



**Military Families Speak Out
December 2020
Troops Home Now!**

Editorials from MFSO members:

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So Are We Getting Out of Afghanistan or Not?



President Trump has ordered the Defense Department to cut the number of troops in Afghanistan from 4,500 to 2,500 and Iraq from 3,000 to 2,500 by Jan. 15, 2021- just days before he is set to leave office. Both political parties are livid over Trump's plan to reduce troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, even though most Americans and active duty military are for getting out now. Staying one more day in Afghanistan is not worth any more deaths, injuries, Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) or cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and that includes all the military family members, many of whom have secondary PTSD.

We need to accept the facts about Afghanistan; no one has ever controlled the whole country, even when we had over 100k U.S. troops in country. We controlled the large cities but not the countryside. We have been training the Afghan military/police for over 17 years, and yet some people still say we can't leave before Afghans can protect themselves. I guess we must be poor teachers because I was very good at my job in the military after just one year of training and another year on the job. So it really doesn't make a difference whether we leave tomorrow or 2030; Afghanistan will end up in a civil war. Plainly, endless war means we have no real exit plan.

Pushing through a complete U.S. military departure from Afghanistan in the next two months is not precipitous. After nearly 20 years of war, most of them stalemated, inhumane and corrupt, it is long overdue. American politicians and some people in the military still believe we can win and control Afghanistan; as the Russia and British governments discovered, this is foolish and not even feasible.

How did we end up in this quagmire of endless war? The U.S. military has been at war or engaged in other combat operations in all but about 11 years of our history. Having almost 800 U.S. military bases abroad provides a key to understanding why we have been fighting almost without pause since 1776. These bases have expanded our boundaries, while keeping the country locked in a perpetual state of nearly continuous war that has largely served our country's economic and political interests and left millions of innocent civilians dead, wounded and displaced. While other nations have spent the bulk of their treasury on their people, Americans have invested in a state dedicated above all to preparing and waging war. You only look at the size of our military and consider the growing

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homeless population in the US, to know we must change our priorities and start working to not only save ourselves but the entire planet.

The only thing President-elect Biden needs to know about Afghanistan is that the only way to honor all those killed in endless war is to stop the bleeding and bring all of our troops home now. This does not mean that the 2,451 died for nothing- just talk to anyone who deployed- they died protecting their buddies so they could come home. Too many didn't come home, but we will never forget them. We know we have to stop the wars sometime; there's no point in any more needless deaths, so let's show respect for the lives of our troops and their families and make it now.

Read more about the history of Afghanistan from World History Website: [Link](#)

In the News:

The threat to our security isn't reducing troop levels, it's failing to withdraw them entirely. While it may sound good on paper to keep 2,500 troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq, doing so will perpetuate the decades long military failure. [Link to article](#)

A 'Sacred Obligation:' Jill Biden Pledges Support for Military Families Will Dr. Jill Biden's family ties to the military really help our military families or will her focus only be on helping military kids face endless war? [Link to article](#)

Accelerated troop pullout fuels concern about an accelerated U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. And so the debate and the second guessing continues- If Biden keeps a residual force, that would require a renegotiated deal with the Taliban, which they and the Afghan government have already rejected. Deputy Director of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center reports that the US can't rein in rising insurgent violence, and has contributed to the violence through its own actions that maim and kill civilians, not to mention its complicity in Kabul's corruption. [Link to article](#)

The Case for Getting Out of Afghanistan Now Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller wrote in his introductory memo to the Defense Department, "All wars must end.. and requires compromise and partnership. We met the challenge; we gave it our all. Now, it's time to come home". Withdrawal to a smaller force is... "strategic and feasible, but the Washington foreign policy establishment is the obstacle for total withdrawal of our troops which "inflates threats, exaggerates benefits, and conceals costs". [Link to article](#)

Will US troops actually leave Syria in exchange for hostages? The US seeks the release of two American citizens believed to be held hostage in Syria. President Trump would like to have the victory of bringing hostages home and withdrawing from complicated wars. Could these factors lead to a complete exit in Syria before Trump's exit? [Link to article](#)

MFSO ACTION UPDATES

- Have you met the MFSO board yet? Check out our website at mfso.org and meet the powerful group of MFSO leaders who steer the organization in the right direction to keep us relevant and on the right path.
- A committee made up of MFSO & VFP members has sent a letter requesting a meeting with President-elect Joe Biden and staff to discuss bringing all of the troop's home now. To that end we have signed a joint letter and agreed on points of unity.
- Our board is very concerned about the large influence of the think tank Center for New American Strategy (CNAS) and the potential appointment of Michele Flournoy. CNAS opposes total withdrawal and supports first strike to protect American

interests. Flournoy is the founder of CNAS. Have you called your Senator yet? link to Call to Action

- Hope you've taken a moment to support veteran and whistleblower Reality Winner- sign and send a letter to Pres. Trump/ and send her a note. Be sure to follow strict prison letter writing guidelines on how to write to Reality and send letter to president.

From Jeff's desk

This week I watched an honest, realistic account of returning combat troops from Afghanistan. "Once a Marine" I would recommend this excellent film to anyone who wants to understand what happens to our troops during combat and after coming home. Available free if you have Amazon Prime Video! [Link](#)

Note: The opinions reflected above and in future editorials are not a reflection of any official stance approved by the MFSO board, which meets monthly and posts official positions decided by the board on our website. Your responses and opinions are welcome. If you would like to send your own editorial on any MFSO related issue, please send to mfsooc@earthlink.net

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4,586 American Troops killed in Iraq; 2,451 American Troops killed in Afghanistan

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