

## **CLEGG SAYS PAUL IS UN-AMERICAN?!**

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*Guest column by Free State activist Matt Simon*

*The following analysis suggests that peace-and-freedom presidential candidate Ron Paul is the favorite candidate of military personnel. It appears originally on the Website New Hampshire Insider and is reposted here by permission of the author. Matt is leader of NH Common Sense and Send the Right Message, organizations devoted to rational, just drug policies.*

Sometimes politics upsets me and even depresses me. Yeah, it's true. And the years following 9-11 have been tough years for me personally. They've been tough on every American, especially those who have been called to fight and their families. They've been tough on everybody else in lots of small ways which add up to one big loss of liberty and prosperity. And that's why I think the United States should have adopted a very different foreign policy a long time ago -- if we'd done a lot less meddling in the Middle East over the last century, I truly believe the 9-11 attacks would never have occurred and that we would be living in a freer, more peaceful, and more prosperous nation. Our economy would be much stronger, and as a result there would be less aggression in our society; we would also have lower taxes and lower degree of dependence on government.

Unfortunately, we Americans don't know much about war, and war is a big business of which we should be suspicious. We know how to watch it on TV, where we are safe from having to see the coffins and other pertinent details, but can any of us imagine being anywhere near the receiving end of a missile? I can't. Most Americans can't. There hasn't been a war on American soil since the 1860s, and compared with the carnage most nations have experienced in the last century, Pearl Harbor and the 9-11 attacks barely even make the list. People may not be used to hearing that, but it's true.

In the United States, we learn about World War II chiefly through the eyes of our veterans who experienced its horrors firsthand and came home to cope with their various nightmares. In Europe, by contrast, you can just ask anybody who was alive, and that may be why the European collective consciousness remembers the lessons of war so plainly when Europeans are asked to help invade and occupy a country. One of my college students in 2002, a freshman girl in her first semester away from Germany, described the prevailing German position as follows: "We just think war is hardly ever worth it."

And after the mess we have made in Iraq, who can argue with that? (The Germans used to have a different position, you know, but they seem to have learned their lesson.)

Personally, I've never been anywhere near a war, and I never want to go, but I have sat next to a lot of veterans on a lot of barstools, and I've listened to some stories that have made my head spin. I can sum those stories up in one quote from General William Tecumseh Sherman: "It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell."

It's one thing that we don't see the coffins. It's at least as bad that we fail to see the pain of soldiers who return from war. Some of them come back not knowing who their friends are, or not sure. In the time I've spent holding "Bring the Troops Home!" signs on the sides of streets, I've been accosted twice and thanked at least three times by ex-soldiers. Based on that data set, it's clear that the only way to support all the troops at once is to be schizophrenic.

If we observe the media, we're led to believe that candidates like Rudy Giuliani and John McCain speak for all the troops in Iraq and elsewhere, but we have to reexamine that assertion. We know that the architects of our nation's current foreign policy have been widely criticized for their lack of military experience and failure to interpret simple intelligence, and we should understand that nobody feels the brunt of their mistakes more painfully than our troops in combat.

Unfortunately, it's rather difficult within the military hierarchy for individual soldiers or even generals to register dissent against a bad idea at the top. Heck, that would be like a police officer speaking out against Drug Prohibition.

So do the soldiers want to come home and stop playing police officer in a civil war? Well, let's see who they support with their dollars to become the next commander-in-chief.

The answer is actually Ron Paul.

***Who is Ron Paul?***

Ron Paul is the ten term Texas Congressman who has opposed the invasion of Iraq since long before it commenced. Ron Paul is a Republican. And according to even Fox News, Ron Paul has raised more money from military donors than any other candidate for the U.S. presidency.

This news prompted a number of interesting reactions. A caller to Sean Hannity's radio show strung Hannity along quite nicely before dropping the news into the host's lap. Hannity swerved from sweetness into sour. "Congressman Paul's not going anywhere," he snapped. "Are you a Congressman Paul supporter?!?" And we see that yet another friendship ends over this damned war...

Perhaps more telling is this letter from a marine who read this professor's blog, which reports that Paul has raised over 50% of military money given to Republican candidates:

*Thank you so much for your article. I am currently in the Marine Corps and I thoroughly enjoyed your article. It boosted my morale and reinforced what I only suspected to be true. I know that Ron Paul is the only one that truly speaks for the military. As an active duty Marine, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution. I take that oath very seriously and see Ron Paul as the only candidate that has actually proven through his actions that he cares about preserving our Constitution and our constitutional republic.*

*If there were more public awareness about Ron Paul and what he stands for, I imagine that he would have nearly unanimous support among military members and veterans. However, his fame is spreading fast and I'm sure a lot of ground will be covered between now and the election in 2008.*

Un-American?!?!

In light of all this, consider this juicy tidbit from Kevin Landrigan's Nashua Telegraph column: "'That guy (Paul) is the most un-American person in this country as far as I'm concerned,' said Hudson Republican Sen. Robert Clegg, a big Huckabee backer."

Are the servicemen and women who contributed to Paul's campaign un-American as well, Senator Clegg? Do you endorse this statement by your strongest supporter in New Hampshire, Governor Huckabee? And is there ever going to be any end to the Bush-era madness in the top ranks of the Republican Party?

Those of us who think like Paul about foreign policy are not un-American. We're just looking beyond the surface and seeing what another soldier, Spc. Alex Horton, 22, of the 3rd Stryker Brigade, observed in his blog:

*President Eisenhower warned of the growing military industrial complex in his farewell address. Since Dick Cheney can now afford solid gold oil derricks, it's safe to say we failed Ike miserably. After losing two friends and over a dozen comrades, I have this to say: Do not wage war unless it is absolutely, positively the last ditch effort for survival. In the future, I want my children to grow up with the belief that what I did here was wrong, in a society that doesn't deem that idea unpatriotic.*

Horton and other soldiers have been blogging aggressively against the war, and military leadership apparently knows better than to think these bloggers can be forced to stop. Perhaps they know by now to expect blowback.

### **The Constitution**

Paul's prescription for preventing another fiasco like Iraq is that we should follow the Constitution and always require a declaration of war from Congress. This would at least require a rational discussion about war by the body of government which is, in theory, closest to the people. Somebody like Senator Clegg may think that is a nutty idea, and that the president should be more like a king, but the delegation of war power to the legislature was written into the Constitution (by men who had seen war) for an excellent reason.

Did they really mean it? Let's ask James Madison, fourth U.S. president and principal author of the Constitution:

"The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature."

While we've got Madison on the line, let's ask him what he thinks of war in general:

"Of all the enemies to public liberty, war is perhaps the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other."

Madison's views, it appears, would be quite unwelcome at a Republican debate, just as Congressman Paul was quite unwelcome making anti-war arguments on the house floor during the carefully scripted run-up to our invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq. The media didn't cover it much, but some of us watched him on C-SPAN, even before YouTube; there he was, just being the Ron Paul he is today, telling the truth about blowback and the unintended consequences of aggressive war.

The difference is that now people are listening.

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