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## **VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES SAY PENTAGON STATEMENTS ON WIKILEAKS AIM TO CLOUD REAL ISSUES**

Our organizations represent veterans and military families. We have personally carried the burden of the war in Afghanistan, along with wars past. We are glad that the truth about the war is getting out to the public with the recent 92,000 documents on Wikileaks. Hopefully, this will inspire a massive outcry against this war that is wreaking so much destruction to our exhausted and demoralized troops and their families while draining our national coffers.

Obama administration officials are trying to spin events in their favor. Their words must be carefully examined. On the one hand, in an effort to downplay the significance of the release, we are told the documents contain no new information.

On the other hand, some high ranking members of the U.S. military are trying to: 1) intimidate anyone else from doing the same thing and 2) turn public opinion against whoever leaked the current documents. Towards those goals, we are told that grievous harm will surely come to many Afghans and U.S. military personnel – if not now then certainly later.

A more damning statement could hardly be imagined than this one from Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "The truth is they might already have on their hands the blood of some young soldier or that of an Afghan family."

While we certainly do not wish to see one additional person put at risk in this tragic, wrongheaded war, we must state the following as clearly as we can.

As veterans and families with members in the military, we consider statements like Admiral Mullen's to be nothing more than calculated attempts to turn public attention away from the real problem – the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan that has already caused the deaths and injuries of many thousands of innocent people all the while millions of Americans are jobless and face foreclosure or eviction.

This suffering in Afghanistan and this bleeding at home will continue as long as our troops remain in that country. Congress must stop funding this war. We must bring our troops home now, take care of them properly when they return and pay to rebuild the damage we have caused to Afghanistan.

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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: Exposing the true costs of war and militarism since 1985.*

*Military Families Speak Out is an organization of people opposed to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who have relatives or loved ones who are currently in the military or who have served in the military since the fall of 2002.*

*Iraq Veterans Against the War is a national organization comprised of active duty, guard, and reserve troops and veterans who have served since 9/11. We call for immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, reparations to the people of those countries, and full benefits for returning service members.*

