



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on February 20, 2012

Veterans for Ron Paul Plan Presidents' Day March on White House

According to a [report published in the *Washington Times*](#), the march will take place on Monday, February 20 — President's Day. Participants will gather at the base of the Washington Monument at noon and then proceed on to the White House at 2 p.m.

In an interview with the co-founder of Veterans for Ron Paul published in the *Washington Times*, [Adam Kokesch explained](#) the impetus behind the formation of his organization. "We want a commander-in-chief who will be decisive, put America's security first, and only send troops into harm's way with a clear mission. Ron Paul is the only candidate with a pragmatic and principle foreign policy," said Kokesch.



Kokesch is also a member of another veterans' advocacy group known as the Iraq Veterans Against the War. He, along with Nathan Cox, founded the Veterans for Ron Paul in order to give a voice to the scores of veterans who back the Texas Congressman's campaign for the presidency.

According to the group's [Facebook page](#), Veterans for Ron Paul makes its pitch for members:

If supporting the troops is important to you, Ron Paul is your candidate! For veterans and active duty who support Ron Paul and want to see him elected President in 2012. This page is also for anyone who supports veterans speaking out for freedom.

Plans for the Presidents' Day rally were announced during a New Hampshire event where Kokesch and Tom Woods spoke to a throng of Paul supporters.

In a statement subsequently released on the Ron Paul Forums, [Kokesch provided insight](#) into the inspiration for the march, as well as details of the expected logistics:

In solidarity with Cpl Jesse Thorsen, we, the founders of Veterans for Ron Paul 2012, Nathan Cox and Adam Kokesch, propose a Veterans and Active Duty March for Ron Paul on President's Day, Monday, February 20th, giving us enough time to plan and promote, and in plenty of time for an impact on Super Tuesday, March 6th. We would apply for a proper permit from the Parks Department and coordinate with appropriate authorities to gather in the vicinity (at the base if possible) of the Washington Monument, have a brief chance for veterans to speak, nothing special, possibly even as little as a soapbox and a bullhorn, but we'll see. Then, at a designated time, line up in formation on 15th St NW facing North towards Constitution Ave NW, march in formation to the White House, turn our backs to the White House, then "present arms" (hold a hand salute) to a folded flag for as many seconds as service members have died since Obama took office, then march silently back to the Washington monument and fall out. This could be followed by a designated time and place for media availability, and/or a reception to take place at another



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location. This has the benefit of being effective even if we only have a platoon-sized element of participants, but imagine if we could have an impressive number of vets and even active duty soldiers participate in this gesture! How many would join us in demanding that Ron Paul be recognized as the choice of the troops? We could encourage individuals to wear something symbolic of their service, like a piece of uniform like a hat or a patch and carry proof of service. We could invite active duty troops to participate in full recognition of the regulations of NOT being in uniform or to come in defiance of those regulations. It is an absurd proposition to say that members of the military supporting candidates in uniform would be construed to represent official positions of the government and rules regarding free speech for members of the military have only been used to silence dissent and keep the true will of the troops from being relevant in the American political discourse. Well, NOT ANY MORE!

Kokesh is a veteran of the Iraq War, serving as a corporal in the United States Marine Corps. In 2004, he was stationed in Fallujah. He was discharged in 2007 after receiving the Combat Action Ribbon and Navy Commendation Medal as a result of combat seen in Iraq. Kokesh ran an unsuccessful campaign for Congress in New Mexico's third Congressional District.

When asked by the *Washington Times* what issue the organizers of the march planned to highlight, Kokesh responded:

I think it's sad that if any other candidate had this much support of the troops, we'd be talking about this race as if it was over. It's not over because it's a message that some have failed to understand despite its clarity.

It's upsetting when you hear debates about whether we should have 100,000 troops or 130,000 troops in Afghanistan instead of whether or not we should be policing the world or basing our foreign policy on the golden rule of treating others the way you want to be treated.

Kokesh informed the *Washington Times* that Karen Kwiatkowski, a congressional candidate from Virginia's Sixth Congressional District, will be a featured speaker at the event. Kwiatkowski is a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. Although formerly an outspoken member of the Libertarian Party, she is running for Congress as a Republican.

It is no paradox that so many veterans are coming out against the U.S. government's ongoing prosecution of the various illegal, undeclared foreign wars. Constitutionalsists recognize that only Congress is granted the power to declare war and that any armed conflict carried out in defiance of that enumeration is unconstitutional and detrimental to the safety of our nation. That is the paradox.

As a war veteran and a veteran of anti-war activism, Kokesh was asked by the *Washington Times* if he believed it was difficult in the current political climate to be an anti-war conservative. Kokesh replied:

I think it's getting easier and easier to be anti-war and conservative these days. It's detrimental to free-trade, and it requires vast amounts of government spending. People are beginning to realize that a big government foreign policy is not conservative.

The issue of sanctions is also something that conservatives are beginning to wake up to as well. Sanctions have always been an old weapon that stronger nations have used against weaker nations in order to get what they want.

But people are starting to realize that sanctions are contrary to the ideals of the free-market. So I think being able to be a principled anti-war conservative is getting even easier.



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When asked his opinion of the National Defense Authorization Act, Kokesh said:

The scary part about the National Defense Authorization Act isn't just that it allows the military to arrest US citizens without a trial or due process, it's that it gives government employees a cover for their actions.

The government has always had the power to do this, but now they're protected by law. The Obama administration does not care about the rule of law any more than the Bush administration did.

At the conclusion of the protest, supporters and participants are invited to attend a reception featuring "libertarian musicians." The entertainment will begin at 7 p.m. with doors opening at 6.



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