

GI SPECIAL #163



REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: US soldiers prepare to leave their base on a patrol around Tikrit. (AFP/Jewel Samad) **BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**

Occupation In Full Retreat

**Resistance Attacks And Workers
Opposition Kill Iraq Privatization
Plan;
New Iraqi Army Slashed**

By Rajiv Chandrasekaran
Washington Post Foreign Service December 28, 2003

BAGHDAD, Dec. 27 -- The United States has backed away from several of its more ambitious initiatives to transform Iraq's economy, political system and security forces as attacks on U.S. troops have escalated and the timetable for ending the civil occupation has accelerated.

Plans to privatize state-owned businesses -- a key part of a larger Bush administration goal to replace the socialist economy of deposed president Saddam Hussein with a free-market system -- have been dropped over the past few months. So too has a demand that Iraqis write a constitution before a transfer of sovereignty.

With the administration's plans tempered by time and threat, the U.S. administrator of Iraq, L. Paul Bremer, and his deputies are now focused on forging compromises with Iraqi leaders and combating a persistent insurgency in order to meet a July 1 deadline to transfer sovereignty to a provisional government.

"There's no question that many of the big-picture items have been pushed down the list or erased completely," said a senior U.S. official involved in Iraq's reconstruction, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "Right now, everyone's attention is focused [on] doing what we need to do to hand over sovereignty by next summer."

While the diplomats maintain those goals are still attainable, the senior official said, "ideology has become subordinate to the schedule."

With goodwill toward Americans ebbing fast, Bremer and his lieutenants have also concluded that it does not make sense to cause new social disruptions or antagonize Iraqis allied with the United States. Selling off state-owned factories would lead to thousands of layoffs, which could prompt labor unrest in a country where 60 percent of the population is already unemployed.

A similar philosophy extends to the disarmament of various militias backed by political groups. Although the occupation authority wanted to quickly disband the Kurdish pesh merga militias by moving members into the new army and police force, U.S. officials have not pressed the issue with Kurdish leaders, who remain strong supporters of the American occupation. U.S. officials are also taking a measured approach toward a Shiite militia whose sponsoring party is the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

At the same time, the occupation authority has substantially decreased the number of new recruits it intends to put through a three-month boot camp designed to build an improved, professionally trained army. Instead, the occupation authority is increasing the ranks of police officers and civil defense troops, who can be deployed faster but receive far less training and screening than the soldiers.

Privatization, the official said, illustrates the dilemma well: It is a step that needs to be taken -- and that Bremer wanted to take -- but it has been deemed too difficult and dangerous to accomplish now.

Bremer's chief economic adviser over the summer, Peter McPherson, advocated a speedy move toward privatization.

But as resistance attacks grew more intense, security worries quickly trumped economic ambitions in Bremer's office. No one wanted to do anything that would increase the number of jobless Iraqis who might be recruited to fight the occupation. Practical concerns also surfaced: The closure of Baghdad's airport to commercial flights meant few investors could travel to Iraq.

In late July, the debate took a grim turn. **After refusing to rehire dozens of workers who had been dismissed before the war, Aziz, the director of the vegetable oil company, was gunned down on his way to work. His killing sent a wave of panic through the Ministry of Industry. All of a sudden, no one wanted to talk about privatization.**

Faced with growing reluctance among officials at the ministry and on the Governing Council, Bremer and his advisers stopped advocating a fast sell-off of state firms. "It's just disappeared from the agenda," an official with the occupation authority said. "It was just too risky."

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Baghdad Bomb Kills Soldier And Wounds 14 More

28 December, 2003 By Luke Baker, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

A powerful roadside bomb blast in a central Baghdad shopping street has killed a U.S. soldier and two Iraqi children, a day after attacks in the holy city of Kerbala killed six foreign troops and 12 Iraqis.

Sunday's blast wounded at least 14 people including five U.S. soldiers, eight members of the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps and an Iraqi translator working with troops, the U.S. Army said.

"A soldier from the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and two Iraqi children standing nearby were killed when the IED (improvised explosive device) detonated as a convoy was passing," said Captain Jason Beck, a spokesman for the 1st Armored Division. "At this stage we don't know how serious the injuries are."

