

## Disagree with Murphy, but don't question his integrity

By FRED ALLINGHAM

I am a life-long Democrat and a seven-year veteran of the United States Air Force. Thankfully, I never had to engage or even be near combat.

I have known Congressman Murphy for a little over two years when, upon my move to Pennsylvania, I became interested in his campaign as well as those of Joe Sestak, Lois Murphy and Chris Carney. We do not hang out together. We are acquaintances only.

The "Swift Boat" attacks on John Kerry in the 2004 election were reprehensible because for the first time in my recollection, a group of ex-military men used lies and innuendos to attack the honor and integrity of another ex-military man. Well it looks like Richard Staedtler, in his recent Guest Opinion, has taken a page out of the Swift Boat book in attacking incumbent Congressman Murphy, who served in Iraq.

Because I supported Murphy, I have heard him speak on several occasions and have read his pieces in this paper and read pieces about him in many other newspapers and magazines. I have never once heard Patrick Murphy claim he speaks for the 82nd Airborne Division or all veterans, a status Mr. Staedtler is apparently claiming for himself.

It is a typical tactic of the ideologue to make an accusation that has no basis in fact and then proceed to disparage the person one claims to be guilty of the accused act. It is also a typical tactic to use emotional phrases to form one's argument as in "cut and run." Would he declare President Ford a cut and run failure for his pull-out of our troops from Vietnam in 1975?

Staedtler goes on to rehash other issues to bolster his arguments, even accusing Gov. Rendell of trying to keep servicemen votes from counting because they arrived late. Republicans would be the first group screaming if Rendell had extended voting hours because a particular group had trouble getting to the polls on time. Laws and rules are made to be adhered to and not just for one's convenience.

And let me remind you ideologues out there. Iraq was a war of choice not necessity. It was initiated with the "army you have not the army you want," according to then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. So President Bush is trying to create a stable Middle East? Maybe he didn't know that Iraq was stable... brutal, perhaps, but stable prior to our invasion. Maybe he didn't know that Israel, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates are also in the Middle East and stable.

If there is a place for our troops in the war on terror it is in Afghan-istan and on the border between that country and Pakistan where Osama Bin Laden apparently roams freely. Whatever happened to Bush's promise to get him dead or alive? This Republican administration took its eye off the goal in order to sidetrack into Iraq. Oil? Revenge? Permanent presence in the form of bases and the biggest embassy in the world? Who knows?

Patrick Murphy, besides being a combat veteran, is now an experienced congressman who, if you believe the news reports and letters to the editor, has done some very good work in Congress. He actually has a mind of his own and does not vote lock step with the Democratic Party. And I think Staedtler is wrong about Murphy.

I am grateful that in America we have the right to disagree with policies, with procedures and processes that we feel may infringe on our rights, and to publicly air our desire to get our troops safely out of Iraq. But those who use lies and smear tactics should be ashamed.

We are all Americans. We just have different opinions. And I think we should declare the United States of America a "No Friendly-Fire Zone."

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