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Non-Partisan Veterans and Military Families Organization invites Americans to renew a personal commitment to Freedom, and to reject scurrilous attacks on Congressman Murtha

Washington, D.C.: Recent efforts designed to smear an honorable, patriotic veteran like Congressman John Murtha (PA-12) are an attack on all of us. Because Congressman Murtha speaks out based on his experience as a decorated veteran and faithful steward of military matters in congress, some, unable or unwilling to debate the merit of the issues he raises, attack him personally. Such a tactic is an attack on freedom and democracy itself. These efforts are designed to prey on Americans' fear, and are an abuse of Americans' sense of reason, in an effort to link fear to people's personal patriotism.

“Such attacks inspire veterans, current military service members, and military families to stand up and stand with Congressman Murtha,” Matt Cary, President of Veterans and Military Families for Progress (www.vmf.org) said recently. “For veterans, military service members, and military families, the color of politics on this issue is red-white-and-blue, it is American, blind to political party, clear and perceptive in its connections to our founders' sense of freedom.”

“Freedom not only allows us to speak out, freedom *requires* that we speak out whenever we see abuse of power or inappropriate action or policy, even if the abuse or policy is initiated by our own government,” Cary added.

“VMFP and numerous other organizations speak out now to reveal the error and blindness, the abuse and callousness of those attempting to marginalize the efforts of Representative Murtha, decorated Marine veteran, patriot, and zealous supporter of military, veterans and defense programs throughout his career,” Cary explained.

“Those of us who serve (or who served) in one of the branches of the United States military raise our right hand and take an oath of allegiance to our country. Our families share in the experience and in the meaning of the oath which survives formal separation from the military after we return home,” Cary said. “Living the oath continues. Living the

meaning of the oath is the essence of the very freedom our military pledges to protect. Congressman Murtha's speaking out reminds us all of our obligation to ask the difficult questions he is asking and to explore those very sensitive issues he raises."

"The price of liberty is not to acquiesce, submit, or surrender to authority, but to act with courage, commitment, and resolve; to speak truth to power, even if we stand alone," Cary continued.

VMFP stands shoulder to shoulder with Congressman Murtha who speaks the truth out of love of country. We stand beside Congressman Murtha who reflects the wisdom of a veteran's depth of love for his country and its entire people, including those who discredit themselves as they attempt to discredit him. VMFP recognizes Congressman Murtha knows the price of freedom and he lives its responsibility.

As a nation, we have choices to make. "Do we support freedom, or attack its defenders? Do we open ourselves to the wisdom held by those with whom we disagree, and engage in civil, meaningful discourse, as the framers of the Constitution envisioned?" Cary asked.

We (www.vmf.org) believe that a meaningful debate on the merits of life-and-world-threatening issues is long overdue and that men and women like Congressman Murtha should be lauded - not demonized - for taking a lead in this important discussion. It is time for Americans to reject the politics of division and hate-filled baseless campaigns against people, not issues, which are calculated to ruin good people who disagree with presiding power. It is time all Americans join veterans, current military members, and military families and demand frank and open debate on the issues at hand. It is time all Americans say "enough" and stand with Congressman Murtha, and against those who would see our Constitution, our very flag, dishonored

Veterans and Military Families for Progress is a 501(c)(4) organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. It is a 21st Century organization made up of members from across the country, and from across the breadth of rank and military services, who served, are serving, or are members of families of those who have heeded the call to serve their country in the U.S. military.