



**Support our troops,
bring them home now,
and take care of them
when they get here.**

Newsletter – March/April, 2015

MFSO Steering Committee REPORT

War – Our Solution to Everything

I write today as the mother of an Army Infantry Officer who served in Afghanistan, in the middle of intense fighting, at the height of President Obama's Surge.

We have been told by the Obama administration, national security and intelligence officials that there is no military solution in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East, yet that is our continued response. More than 8-1/2 years in Iraq and almost 14 years in Afghanistan have not created a safer, more stable Middle East. In fact, U.S. and NATO involvement have created substantial "blowback" and put us on the path to Endless War.

General McChrystal stated "for every innocent person you kill, you create 10 new enemies". In Iraq, civilians account for 90% of all deaths. Afghanistan has had overwhelmingly high civilian deaths as well.

With no solid strategy in place, we are once again at war in Iraq. Many Americans have shown a willingness to go along with more war, with very little questioning or objection.

We must not forget our recent past in Iraq. Instead of bringing democracy, we invaded a country with no weapons of mass destruction, no Al-Qaeda presence until after the U.S. invasion, we learned of U.S. torture, Abu Ghraib, and the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. We must not forget the less than 1% who served and bore the burden of war, those loved ones who will never return, and all those who were wounded in body, mind and soul.

Many Americans may be quick to forget the tragedies of war but the people of Iraq & Afghanistan, where the fighting takes place, have not forgotten. Nor have our military men and women and their families.

Once again we hear fear mongers trying to convince us war is absolutely necessary – that we must take extreme action – lest we be destroyed. This fear mongering led us into Iraq & Afghanistan with disastrous results – are we really willing to let the fear mongers, who were wrong about everything, lead us into more war?

Yes, ISIS is a danger but U.S. led bombing is not the answer. When the U.S. takes the lead in fighting ISIS it is seen as a continuing crusade against Islam. Since the Iraq airstrikes began ISIS has exponentially added recruits. ISIS is a symptom of the problems in the Middle East. Even if we could wipe them out, it would not resolve the regional issues that created ISIS.

The fight against ISIS should be led by the Muslim countries in the region – waged through political, social and economic development not bombs. And yes, the U.S. has a role to play in diplomatically addressing the real grievances behind the violence to bring about a stable Middle East.

There are no quick fixes. Well over a decade of war proves war is not the answer to violent extremism, it is in fact, a catalyst. Americans should reject more war and our military first foreign policy. It is time to stop repeating the mistakes of the past, we need to put our time, money, and intellect into developing a long term strategy that will produce better results than endless war.

War affects us all, only the business of war profits. Together we can still make a difference. We must make our voices heard. Call you Senators and Representative today. **202- 224-3121**

by Mary Hladky, MFSO, MO





MFSO joins *Spring Rising* Event with Message:

**“Don’t Take the Bait!
Bring our Troops Home Now!”**

MFSO will participate in a teach-in, lobbying and the large march on Saturday. A mixer will be held to meet other MFSO members. See below for details. Everyone is welcome!

THURSDAY MARCH 19

9:00 am – 1:00 pm. "Challenging Congress" – a morning of lobbying against U.S. wars- Meet in Rayburn House Office cafeteria. 45 Independence Avenue South. MFSO members will pair up and will be given MFSO literature and talking points

6:00pm – MFSO mixer – conference room, Harrington Hotel- Meet steering committee and other members and voice your opinion about adding Syria to our mission statement. Plus get to know each other.

FRIDAY MARCH 20

10:00am - Brunch with GSFSO member, Kevin Lucey – hospitality room, Harrington Hotel. Kevin and Joyce’s son, Marine Lance Corporal Jeff Lucey, was featured in the book, **THE WOUNDS WITHIN: A VETERAN, A PTSD THERAPIST, AND A NATION UNPREPARED.** by Mark I. Nickerson and Joshua S. Goldstein. Jeff, who deployed early in the Iraq war, battled PTSD after returning home, then, tragically, died by suicide.

