

**For Immediate Release**  
**Veterans For Peace: [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)**

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CONTACT: Mike Ferner 419-360-3621  
Michael T. McPhearson 314-303-8874

Today President Obama announced what he termed, "a comprehensive, new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan."

The President went on to say, "I want the American people to understand that we have a clear and focused goal: to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaida in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the future. That's the goal that must be achieved. That is a cause that could not be more just. And to the terrorists who oppose us, my message is the same: We will defeat you."

The national organization Veterans For Peace takes issue with the President's characterization of the conflict in Afghanistan and his policies.

Vietnam War Navy Corpsman and National President of VFP, Mike Ferner, said, "The President has already escalated the war in Afghanistan by an additional 17,000 troops. Today's announced escalation of 4,000 more troops is another step into the swamp. It doesn't matter if those steps are big or small, we're still going into the swamp and we need to turn around. At some point we will undoubtedly stop bombing and start talking. The sooner we do that the better."

Ferner, who as a Corpsman attended hundreds of wounded troops, added, "Some of what the President said will help the situation, but it is all undercut by the basic belief that more force will provide security. U.S. use of force in the region has caused the deaths of thousands of civilians, greatly increasing opposition to U.S. presence and undermining confidence in the local government. Our military operations in Pakistan have aggravated an already unstable environment, and expanding them will only increase instability. Obama's plan will ensure more of the same in both countries."

VFP Executive Director Michael T. McPhearson stated, "President Obama expressed concerns for the women and girls in Afghanistan. VFP shares those same concerns for the women serving in our Armed Forces who are more likely to be sexually assaulted than their civilian counter-parts. What I do not hear in this discussion is the fact that those who suffer the most in war are women and children. War does not protect the vulnerable, it throws social mores out the window and women are seen as spoils. VFP urges the President to rethink his plan of escalation and put the full force of U.S. efforts in diplomacy, economic assistance and humanitarian aid."

In their August, 2008 Annual Convention VFP passed a resolution calling for: "the government of the United States to immediately withdraw all military and intelligence forces from Afghanistan and Pakistan; to provide humanitarian aid directly to the people of Afghanistan, in non-coercive forms, to help the Afghan people rebuild their own nation and their lives in cooperation with other nations in the region; and to allow the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own government without interference by the US."

The resolution also renounced the claim that the war in Afghanistan is somehow the "right" war and reaffirmed their position that war must be abolished.

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Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace is an official Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the U.N.

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