assange and deal with him and other WikiLeaks staff as "enemy combatants". Calling for "non-judicial action" against them, he implied that they should be in Guantanamo Bay with Taliban inmates.

Nor was Whiton alone in his stance. "The government also should be waging war on the WikiLeaks web presence," an editorial in the conservative Washington Times railed this week. Other infuriated conservative commentators made similar demands on websites of such august institutions as the neoconservative thinktank the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

However, the right is not united in its response to the latest paper blizzard. Before the cries for muscle-flexing began, some on the right thought they saw snippets in the new documents to stand up the discredited theory at the centre of the 2003 invasion - that there were weapons of mass destruction hidden in Iraq. "There were weapons of mass destruction after all," was a weekend headline in the New York Post, also Murdoch-owned.

Closer inspection of passages referring to the discovery of equipment by coalition forces in Iraq reveal they were left over from early efforts by Saddam Hussein to build a deadly arsenal and do not point to his concealing hardware when the invasion was ordered.

But it is the inability of America to silence WikiLeaks that is stirring the greatest passion among conservatives. On the AEI website, Marc Thiessen, a former spokesman for the late Senator Jesse

Helms, noted a Twitter post from Admiral Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, saying that the leaks put lives at risk.

"Mullen is right - the release of these documents was irresponsible and dangerous. But, with all respect to the chairman, a Twitter posting is not exactly the cyber response that these WikiLeaks disclosures warrant," he wrote.

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The sooner the world comes to realise the truth of 9/11 the sooner sane government, peace and justice are restored.

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-2170.html>