Teach-In

District of Columbia Law School. 4200 Connecticut Avenue NW(15 minute subway ride from the Harrington)

3:00 – 4:30: End These Endless Wars: Perspectives from Veterans and Military Families

Speakers: Kevin Lucey(MFSO), Michael McPherson (VFP) and Maggie Martin(IVAW)

SATURDAY MARCH 21

Rally and March

11:00 am- MFSO members meet up at Lafayette Square. Look for the MFSO signs.

Rally: 12:00pm

Gather at Lafayette Square across from the White House
Confirmed Speakers: Cindy Sheehan, Debra Sweet, David Swanson and Brian Becker.

1:00 pm- We will be marching from Lafayette Square through

China Town and end at the Capitol where there will be a brief rally. Along the march route we will be stopping at designated intersections and locations for mini- rallies, actions and speakers. Bring MFSO signs and banners.

For the complete *Spring Rising* schedule go to: www.springrising.org



MFSO Member, Cathy Smith, Honored at International Women’s Day in Los Angeles

“The global theme of this year's March 7 annual International Women's Day event was "A Living Wage for Mothers and All Caregivers." In Los Angeles it was expanded to specify "No to Austerity, Poverty, Prisons and War."

"I came from Missouri to be here today because I want to let you know that what you all are doing really, really matters," Cathy Smith told the audience as she accepted a certificate of appreciation for the care she gave to her son Tomas Young. Tomas was a veteran shot while on duty in Iraq. The bullet to his spine paralyzed him, and she cared for him until his untimely death. Cathy Smith is a long time MFSO member and also has another son in the military. The story of Tomas Young and the sacrifices and suffering they endured is featured in the movie Body of War. These are the same struggles so many of our families face after being injured in war and the movie only addresses the beginning her story to make sure the message that Tomas Young left for all of us is heard.

The certificate read in part, "you are honored by those of us gathered in Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Oakland, London England, Galway Ireland, Lima Peru, Chhattisgarh India." The ceremony was part of a global effort by a coalition representing many organizations to bring to light the work that mothers and other caregivers do. And that such work should be valued at a living wage, whereby mothers and other caregivers would not have to risk poverty and their health to care for a loved one.

Thank you Cathy for your perseverance and for speaking out for all of us!”

by Rossana Cambron, MFSO-CA
Reprinted from the People’s World

MFSO Opposes A New Authorization of Use of Military Force (AUMF)

Here are four reasons we should not be fighting ISIS in the Middle East

1. ISIS isn't that powerful

War hawks claim that "the threat ISIS poses cannot be overstated." [That is itself an overstatement](#)¹. The FBI and Homeland Security both say ISIS isn't a credible threat to the American homeland. The group may be great at using social media to exaggerate its power, but estimates of its troop strength range between 10,000 and 30,000 and most analysts talk about a core group of a few thousand fighters.

2. It's a regional conflict

ISIS controls territory inside Iraq and Syria. But even President Obama concedes that ISIS does not currently pose a threat "beyond that region."

Iraq and Syria—and their neighbors, including Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Kurds—are the ones that must deal with this problem. Iraq's army has more than one-quarter of a million U.S.-trained troops, the Peshmerga almost as many. Iran's active forces number over half a million.

3. What counts as victory

That's a prerequisite for any responsible war plan. As important, his definition of success—we will "ultimately destroy" ISIS—is a goal nobody has ever achieved against any terrorist group. But if the past dozen years have taught us anything—in Iraq and elsewhere—it's that war is more complicated than our leaders ever want to admit. And it's a lot easier to start wars than to win them—or even know when they're over

4. War is not going to stop the spread of ISIS

ISIS thrives because of local political reasons in both Iraq and Syria. This has been driven by local sectarian tensions and a brutal civil war in Syria, and let's not forget the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The ongoing sectarian government of Baghdad has caused millions of Sunnis to rebel against the governments.

Military intervention fixes none of these problems, and in fact it reinforces many of the same errors that helped to create them. Only humanitarian assistance, strictly controlled aid, and renewed diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire and power-sharing agreement in Syria, equal rights for minority populations in Iraq, and a regional arms embargo will defeat ISIS.

Below is a link to a petition opposing the passage of the new AUMF. Please take a moment to review and consider signing.

http://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=10938&track=MFSO20150219&tag=MFSO20150219

DAYS OF ACTION

MFSO is part of a coalition including United For Peace and Justice, U.S. Labor Against the War, and other groups. We encourage you to join actions in your community or organize actions if there are none already planned.

