



Contact: Ateqah Khaki, Riptide Communications, 212-260-5000 ateqah@riptideonline.com
Nancy Lessin, Military Families Speak Out, 617-320-5301 mfso@mfso.org

Media Availability

MILITARY FAMILIES AVAILABLE TO RESPOND TO PRESIDENT BUSH'S SPEECH OUTLINING HIS NEW COURSE IN IRAQ

January 9, 2007 – *Nationwide* – Members of Military Families Speak Out (MFSO), an organization of over 3,100 military families who are opposed to the war in Iraq, are available to comment on President Bush's new course for Iraq. Many of these families expect that their loved ones can or will be affected by any escalation in troop strength in Iraq, either because they will be extended beyond their scheduled return date or because they will be deployed early.

“As politicians in Washington, DC, including President Bush, scramble for ways to extract themselves from the political fallout of the war in Iraq, they are doing the unconscionable: gambling in a no-win situation with the lives of our loved ones and the loved ones of others,” said Nancy Lessin, a co-founder of Military Families Speak Out. “It is incumbent upon Congress to now use their power of the purse to stop funding for continuing the U.S. military occupation of Iraq and use the funds necessary to bring our troops home quickly and safely.”

“De-funding the war is *not*, as Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and others have suggested, ‘abandoning the troops’ or ‘decreasing financing for American troops’; it is the most supportive thing that Congress can do,” said Charley Richardson, another co-founder of Military Families Speak Out. “If they fail to act to support our troops in this way, and vote for funds to be used to continue the war, then this will no longer be George Bush's war – it will be the Democrats' war. If they buy it again, they will own it.”

“Going through my son's first deployment to Iraq – to a war that should never have happened – was the hardest thing I've ever experienced, and he is still irreparably scarred,” said Tina Smarro of Cohoes, NY whose son is in the Army. “Now there's talk that he may have to go back as part of Bush's troop ‘surge’, and for what? There are no new troops for this so-called ‘surge’ – it'll be the back-door draft all over again. Troops currently in Iraq, due to come home, will be extended, and those who have already been through so much will be re-deployed.”

For more information on *Military Families Speak Out*, please visit: <http://www.mfso.org>