Beck said the explosion occurred at around 1015 a.m. when the streets of Baghdad's Karada district, a bustling area of shops and stalls, would have been crammed with people.

82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION SOLDIER DEAD IN IED ATTACK

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
December 28, 2003 Release Number: 03-12-28C

FALLUJAH, Iraq – **One 82nd Airborne Division soldier was killed and three others were wounded at approximately 1 p.m. when their convoy was attacked by an improvised explosive device (IED) northeast of Fallujah.** The three wounded soldiers were evacuated to a military medical facility for treatment.

Another Bulgarian Soldier Dies in Iraq

28 December 2003 [Sofia Bulgaria Morning News](#)

One more soldier from the Bulgarian battalion in Iraq has died. This was announced by Deputy Defense Minister Ilko Dimitrov. The man was identified as Lieutenant Nikolay Anguelov Saruev.

On Saturday, four other soldiers from Bulgaria's unit in the Iraqi city were killed in several attacks, two of them against Bulgarians' camps. The bombers also targeted the municipality building.

Dozens of other soldiers from the coalition forces in Karbala were wounded, 27 of them Bulgarians. Earlier on Sunday, it was reported that seven of the Bulgarian soldiers were in very bad condition.

Five Governing Council Members Nailed In Karbala Offensive

December 28 sg.news.yahoo.com

Karbala Governor Akram al-Yasseri said he was in the middle of a meeting when a car bomb blew up by the city hall.

"We were meeting with community leaders at the city hall when we heard an explosion across the town around the university. Ten minutes later, our building shook and glass flew everywhere."

The attack wounded several people who had come to the city hall on routine business, he said.

Five Karbala governing council members or employees were counted among the wounded.



GET THE MESSAGE? A shrapnel-riddled police car sits outside Baghdad's al-Alam police station. (AFP/File/Patrick Baz)

Foreign Contractors Attacked

December 28, 2003; By Andrew Marshall BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Near Mahmudiya, south of Baghdad, gunmen opened fire on a car carrying foreign contractors working with the Ministry of Electricity, killing two Iraqi security guards, police said. A British official said a British contractor was shot in the leg in the attack and was recovering in hospital.

TROOP NEWS

Unprepared Reserve And Guard Troops Hit Hardest

(THANKS TO Vet Peter B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: HE WRITES:)

The article appeared on the front page NY Times on Sat 12/27

December 27, 2003 By ROBERT F. WORTH

"...But recent months have added a grimmer element: large numbers of American men and women who are not battle-tested are being killed in Iraq.

A quarter of all deaths since May 1 have been reservists or members of the guard, many of them older, less physically fit and lacking the combat experience of their recruit counterparts."

"My knees aren't quite as strong as a 26-year-old captain's," said Captain Heintz, a squarely built man who exudes a bullish confidence and works in the rackets section in the Manhattan district attorney's office.

"Like many others in his unit Staff Sgt. Sean Goodridge a firefighter with Squad 252 in Brooklyn, has four children. He worries about them, and wonders whether he will come back from Iraq."

I think that you should feature this on one of the GI Specials.

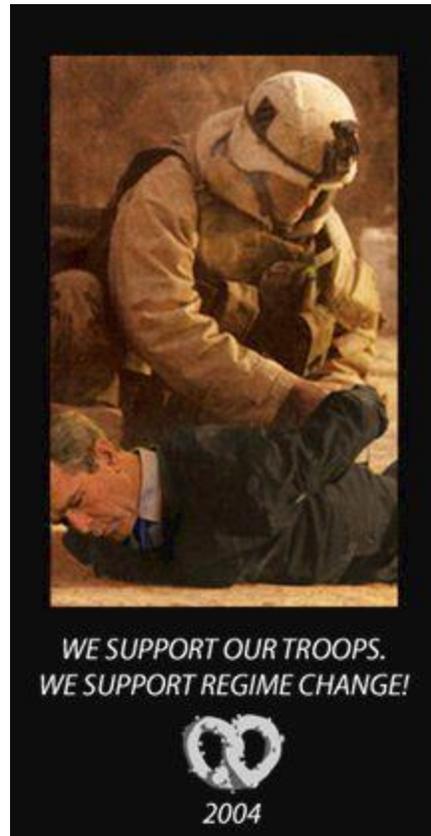
Peace,
Pete B

(Comment: You ain't seen nothing yet. March will be crunch time if Bush plans don't get changed again. By then +50% of the troops in Iraq are supposed to be Guard and Reserves. This prospect has the resistance most eager with anticipation. A parallel would be King George trying to whip Generals Washington and Light Horse Lee with an army of 40 year old London shopkeepers, bookkeepers and dentists in country hotter than the hinges of hell.)