March 19-20

Anniversary of the occupation of Iraq.

April 15

Global day of Action on Military Spending. Trillions are spent on armaments; the global arms trade needs to be curtailed.

April 26

Peace & Planet Rally in New York City on the eve of the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the United Nations (No more nuclear weapons, war, or warming)

Please let us know of any actions planned for your area. Send an e-mail to Pat Alviso at MFSO-OC@earthlink.net so we can spread the word. Let us know if you need any support in planning or publicizing your events.

What War? Everyone!

When your child's away in the fray
Days have 40 hours. Fear and hope might form a dam to clog your throat
You fear that knock at the door
Shaking the floor. Or a call about
the IED explosion that chose *them*
To never dance again

And all the while you hope they'll
Never choke in land mine smoke. Or, have
An RPG round knock them down forever
Or a mortar make them chortle at being mortal.

It might be a sniper who's the piper
Friendly fire the wire that trips them
So many ways that last second may beckon

But you smile- or laugh- at the memory of
Their first solo bike ride
Drawings on the refrigerator
The Best Player Trophy

The homecoming hug says
More than unspoken words

You don't even mind the unseen wounds (at first);
A clueless nation or Chicken Hawk neighbors
Learn your offspring's new needs
And help them get back up to speed
You don't want a survivor who died from suicide

By Horace Coleman
Veterans for Peace Chapter 110, Vietnam Veteran 67-68

MFSO, IVAW, VFP meeting with White House Officials – A Follow-up

In the last newsletter, the MFSO Steering Committee reported about the meeting of a team from MFSO, VFP, and IVAW at the White House in August to discuss our strong opposition to the war in Afghanistan and military action in Iraq as well as our recommendations for the care of veterans and military families. Assurances that the White House would continue to work with our delegation did not materialize. We contacted the WH constantly and got no response. Finally, we found out that the person who headed the Veterans and Military Families office of the Office of Public Engagement left the White House with no one assigned to follow-up with us. We have now reconnected and will give you an update as soon as possible.

Forum on Veteran/GI Suicide

Speakers:

**Kevin Lucey, psychologist,
father of Jeffrey Lucey,
Iraq war veteran who died by suicide**

Brock McIntosh: Iraq Veterans Against the War

Film about Jacob George,
a Iraq War Veteran who died by suicide

Sunday, March 22, 2015
3:00 pm

Goddard Riverside Community Center
595 Columbus Avenue at 88th Street
New York City, NY

Sponsored by: Military Families Speak Out, IVAW, Manhattan Peace Action, Bay Ridge Peace Action, Brooklyn For Peace, Washington Heights Counter Recruitment, Grannies Peace Brigade

Copies of "The Wounds Within" by Mark Nickerson, will be available.

Suggested donation, \$10.00

Group Protests Walmart's Leave Policy for Service Members in Apple Valley

Excerpted from an ABC Eyewitness News-report. Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

By: Rebecca Omastiak

Veterans, Walmart employees and community members met Saturday at an Apple Valley-area Walmart to protest what they claim is an unaccommodating leave policy for military members and their families.

The group delivered a worker petition from more than 14,000 supporters. Lisa Austin, an Apple Valley Walmart associate, launched the petition on Coworker.org after she was reportedly denied leave while her husband attended his drill service with the National Guard. Austin said she requested time off of her overnight shift two months in advance in order to care for her then 7-month-old daughter while her husband attended the service.

Austin said Walmart denied her request and that she now fears she may lose her job the next time her husband is called to serve.

"Military families need time off to take care of their family while the soldier's away, whether it's active duty training, deployment or anything. Just give us the time that we need," Austin said. . . . Walmart said the company would work with her if she needed to take time off in the future due to her husband's military drills."

A Note to MFSO Members

If you have had similar difficulties getting leave to care for your children when your spouse is away for training or deployment, please let us know.

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Bring Them Home Now!

Take Care of Them When They Get Home!



If you have a loved one serving in the military, please join MFSO.

Write to: mfso-oc@earthlink.net

