

SPEAKING FOR THE MOTHERS

There is only one way to stop the madness **BY ADELE KUBEIN**

EDITOR'S NOTE: The comments below were made at the March 17 peace rally at the Federal Building in Eugene by Adele Kubein of Military Families Speak Out. Kubein, who lives in Corvallis, teaches at OSU. Her daughter Makesha joined the National Guard in 1999 and was trained as an engineer. More on her story can be read at www.motherspeak.org/intervs/adelek.html

My daughter was permanently disabled in Iraq. I am here not just to explain to you why we need to defund the war but to tell you that each one of you has the power to keep mothers like me from having to face the horrors we now face every day. I have suffered my own losses. My first daughter died in a fire when she was three; my second daughter and I will never again climb a mountain or ride our bikes together. She will carry the bloodstains of war for the rest of her life. But even though I would speak of my own sorrow, I have a more important mission. I am here today to speak for all mothers.

While people argue about whether to withdraw and about funding issues, at least three soldiers die every day and at least 100 Iraqis die as well. This is urgent! There is no time to argue; there is only one way to stop this madness and that is the same way the Vietnam War was finally stopped: by cutting off the funding. NOW!

The common argument you hear is that if the funding is cut, soldiers will suffer. Do you really believe that Congress and the people of America are going to leave their soldiers stranded in Iraq because funds are cut?



Adele Kubein

There is enough money right now in the budget to bring them all back. Don't use our loved ones as an excuse to commit more murder. What hurts our troops is to force them to be targets in the middle of a civil war; it is to force them to kill as my daughter was forced to. If they come home now, there is no need for equipment, Humvees and ammo because there will be no more war.

The other argument you hear is that if we leave, there will be massive bloodshed. Well, there *is* already massive bloodshed. We have to accept that we cannot stop it, no matter how many troops we send. Our troops are a

tiny force compared to the millions of Iraqis engaged in and victimized by the civil war raging in Iraq. We would have to send at least six times the troops we have now to stop it; we don't have that many troops, period.

Just because we broke it does not mean we can fix it. Our troops are the magnet that attracts death to the Iraqi people. It is bitter indeed to realize that now Iraq will have to stop its own war, and will have to pick up the pieces of what we broke, but we cannot do it. The sooner this nation accepts that, the sooner we all will heal. Our presence inflames the divisions that have been created by war and oppression. As long as our troops are there, humanitarian and rebuilding aid cannot go on; every aid agency will be seen as a tool of the U.S. until we leave.

I plead with you to join us in calling your representatives daily. Tell them we voted them in so they would stop this war now. Choose each word wisely, as if lives depended on them — because they do. Talk to those around you every day. For each person you reach, a mind may be changed, and that is one more person who joins us in the struggle to end this carnage. It is up to us. We stopped Vietnam, and we can stop this war.

Please show my daughter and the other soldiers that you cared enough to speak when they cannot, to do what they cannot. They promised to serve; we are the ones that have the freedom and the power to bring them home. As we dawdle, another Iraqi mother holds her dead child; another American mother hears the sound of military boots on her porch. You have the power to stop this grief. Help us. **EW**

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