Lies Lies Lies; Still No Body Armor For Guard, Reserves

Army Times 12.29.03 Associated Press

Rep. Tom Allen, D-Maine, is investigating reports that members of Maine-based reserve and National Guard units in Iraq are among those serving without the latest protective body armor.



Allen said families of service members from the Army Reserve's 94th Military Police Company and the National Guard's 1136th Transportation Company told him their sons and daughters have been deployed without the Interceptor vests.

The vests include removable ceramic plates in the front and back that can stop bullets fired by rifles common in Iraq and Afghanistan. **Older-model vests can protect against shrapnel and other low-speed projectiles, but not high-velocity rifle rounds.**

Other congressmen also have denounced the Pentagon, saying as many as a quarter of the 130,000 troops in Iraq lack the best vests because of a sluggish supply chain.

Relatives of some soldiers have resorted to buying body armor in the United States and shipping it to their troops.

(Army Times reported last fall a Pentagon promise that ALL Iraq troops would have body armor by November 15. Today, Pentagon Spokesman Lt. Col. Muckmouth Dumbfuck clarified that announcement, saying the Pentagon meant Nov. 15 2009. (It seems that because of concern about the mood of angry soldiers, much of the body armor originally destined for Iraq had been issued to

members of the Bush cabinet, senior Pentagon officers, and members of Congress instead.)

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. **Send requests to address up top. For copies on web site see:**<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>

War's Casualties Include Children of Reservists

By Faye Fiore Times Staff Writer December 27, 2003

FARGO, N.D. - There won't be any Christmas on the Schmidtke farm this season. Never mind that the artificial tree has been up and decorated in the living room window for an entire year - through the spring thaw and the lush summer, when the cats toppled it twice.

It's there because Sgt. Dan Schmidtke promised his daughters he would take it down just as soon as he got home from Iraq. That was in January, when he left with the rest of the Army National Guard's 142nd Engineer Combat Battalion. He isn't back yet, and until he is, they aren't about to let go of last Christmas, much less celebrate this one.

"I worry about his safety when I'm at school. I can't sleep when my dad's awake," said Dani Schmidtke, 15, who decided she would rather live with a tree for a year than risk jinxing her father's life.

The separation of war has fallen hard on the children of American soldiers, and perhaps none so much as the families of those in the reserves. **This is the largest call-up of reserve forces since the Korean War, and unlike their active-duty counterparts, thousands of so-called citizen soldiers have left behind children caught between two worlds.** Neither military nor civilian, they live outside the vast support network available at virtually every base and fort. Yet they represent an almost invisible minority in a public school system only recently aware that they exist.

Here in North Dakota, nearly half of the Army National Guard has been activated - one of the highest per capita mobilization rates in the nation. Virtually no one denies that the children are showing scars, some probably fleeting but others potentially indelible.

In and around Fargo, where the 142nd is based, teachers report falling grades and rising absenteeism. Some students have come to school in tears, others have turned to

antidepressants to stop their nightmares ("I would have this vision of my dad running toward me, and he would just get shot and disappear.")

One high school junior, refused permission to visit his father and brother in Colorado before they left for Baghdad, dropped out of school and began taking methamphetamines. Another 13-year-old boy regressed to the emotional age of 7 in a breakdown so severe that his father came home.

Unlike an active-duty force composed almost entirely of soldiers under 25, the face of the reserve army is stable and more mature. According to National Guard statistics, as many as three-fourths are married; up to half have at least one child.

In North Dakota, that translates to more than 700 children left without a parent since two units rolled out in early 2003 - a number bound to rise when 500 more soldiers deploy from the 141st later this month, Guard officials said.

