

Patriotism  
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Winter Solstice, 2007

My patriotism has been questioned because of my work for Peace and Justice; this has caused me to think about what patriotism means. To many, it means to love one's country, but what does that mean? Do I love my country? Why? What makes my country worth loving more than any other country?

For me the answer is simple; it's our Constitution that makes our country worth loving. The rights we are guaranteed make our country special.

When I was in the Marine Corps, I took an oath to defend the Constitution against all threats foreign and domestic. I take that oath very seriously; I did not un-take that oath when I got out of the Marine Corps.

As I look at what has happened to my country over the last seven years, I am blown away by how much destruction has been done to our Constitution and how little outrage there is coming from the public. If another country were trying to take away our rights, people would be fighting mad. I can't figure out why there is so much complacency as our government subverts our Constitution.

In World War II, the "Greatest Generation" fought to save our way of life. We fought against the idea that any country has the right to preemptively attack another country. We fought against the ideas that "might makes right," "the ends justify the means," and some people do not deserve human rights. Now my country stands for all these ideas. And to some, that is patriotic.

My government has started an illegal war with lies, and now argues that torture is okay, spies on the public illegally without warrant, does away with due process, and kidnaps people all over the world.

Where are the checks and balances? Our Supreme Court protects these violations by ruling that considerations in the name of national security come before the Constitution. Well, I've got news for them. There can be no national security without the Constitution.

Many believe that it's the Republicans' fault, but you would have to be more than blind not to see that the Democrats are partners in these crimes; they control both the funding and the agenda. They argue that they don't have enough votes to stop a filibuster. What a total load of crap. They control the agenda; if they don't put funding for these crimes on the agenda, no one can filibuster or veto.

Our Constitution is being destroyed by a criminal conspiracy of lies, deceit, and dereliction.

What are we going to do about it? I don't have all of the answers, but I've got some.

- 1) If you are currently serving in the military, it is your Duty, Obligation and Responsibility to disobey an unlawful order. This war is in violation of international treaties that the US is party to. That makes any order to deploy to or participate in Iraq an illegal order that must be disobeyed. We executed German and Japanese soldiers in WWII for obeying unlawful orders.
- 2) Under the “No Child Left Behind” Act, every high school is required to release students’ personal information to military recruiters or lose federal funding. The parents of children can sign an “opt-out form” to keep their personal information private. Sign those forms. Demand that the School Board notify parents and students of this policy in the Code of Student Conduct book and mail the forms to the parents at the beginning of every school year.
- 3) I am a proud Marine and there is good that can come out of military service. The problem is that presently there are criminals in charge of the military and they are not being responsible with the lives of our troops. As long as these criminals are willing to expend the lives of our military unnecessarily, it does not make sense to give them our children. **Right now, the military is not a good or a smart choice.**
- 4) We, the people, are the highest authority in the United States of America. The president and the men and women who serve in the US Congress and on the Supreme Court are our employees. It is our job to control what they do in our name and with our money. We need to start doing our job.
- 5) We must not allow our federal representatives to come to town without our being there to make sure that they know we want an end to all of this. No “business as usual” for these people who have been a party to this.
- 6) We must tell Speaker Pelosi to take “subversion of the Constitution” off of the table and put “impeachment” on.
- 7) We must refuse to vote for anyone who voted for this war or voted to fund even *one penny* of it. Period.
- 8) We must understand that loyalty should be given to the Constitution, not to a political party.
- 9) We must let our government know that under-funding the Veterans Administration is an injustice to veterans and not patriotic under any definition.

I am a patriotic citizen, but I will never be so blindly patriotic that I act like the patriotic German citizens of WWII.

***“The best way to honor Veterans is to learn from their sacrifices.”***

**- Veterans for Peace**