



Contact: Ateqah Khaki, Riptide Communications, 509-301-5282
Nancy Lessin, Military Families Speak Out, 617-320-5301

**MILITARY FAMILIES RESPOND TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF TROOP EXTENSIONS
AND 15-MONTH TOURS OF DUTY IN IRAQ**

Military Families Affected By These Changes Are Available for Interview

April 12, 2007, Nationwide – **Military Families Speak Out (MFSO)**, an organization of over 3,300 military families opposed to the war in Iraq, issued the following statement regarding yesterday’s announcement of troop extensions and 15-month tours of duty in Iraq:

In announcing 3-month extensions for soldiers currently serving in Iraq, and 15-month standard tours for those yet to deploy, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates stated, “What we’re trying to do here is provide some long-term predictability for the soldiers and their families....” Military Families Speak Out members know too well what is predictable: more of our loved ones coming home in flag-draped coffins, more of our loved ones being severely wounded, more of our loved ones suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, more of our loved ones taking their own lives because of what they saw and did in a war that should never have happened, and more of our families being damaged and destroyed.

Yesterday’s announcement of 15-month tours of duty is only the latest manifestation of the “backdoor draft” that military families and our loved ones have been living with. Troop extensions began in 2003 and have continued to plague service members and their families, along with multiple deployments, “stop-loss” orders, and overuse of National Guard and Reserve forces.

While we are outraged by this latest abuse of our troops, we know that the real problem is that four years ago our loved ones were sent off to fight and die in an unjust and unjustifiable war, a war based on lies, a war that this administration and Congress are refusing to bring to an end.

Military Families Speak Out continues to call on Congress to use its “power of the purse” to bring real predictability to our servicemen and women and their families by fully-funding the safe and orderly withdrawal of troops from Iraq, funding the care they need when they get home, and de-funding the war.

To speak with members of Military Families Speak Out affected by these troop extensions and 15-month tours, contact Ateqah Khaki, Riptide Communications, 509-301-5282 or Nancy Lessin, Military Families Speak Out, 617-320-5301.

For more information about Military Families Speak Out, please visit: www.mfso.org