Thai Prime Minister Says Troops May Pull Out

sg.news.yahoo.com December 28

In Bangkok, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said Sunday he remained "dedicated" to helping rebuild Iraq despite the first deaths of Thai troops in the war-ravaged nation. There are 440 Thai soldiers in Iraq.

"We will monitor the situation carefully. **We will not say whether we will pull out or not.** As long as we can work, we will work on our humanitarian mission," he said.

A prominent Thai opposition senator, Kraisak Choonhavan, however renewed calls by dozens of opposition legislators for a review of the kingdom's troop commitments in Iraq.

Pink Slips Greet Returning Soldiers

Posted Dec. 24, 2003 [By Timothy W. Maier](#)

When U.S. Army Maj. Joe Cherry left his federal job at the National Labor Relations Board in Chicago because he was called up to fight the war in Iraq he received an unexpected going-away present. The major wouldn't have to worry whether his government job would be there when he returned - the federal government made that decision for him, firing him on the spot.

Cherry is not alone. **In the last five years 5,690 veterans have lost their jobs in both the private and public sectors while activated to serve a tour of duty,** according to a U.S. Department of Labor report presented to Congress this year. Those numbers are

expected to increase because, of the 300,000 deployed reservists, as many as 25,000 veterans are expected to return home in 2005 to reintegrate themselves back into civilian life after a tour of duty

While Cherry received his pink slip prior to being deployed, veterans' advocacy groups charge that many others have yet to learn that the government which sent them to war may have little use for them afterward.

The good news is that Cherry got his job back when he returned home, but he had to live with uncertainty about his employment all the time he was risking his life in Iraq. **In the end he bypassed the bureaucracy in the Labor Department, where veterans may file complaints and follow developments in individual cases. More than 1,000 other veterans annually skip that process as well and take matters into their own hands, according to veterans' advocates.** Cherry represented himself before the Merits System Protection Board (MSPB). Administrative Judge Julia Packard held in October that the firing of Cherry violated the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), which established that veterans returning from active duty have re-employment rights and must be protected against discrimination by their employers on the basis of their recently completed military service or current military obligations.

Capt. Sam Wright [ombudsman for the Reserve Officers Association] and members of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve says that had Cherry pursued the bureaucracy channel, filing complaints with the Labor Department and relying on the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) to investigate the charge, there would not have been a happy ending. Wright notes that the cases handled this way by the federal government rarely produce a positive outcome for the veteran.

"In the almost nine years since USERRA was enacted the OSC has brought not one single USERRA case to the MSPB," Wright charges. He explains that the OSC position has been, "Congress did not consult us before giving us this additional responsibility, and Congress did not give us any additional resources to do the job, so we just say no."

The Labor Department VETS agency also fails to receive a ringing endorsement among veterans, who question whether they are getting a fair shake there as well. According to the latest statistics provided to Congress, VETS handled 4,690 complaints from fiscal 2001 to fiscal 2004. While it closed 90 percent of the cases, veterans received positive outcomes or came to a mutual agreement in only 26 percent of the cases between 2001 and 2003, according to records obtained by Insight.

Uncle Sam Wants You, Eh? Pentagon Tried to Recruit Canadian Inuit

December 24 - 30, 2003 Mondo Washington by James Ridgeway

As Bush was ramping up the Iraq war last winter, Canadian military officials were startled to discover Pentagon recruiters roaming through their nation's native population reserves trying to persuade Inuit and others to enlist in the U.S. military. The Americans started cropping up on the Atlantic Coast in Quebec, in the Sault Sainte Marie area of Ontario, and in Western Canada. A Canadian Defense Ministries report said the U.S. claimed that under the 1794 Jay Treaty it had the right to recruit Canadian native inhabitants for its military because aboriginal Canadians held dual U.S.-Canadian citizenship.

Alarmed top Canadian officials from the ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Defense huddled with Privy Council bigwigs and, screwing up their nerve, decided to tell the Americans that Canada didn't like what was going on. **"As a result of our interaction with the U.S. embassy, a letter was sent from the director, Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, to the vice chiefs of the U.S. military services, reminding them that their recruiters are to refrain from entering Canadian territory,"** Foreign Affairs official Reynald Doiron told The Vancouver Sun earlier this month. The prohibition on recruiting applies to U.S. activities in Canadian high schools and university job fairs as well as on native reserves. The U.S. embassy confirmed that it would stop active recruiting in such places in Canada.

