

# Rants From The Rookery

Monday, April 23, 2007

## Soldier, thinker, progressive Democrat

Something that a wingnut cannot get his mind around. Jason Kander's last post in his journal about his deployment to Afghanistan to his return home.

Today, Afghanistan is the war in which so much of our national security is at stake, yet it is the forgotten step-child of the war on terror. The baddest of the bad guys are along the border with Pakistan, reaching out and striking us throughout Afghanistan, but also throughout the world. This spring, things will only get worse. Yet we have only about 20,000 American troops in Afghanistan - roughly the same number by which President Bush intends to escalate our commitment to Iraq.

I'm a Progressive Democrat, so when I get into debates about the war with ill-informed, indoctrinated regressives who don't know me well, they generally throw Rush's talking points at me, insinuating that I love my country and support the troops just a bit less than them. Whether you've served or not, love of country isn't about blind faith. It is not about a piece of cloth that I wear on the shoulder of my uniform, but about an idea, about Americans themselves. I have little patience for those who claim to love America but clearly can't stand the majority of Americans. As a progressive, my beef with President Bush isn't that he's fighting a war, it's that he's doing it wrong. I want to win every bit as badly as he does, if not more, but I believe that means the symbol of America can't just be a soldier with an M-16.

It must also be a peace corp volunteer armed with the knowledge to improve crop yields, an American diplomat holding court on the rule of law, and a doctor curing the sick in a village clinic. It must be, for all intensive purposes, dollars. Young men with good jobs, food on the table, and subsequent honor in their homes do not become terrorists, let alone suicide bombers. It is not always necessary that we spread the American way of life so much as the American standard of living, because new economic choices beget a demand for political choices. Political choices breed open societies that are less likely to lash out at the United States. And sometimes all of that can happen without shedding blood.

Sometimes we must take the fight directly to our enemies. There are people in this world who need killing and there is no one better at meeting their needs than the US Army, but for the rest, the Army is not the best tool. The foot soldiers of the world could sometimes become productive citizens with the proper distractions, while the ringleaders simply need to be dispatched from this mortal coil.

I really believe our President fails to understand all of this and it worries me greatly. I volunteered for this deployment and now I'd like to stay home with my wife for a while, but if my country calls again, I will no doubt answer that call. I hope that we can salvage this mess just enough to ensure that my next deployment is not to Syria, Iran, or Pakistan.

Posted by ellroon at 4/23/2007 09:12:00 AM



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