

AN APPEAL TO THE U. S. SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

from
Robert Y. Watada

I am writing to you on behalf of my son, Lt. Ehren Watada, to ask for your advice and consideration on his current moral dilemma.

His mother and I raised Ehren to be the kind of young man who keeps his word, tells the truth, is kind and considerate to others, and brave enough to rise to the occasion, if called upon to defend his country.

After the 9/11 attacks, my son volunteered to become an American serviceman. He served in South Korea, earning kudos from his superiors. He fully intended to go to Iraq. Upon his in-depth reading of reports of the false premises for the use of force in Iraq, Ehren's conscience began to trouble him. He offered to resign but, was denied. He offered to be deployed to Afghanistan, but was denied.

All service men and women swear an Oath of Service to defend the Nation and the Constitution from enemies, both foreign and domestic. It is not always easy to identify one's foreign enemies, as the failure to find WMDs in Iraq demonstrates. Great care should be exercised before asking our children to kill other human beings in the name of our country. All proper procedures should be followed by those of you who also take an Oath of Office to protect the Nation and our Constitution.

When young Americans volunteer to don the U.S. Armed Services uniform, you who make the laws, and issue the orders, owe them a duty of trust, that what they are being asked to do is within the law.

My son, Lt. Watada, offered to risk his life and liberty in the service of his country, but he did not agree to give up his soul. He has both a birthright and a duty to the Constitution to obey his conscience and to refuse to commit acts which he considers to be war crimes.

Ehren volunteered when the World Trade Center and Pentagon were attacked. He did not wait to be asked to do it. His priority was to defend his country.

My son's recent refusal to obey his orders to deploy to Iraq is not motivated by a lack of loyalty to his country, or cowardice in the face of danger, but rather is based on his duty to protect the Constitution from domestic enemies, by refusing to obey illegal orders and commit acts which are crimes. His refusal to deploy to Iraq was motivated by this moral duty to not commit illegal acts in our Nation's name.

Please consider my son's dilemma and ask yourself what you would like your child to do, faced with the same circumstances, assuming any of you have children in combat. Would you want them to obey any order, regardless if they feel it is wrong? Or, would you want them to have the courage to refuse to commit any act they feel is a crime?

My family and other American families would like to know your opinion on a citizen's Constitutional right to obey their conscience while on active duty in the U.S. Military I am appealing to your sense of responsibility to clarify that right/duty to taxpayers and voters whose family members are being paid to participate in this war that is based on false information.

Our son has always led an exemplary life. To discharge him dishonorably for obeying his conscience will sully his impeccable record in an unfair way. The Nuremburg and Hamdan rulings support his position. The Senate Intelligence Report, Phase 2, released on Friday, September 8, 2006 indicates there are still many unanswered questions that need to be examined.

Surely imprisoning Ehren, as though his action is on a par with those convicted of torture and abuse of prisoners, is a travesty of justice and insulting to his honorable character. Ehren has never committed a crime and it is inappropriate to imprison him for refusing to commit war crimes.

As elected officials, you owe the voters public hearings on these questions, to help Americans understand the issues and laws involved. Americans need to hear testimony from Iraq veterans, military, constitutional, medical, psychiatric, and criminal law experts. Spiritual leaders should also be invited to testify on one's right to one's own soul in time of war.

My son was honoring his oath of service to protect the Constitution from domestic enemies when he refused to participate in a war based on fraudulent representations to Congress. Please honor your oath of office and hold accountable those who circumvented our Constitution to take us to war in Iraq.

As members of Congress, each one of you has a duty to protect our service men and women from being ordered to commit acts which violate international laws. Like you, Ehren was misled about the existence of WMDs in Iraq and the degree of threat this posed to our country.

Sincerely,



Robert Y. Watada

BYW:lb

cc: House and Senate Leadership

Senate Committees on Foreign Affairs, Intelligence, Armed Services, and Veterans' Affairs

House Committees on International Relations, Intelligence, Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs

The National Press Club