The American recruiting efforts are aimed at filling the ranks of an army stretched thin by the Iraq war and by having to post troops in other world hot spots such as Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. The U.S. currently recruits from among green-card holders--people with permanent resident status who aren't yet American citizens.

Additional reporting: Ashley Glacel, Phoebe St John, and Alicia Ng

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Cleric Says Shi'is "Are Also Fighting" Occupation

BBC Monitoring Middle East. London: Dec 26, 2003

The Shi'i authority, Ayatollah Ahmad al-Baghdadi has charged that the Iraqi Governing Council is working to divide Iraq. In a speech delivered at Al-Sadr city in Baghdad, **Al-Baghdadi said the Shi'is of Iraq were participating in resisting the occupation the same as the Sunnis were.**

[Al-Baghdadi - recording] **They say that the fighting is only in the Sunni triangle. This is a falsehood. The Shi'is are also fighting. In Al-Diwaniyah, Al-Amarah, Basra and in Al-Hillah there is an annihilation of the US army taking place.**

However, there is a blackout. The television channels, which are influenced by foreign parties, say that there are signals and threats from the so-called members of the interim Governing Council not to say that the Shi'is are fighting because there has been an undeclared sectarianism for 80 years, so let us win the battle [sentence as heard]. The question is not a question of Sunnis and Shi'is at all.

Attack On Kurds Baghdad Office

BBC Monitoring Middle East. London: Dec 26, 2003

Text of report by Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) satellite TV on 26 December

[Reporter] At 0610 [local time] on Thursday 25 December 03, the office of the Kurdistan Satellite TV in Al-Mansur District in Baghdad was hit by a rocket. The rocket was fired from the east of the office from a distance of about 400 metres. The rocket hit the upper part of the 5th floor and the lower part of the 6th floor and exploded between the director's room and the correspondents' room. The debris from the rocket scattered in the rooms, causing heavy material damage to the office. Fortunately, the attack did not cause casualties.

“Fuck My Job, I Just Want To See The Americans Fail Here”

12/24/03: (ICH) Dahr Jamail

Over in Alwat Al Rashid, the specific area near the US base, we learn that the base was attacked (as convoys don't travel at night), and the base basically opened up with everything it had in every direction, which has become the typical response, unfortunately.

While driving in a taxi to visit a hospital earlier, we are stuck in a long traffic jam. The police man makes our direction wait as a couple of Humvees pass, then he lets us move.

Our taxi driver says, "I never liked Saddam, but he gave us protection and what we needed to live. Saddam was honey compared to the American's. The Americans are like hell. I'm happy for this gas crisis. Fuck my job, I just want to see the Americans fail here."

He is angry with the traffic jams, the fighting, the terrible daily living conditions people have to struggle against in Baghdad.

"I want to see it get worse," he continues, "I want this to get so bad it proves to the world that all those who celebrated Saddam's capture are thieves and cowards!"

(Remembering Fallujah The Turning Point That Ripped The Mask Off Bush's Lie Of Liberation And Began The Resistance)

Soldiers Fire Into Iraqi Demonstration; 13 Killed

April 29, 2003 By Ellen Knickmeyer Associated Press
FALLUJAH, Iraq

Iraqis interviewed at the hospital insisted it was a peaceful demonstration and that no one was armed or throwing rocks. **One wounded 18-year-old man, Aqil Khaleil, said U.S. soldiers opened fire with no warning.**

"They waited until we came very close, and then they started shooting," he said.

Residents said the shooting continued for at least 30 minutes. Edtesam Shamsudeim, 37, who lives nearby, said her 45-year-old brother died in the gunfire. She was shot in the leg; her husband was wounded.

"We were sitting in our house. When the shooting started, my husband tried to close the door to keep the children in, and he was shot," she said at the hospital, sitting in a chair with a bandaged leg, surrounded by some of her children. Their clothes were stained with bloody handprints.

"Americans are criminals," she said.

The unusual nighttime demonstration sprung from evening prayers held earlier, residents said.

