

To the Editor:

Posted: 2 February 2006

On Tuesday, members of North Country Veterans For Peace gathered to listen to President Bush's State of the Union Address. This response to his speech is supported by veteran and non-veteran associate members of the group.

Having served in various branches of the U.S. military during WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the Iraq Wars, we listened to the address with great interest. Those of us who are veterans stepped up to serve when called upon and understand, better than most, the real cost of war.

While the President gave lip service to supporting the troops, U.S. deaths are on the rise and veteran's benefits and services are being deeply cut. Depleted uranium, the new "agent orange," developed as a way to dispose of nuclear waste, has attacked the health of our military personnel and has produced devastating birth defects in their children. Over 2000 Americans have died in Iraq; thousands more are permanently disabled or suffer from psychological trauma.

President Bush's claim that the Iraqis are better off than before the American invasion is also disingenuous. Tens of thousands of civilian men, women and children have been killed and injured due to our presence. There have been over 34,000 serious acts of violence in the last year. Fear is the reality for all Iraqis.

While many argue for a strong national defense, we condemn an irresponsible intervention that has put our brave men and women in harm's way. President Bush continues to trade on fear to convince us that he is engaged in a battle against terrorism. However, the facts suggest that his intervention into Iraq has dramatically increased recruitment for terrorist groups.

Once again, the President referred to a "plan for victory" but his words are without meaning. Both veterans and non-veterans in our group desire a plan that would end this war and bring our men and women home. Unfortunately, his words and actions have sent our sons and daughters into another quagmire.

Sincerely,

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Dave Lennox
Miles Manchester (Associate)
Robert Jewett
Edward J. Bage
Ruth Beebe (Associate)
Dale Pondysh
Dale Hobson (Associate)
Kim Bouchard (Associate)
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