

UNITED FOR PEACE OF PIERCE COUNTY

"We nonviolently oppose the reliance on unilateral military actions rather than cooperative diplomacy."

**SUPPORT LT. WATADA'S HONORABLE DISCHARGE,
DEFEND THE RULE OF LAW**

Statement adopted June 15, 2006

We call on the U.S. Army to honorably discharge, without a court-martial, First Lieutenant Ehren Watada, who has announced he will refuse to deploy to Iraq. [Note: and did so refuse on June 22]

At a press conference in Tacoma on June 7, Lt. Ehren K. Watada announced that he will refuse to obey the order to deploy with a Fort Lewis Stryker brigade being sent to fight in Iraq later this month. His reason: the Iraq war is illegal, and therefore "as an officer of honor and integrity I must refuse that order."

Media coverage and commentary on Lt. Watada's refusal to fight in Iraq have focused on questions of character and circumstance. Is Lt. Watada courageous or cowardly? Did he join the military for idealistic or self-interested reasons? Is he motivated by faithfulness to his oath as an officer to support and defend the Constitution, or is he a willing pawn of the peace movement? Lost in these ad hominem discussions is his argument about the nature of the Iraq war. Admirable as he is as an individual, it is Lt. Watada's legal argument that is of central importance. Every American should study it.

Lt. Watada stressed in his statement that his decision to disobey the order to deploy is based primarily on his belief in the rule of law. Appearing with him on June 7 was Marjorie Cohn, president-elect of the National Lawyers Guild and professor of law at Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego, who has written extensively and testified about the illegality of the war. She said: "Lt. Watada is correct when he says this is an illegal war."

Lt. Watada's argument that he is legally obligated to disobey the order to fight in Iraq is not complicated. It can be summed up in one sentence. **Together, the United Nations Charter, international conventions the U.S. has signed, and the Nuremberg Principles make wars of aggression crimes against the peace and create a legal obligation not to participate in them, and Article VI of the United States Constitution makes these documents part of American law as well—in fact, makes them "the supreme Law of the Land." . . .**

Lt. Watada is calling on all Americans to stand up for fundamental principles. "It really is time to start sacrificing something for democracy," he said in Tacoma. Asked what he expected of Americans who hear about his case, he said: "Please—don't just say, 'That's a great guy, I support him.' We *all* need to make sacrifices." . . .

United for Peace of Pierce County appeals to all Americans to rally around Lt. Watada as he stands up in support of a fundamental principle: the rule of law. We call for Lt. Watada to be honorably discharged, without a court-martial, and we appeal to all Americans to heed his call to make sacrifices in order that our government may be, in the immortal words of John Adams, "a government of laws and not of men."

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Ways to Support Lt. Watada

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Write a support letter or postcard or poem or create something colorful on poster board and send it to Lt. Watada, c/o Mosqueda, 2725 Westwood Dr., NW, Olympia, WA 98502. His parents will deliver them to him when they visit him (he's confined to post at Fort Lewis).
- Send information about this case to friends around the country and ask them to write letters to their editors. There is a virtual media black-out on Lt. Watada's refusal to deploy to Iraq almost everywhere but the Northwest and Hawaii (his home state), and the word needs to get out.
- Download the petition at www.thankyoult.org (half-way down the page) and get LOTS of signatures.