The demonstration Monday was the first organized protest against the Americans in Fallujah, although one soldier was slightly injured recently when a flare was fired toward some troops, according to Nantz.

Residents say they had been growing increasingly disturbed by the presence of U.S. forces.

U.S. forces serving in the area said they have been trained extensively in crowd control. About half of the company involved at the school served in Kosovo, 2nd Lt. Devin Woods said.

Outside the school Tuesday afternoon, people chanted for U.S. forces to leave Iraq. "Go, go USA!" they shouted in Arabic, adding some English at the end: "Go away!"

Soldiers Fire On Protesters Again; Two More Killed

April 30, 2003 By Niko Price Associated Press

American officers said U.S. soldiers in the compound and in a passing convoy opened fire after some protesters started throwing rocks and some shots were fired at the troops.

"The evildoers are deliberately placing at risk the good civilians," said Lt. Col. **Tobin Green** of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. "These are deliberate actions by the enemy to use the population as cover."

Many people believe these are occupying forces. And many of them are still cautious until they see their intentions," said al-Alwani, a former Iraqi exile and opponent of Saddam's regime.

U.S. officers met with Fallujah's mayor and local Muslims clerics in hopes of averting further violence. Several dozen demonstrators clustered angrily outside the town hall where the talks took place; "Get out, get out," some chanted.

Emerging from the meeting, the imam of the Grand Fallujah Mosque, Jamal Shaqir Mahmood, said the Americans insisted the U.S. troops were needed to provide security, "but the people of Fallujah told them we already have security."

"A number of human beings have been liberated and they are out from under the heel of a vicious, brutal regime," Rumsfeld said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"The poor go to war, to fight and die for the delights, riches, and superfluities of others." --Plutarch (46-120), Greek historian

War in Iraq Revealed The Limits Of American Imperial Power

By Martin Jacques The Guardian (UK) December 27, 2003

Martin Jacques is a visiting fellow at the London School of Economics Asian Research Centre

The military opposition to the American occupation has confounded all expectations: no sooner had President Bush declared the war over and Iraq subdued than the real war seemed to start.

The full repertoire of imperial responses to rebellion by a local population has been rehearsed: that these were the remnants of Saddam's regime, or criminals, or al- Qaida sympathisers who had slipped over the border. **As with Eoka, the Mau Mau, the Vietcong, the IRA, and countless others before, there has never been any admission that the guerrilla forces, motley, primitive and disorganised as they may be, enjoy popular support, bear the imprimatur of legitimacy invested in those nationalist forces who resist invading powers.**

As time has passed, and the intensity of the opposition has grown, it has become clear that the opposition is far more diffuse and homegrown than has been admitted, enjoying widespread support, especially in central and northern Iraq. Saddam's capture is unlikely to make much difference to this.

And who should be surprised? The second half of the last century was the era of successful anti-colonial struggles, culminating in the Vietnamese liberation movement. People do not like being occupied from afar by countries of different cultures and races, though the new American imperial hubris - like many before - convinced the Bush administration and our own prime minister that the coalition troops would be greeted like a liberating army,

The occupation of Iraq has taught the US, not to mention the world, that overweening military power is not invincible, but on the contrary, is as vulnerable as ever when it tries to occupy another people's country. Such was, and remains, the lesson of anti-colonial struggle.

Third, it seems possible, even probable, that further American imperial ambitions - as encapsulated in the so-called "axis of evil" - have been laid to rest, at least for the time being, in the streets of Baghdad, Samarra, Tikrit and neighbouring towns.

There was much speculation in the early part of this year about which country would be next - Iran or North Korea. With the occupation of Afghanistan looking increasingly fragile - and more and more vulnerable - and the Iraqi guerrilla opposition obliging an imminent American retreat, at least of a kind, it is difficult to imagine the Americans taking on either of these regimes in the near future.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Occupation In The Toilet

The Center for American Progress has received an **unclassified Defense Department report entitled, "Draft Working Papers: Iraq Status" and dated December 15, 2003,**

Security Forces: The document reports that the CPA is fully 50 percent short of its current goal of training and staffing the critical Iraqi Border Police Service. Some 12,600 – out of a goal of 27,500 – trained officers are on line, with only 100 in training.

