



**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20318-9999

31 January 2006

Mr. Philip Bennett
Managing Editor, *The Washington Post*
1150 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20071

To The Editor of the *Washington Post*:

We were extremely disappointed to see the editorial cartoon by Tom Toles on page B6 in the January 29th edition. Using the likeness of a service member who has lost his arms and legs in war as the central theme of a cartoon is beyond tasteless. Editorial cartoons are often designed to exaggerate issues – and your paper is obviously free to address any topic, including the state of readiness of today's Armed Forces. However, we believe you and Mr. Toles have done a disservice to your readers and your paper's reputation by using such a callous depiction of those who have volunteered to defend this nation, and as a result, have suffered traumatic and life-altering wounds.

Those who visit with wounded veterans in local hospitals have found lives profoundly changed by pain and loss. They have also found brave men and women with a sense of purpose and selfless commitment that causes truly battle-hardened warriors to pause. Where do we get such men and women? From the cities, and farmlands of this great Nation – they serve to be a part of something bigger than themselves. While you or some of your readers may not agree with the war or its conduct, we believe you owe the men and women and their families who so selflessly serve our country the decency to not make light of their tremendous physical sacrifices.

As the Joint Chiefs, it is rare that we all put our hand to one letter, but we cannot let this reprehensible cartoon go unanswered.

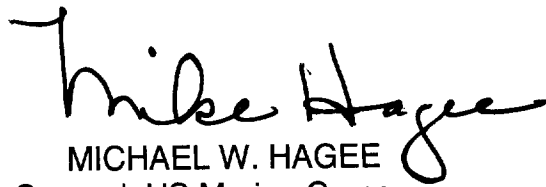
Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Peter Pace in black ink.

PETER PACE
General, US Marine Corps
Chairman
Of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Handwritten signature of Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr. in black ink.

EDMUND P. GIAMBASTIANI, Jr.
Admiral, U.S. Navy
Vice Chairman
Of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



MICHAEL W. HAGEE
General, US Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps



PETER J. SCHOOMAKER
General, US Army
Chief of Staff



MICHAEL G. MULLEN
Admiral, US Navy
Chief of Naval Operations



T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
General, US Air Force
Chief of Staff