

A Young Marine Speaks Out

By [Philip Martin](#)

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I'm sick and tired of this patriotic, nationalistic and fascist crap. I stood through a memorial service today for a young Marine that was killed in Iraq back in April.

During this memorial a number of people spoke about the guy and about his sacrifice for the country. How do you justify 'sacrificing' your life for a war which is not only illegal, but is being prosecuted to the extent where the only thing keeping us there is one man's power, and his ego.

A recent Marine Corps intelligence report that was leaked said that the war in the al-Anbar province is unwinnable. It said that there was nothing we could do to win the hearts and minds, or the military operations in that area. So I wonder, why are we still there? Democracy is not forced upon people at gunpoint. It's the result of forward thinking individuals who take the initiative and risks to give their fellow countrymen a better way of life.

When I joined I took an oath. In that oath I swore to protect the Constitution of the United States.

I didn't swear to build democracies in countries on the other side of the world under the guise of "national security."

I didn't join the military to be part of an Orwellian ("1984") war machine that is in an obligatory war against whoever the state deems the enemy to be so that the populace can be controlled and riled up in a pro-nationalistic frenzy to support any new and oppressive law that will be the key to destroying the enemy. Example given – the Patriot Act. So aptly named, and totally against all that the constitution stands for.

President Bush used the reactionary nature of our society to bring our country together and to infuse into the national psyche a need to give up their little-used rights in the hope to make our nation a little safer. The same scare tactics he used to win elections. He drones on and on about how America and the world would be a less safe place if we weren't killing Iraqis, and that we'd have to fight the terrorists at home if we weren't abroad. In our modern day emotive society this strategy (or strategy?) works, or had worked, up until last month's elections.

My point in this; to show that America was never nationalistic. If anything they were giving their allegiance to the state of their residence. This is shown in the fact that the founders created states with fully capable and independent governments and not provinces that were just a division of the federal government. These men believed that America was a place where imperialistic values would be non-existent. Where the people trying to make their

lives better by working hard, thinking, inventing and using the free market would tie up so much of normal life that imperialistic colonization and the fighting of wars thousands of miles away for interests that are not our own would be avoided. They believed this expansion of power could be left to the European nations, the England, France and Spain of their time. However this recent, and current influx of nationalistic feeling has created an environment where giving up your rights, going to a foreign country to fight a people who did not ask for us to be there, nor did their leader do anything to warrant us being there, and dying would be considered honorable and heroic. I don't believe it anymore. I don't believe it's right for any American to go along with it anymore. Yes I know that we in the military are bound by the UCMJ and somehow don't fall under the Constitution (the very thing we're suppose to be defending) but sooner or later there is a decision that every American soldier, marine, airmen and seamen makes to allow themselves to be sent to a war that is against every fiber this country was founded on. I know that when April rolls around I will be thinking long and hard on that decision. Even though we in the military are just doing as we're told we still have the moral and ethical obligation to choose to do as we're told, or to say, "No, that isn't right." I believe that if more troopers like me and the professional military, the officers and commanders, start standing up and saying that they won't let themselves or their troops go to this illegal war people will start standing up and realizing what the heck is going on over there.

The sad fact of the matter is that we are not fighting terrorists in Iraq. We are fighting the Iraqi people who feel like a conquered and occupied people.

Personally I have a hard time believing that if I was an Iraqi that I wouldn't be doing everything in my power to kill and maim as many Americans as possible. I know that the vast majority of Americans would not be happy with the Canadian government, or any other foreign government, liberating us from the clutches of George W. Bush, even though a large number of us would like that, and forcing us to accept their system of government. Would not millions of Americans rise up and fight back? Would you not rise up to protect and defend your house and your neighborhood if someone invaded your country? But we send thousands of troops to a foreign country to do just that. How is it moral to fight a people who are just trying to defend their homes and families? I think next time I go to Iraq perhaps I should wear a bright red coat and carry a Brown Bess instead of my digitalized utilities and M16.

Notice I never once used the word homeland in any of this. I have a secondary point I want to bring up now. Never once was the term homeland ever used to describe the country of America until Mr. Bush began the department of homeland security after the 9/11 attacks. Taking a 20th century history class will teach us that the most notable countries in the last century that referred to their country in this way were Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Hitler used the term fatherland to drum up support, nationalistic support, for his growing war machine. He used the nationalism he created in the minds of the Germans to justify the sacrifice of their livelihood to build the war machine to get back their power from the oppressive restrictions the English and French had put on them at Versailles. This is the same feeling that has been virulently infecting the American psyche in the last hundred years. This is the same feeling that consoles a mother after her son is killed in an attempt to prosecute an aggressor's war 10,000 miles away. It's also known as Patriotism these days, but I say, "No more." No more nationalistic inanity, no more passing it off as patriotism. Patriotism is learning, and educating oneself to understand what their country really stands for.

✖ I heard a lot during the memorial service about how the dead Marine did so much good for others and how his helping others was like a little microcosm of America helping because we have the power to do so. Well if we have the power to help people why aren't we helping in Darfur where hundreds of thousands of people have died in the last 10 years. Saddam was convicted and sentenced to death for killing 143 Shiites who conspired to assassinate him. (I know all you "patriotic" Americans would be calling for the heads of anyone who conspired to assassinate supreme leader Bush). And yet we spend upwards of 1 trillion dollars and nearing 3,000 lives to help these Iraqis when they don't even want us there. Not to mention we don't have the legal justification to be there. I guess we should wait around for the omnipotent W Bush to decide who we should use our superpowerdom to help next. It's about time to throw him and the rest of the fascists out. Moreover it's about time to start educating Americans about their past and history, and letting them know that imperialistic leaders are not what the founders of this great country wanted.

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Philip Martin [[send him mail](#)] has been a Marine for 2 years. He is in the infantry (a "grunt"), and spent 7 months in the al-Anbar province of Iraq. He went on more than 180 combat patrols in and outside of the city of Fallujah, where he was hit with 2 IEDs (luckily never injured) and was involved in a number of firefights. He is currently stationed in Twentynine Palms, CA, and due to return to Iraq for a second deployment in April 2007. He is 21-years-old.

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