Running Low on Fuel: The DoD "Iraq Status" report reveals that the CPA is failing to meet its own production goals on diesel fuel (54% of target goal), liquefied petroleum gas (45% of target goal); kerosene (45% of target goal), and gasoline/benzene (64% of target goal).

Energy Crisis: National electricity production stands at less than 3500 megawatts, far short of the CPA goal of 5,000 megawatts, according to the DoD status report.

Education: DoD reports that "1,812 schools out of 11,939 schools damaged in some way" have been rehabilitated.

Donor Assistance: A DoD graph indicates that less than \$1 billion out of a total \$15 billion pledged by international donors has actually been committed.

The DoD status report once again demonstrates the stark contrast between the Administration's rosy public statements and the realities on the ground in Iraq.

Isn't Liberation Wonderful? Occupation Declares Joining In Rally A Criminal Act

28 December, 2003 By Luke Baker, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Continuing an offensive aimed at stifling widespread guerrilla assaults, U.S. troops seized 10 people in overnight raids in Baquba, site of recent attacks against them.

A U.S. officer said the detainees had joined pro-Saddam rallies in the city, 60 km (38 miles) north of Baghdad.

“Your ‘Democracy’ Is Bullshit”

Posted by Dahr Jamail on December 23, 2003 - 08:20 AM

Khalil, a man living in Ramadi whose two brothers were killed by US soldiers during a raid on their home which the US military admitted, the next day, was a mistake, tells me, "These men were executed, rather than being treated as prisoners of war. So the US military are criminals for killing them this way."

Talib, a 31 year old resident of Samarra I interviewed on the street angrily tells me of an incident that happened to him.

"At an American checkpoint I was dragged from my car and they put their shoes on my chest. Why do they use these actions? Even Saddam Hussein did not do that! This is not good behavior. They are not coming to liberate Iraq!"

Another man in Samarra commented on civilians in the city who picked up arms against the Americans when they opened fire on a market in their city said that these people were not Fedayeen as the Americans accused them of being, but instead, "They are only defending their freedom, their city, their families and their holy places."

Another man in Samarra approaches me with two children by his side. The children are those of his dead brother, slain in the battle.

"This little boy and girl, their father was shot by the US. Who will take care of this family? Who will watch these children? Who will feed them now? Who? Why did they kill my brother? What is the reason? Nobody told me. He was a truck driver. What is his crime? Why did they shoot him? They shot him with 150 bullets! Did they kill him just because they wanted to shoot a man? That's it? This is the reason? Why didn't anyone talk to me and tell me why they have killed my brother? Is killing people a normal thing now, happening everyday? This is our future? This is the future that the US promised Iraq?"

Over and over again I hear Iraqis talking about having to defend their freedom and human rights from the Americans here. Home raids are occurring every day and night throughout Iraq by the same people who came to "liberate" Iraq from Saddam Hussein. To assist Iraq down the "path to freedom."

Yet the US military has taken up residence in most of Saddam Hussein's old palaces throughout Iraq. **They've turned the beautiful Martyrs' Monument to the one million Iraqi soldiers killed during the Iran war into a military base, complete with sandbags and razor wire. No Iraqi will ever be allowed to visit this memorial and the personal belongings and diaries of the soldiers it stands for.** Instead, Americans now occupy the site in hopes of deterring the resistance from firing upon the hallowed ground.

Ghazwan Mukhtar, an Iraqi electrical engineer I recently interview, shared his thoughts about the new "liberation of Iraq":

"You people are talking about democracy. You are not ready for Democracy in the Middle East. Are you ready for 80-90% of a democratically elected government who is supported by 80-90% of the people who are against the US? You are not

ready for democracy in the Middle East! And those figures did not come from myself, they came from a poll conducted by Pew or some other American organization, saying that over 80% of the people in the Middle East are against US policies.”

“If those 80% truly elect the governments, then all of the Arab countries are going to be against the US! So don’t tell me about democracy because this is bullshit! You’re telling me bullshit!”

“Here you cut my telephone number (for talking on ‘Democracy Now’ with Amy Goodman), you arrest journalists, you arrest photographers, you detain people for criticizing, you close Al-Aribiya, you arrested three journalists from Al-Jazeera. You killed journalists during the war in Iraq. And they say they want to liberate us or give us democracy?”

In Saddr City, the poorest area of Baghdad, Iraqis living there used to do so in subsidized housing by the Iraqi government. Now, according to the CPA, 70,000 families in Saddr City are homeless. The subsidized housing has been removed by the CPA, in lieu of privatizing the living spaces there, which now no one can afford.

<p style="text-align: center;">OCCUPATION ISN’T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

\$80 Million Coalition Headquarters Fraud

sg.news.yahoo.com December 28

Back in Baghdad, Iraq's interim trade minister said his ministry was investigating an alleged **multi-million-dollar corruption scam by members of the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority and senior ministry officials.**

Ali Allawi told AFP that he discovered a month ago that a contract for wooden doors, worth about 80 million dollars, had been manipulated.

“We” Who? The Bremmer Follies Roll On

By Dom Stasi Respon DS1@aol.com

"Ladies and gentlemen, we got him!"

Gee whiz, L Paul, that’s great. But I’m not so sure it was "we" who got him.

At the very best it was our troops who got him. I know / didn't get him – unless he was that smelly guy the Beverly Hills cops roused for wiping my windshield. **And unless I'm mistaken, you, L. Paul Bremmer, ain't one of our troops.**

You're the highly paid civilian administrator sitting safe in a Baghdad palace with your "combat" boots up on the gold-leaf table. Combat boots alone does not qualify you as one of our troops. The troops are those people outside the palace positioned to take your bullet. So if / didn't get him, and *you* didn't get him, the "we" is misleading, imperial, or fallacious.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

OOPS: Lickspittle Bremer Says Blair A Liar--- -Until He Finds Out It's About Blair

Dec 27, LONDON (AFP)

The US civil administrator for Iraq Paul Bremer denied the existence of laboratories in Iraq making weapons of mass destruction for which British Prime Minister Tony Blair says US-led teams have massive evidence.

But in a pre-taped interview scheduled for transmission here Sunday, **Bremer retreated when he learned that it was Blair who had made the claim.**

Asked about the claim without being told first of the source, Bremer said: "I don't know where those words come from but that is not what (Iraq Survey Group chief) David Kay has said."

"I have read (Kay's) reports so I don't know who said that," Bremer said in an interview on the British ITV1 channel with Jonathan Dimbleby.

"It sounds like a bit of a red herring to me," the American continued. "It sounds like someone who doesn't agree with the policy sets up a red herring then knocks it down."

But Bremer retreated when told the claims were made by none other than President George W. Bush's staunchest ally Blair.

"There is actually a lot of evidence that had been made public," he said.

BUSH: SADDAM STILL CAPTURED

Approval Ratings Re-surge on Re-announcement

December 28, 2003 www.Borowitzreport.com

In a nationally televised address, President George W. Bush announced on Sunday that former Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein was "still captured."

"Saddam Hussein remains very much in U.S. custody, as he has been for the last two weeks," President Bush said. "To Mr. Saddam Hussein, our message is clear: you aren't going anywhere, Mr. Saddam Hussein."

The President said that he chose to re-announce the capture of the Iraqi madman on Sunday because that day marked the two-week anniversary of Saddam's arrest in Tikrit.

"Today is a day for all Americans to remember that great and special day that occurred two weeks ago," Mr. Bush reiterated.

President Bush's approval ratings, which had leveled off somewhat over the past week, re-surfed after the re-announcement of Saddam's capture.

Those political dividends suggest that the White House may carry through on a controversial plan devised by chief political strategist Karl Rove to re-announce the capture of Saddam Hussein every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

But political scientist David McCrory of the University of Minnesota warned that re-announcing the capture of the former Iraqi dictator on such a regular basis carries with it certain risks.

"Worst case scenario, people start tuning Mr. Bush out, like they do with Tom Ridge," he said.

Another proposal put forward by Mr. Rove is the so-called "catch and release" plan, in which Saddam Hussein would be released every few days, allowed to run away about fifteen yards and then re-captured by U.S. troops once more.

In other political news, Senator John Kerry (D-Mass) raised a much-needed \$8.3 million for his presidential campaign by selling his hair to Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del).

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