

GI SPECIAL #164



THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME

Sonia Fearon-Yorke, mother of Jamaican-born U.S. Army Spc. Marlon Jackson at his funeral, Nov. 23. (AP Photo/Collin Reid)

64% Of Public Say Iraq Casualty Rate “Unacceptable;” Huge Jump In Last 4 Months

By Vernon Loeb WASHINGTON POST Dec. 28, 2003

WASHINGTON - The number of U.S. service members killed and wounded in Iraq has more than doubled in the past four months compared with the four months preceding them, according to Pentagon statistics.

Increases in those wounded in action have been dramatic this fall. Since Sept. 1, 1,209 soldiers have received battlefield wounds, more than twice the 574 wounded in action from May 1 through Aug. 30.

Nor have casualties tapered off since the capture of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein on Dec. 13.

Through Friday, 12 service members have been killed in action and 105 have been wounded with Saddam in custody.

"The rate of casualties over the last four months is an indication that the insurgents are getting better organized," said retired Lt. Col. Andrew Krepinevich, director of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a Washington think tank.

"The insurgents have been encouraged by the fact that they have had some success."

Nevertheless, Americans are clearly growing weary of casualties.

Washington Post-ABC News polling data from late March, during major combat operations, showed that 58 percent of Americans interviewed said they thought the number of casualties in Iraq was acceptable, with 34 percent saying the number was unacceptable.

The latest results, based on interviews conducted Dec. 18-21 with 1,001 randomly selected adults nationwide, indicate that those percentages have flipped, with only 33 percent saying the number of casualties is acceptable and 64 percent saying it is unacceptable.

Support for the war could erode dramatically, defense analysts and public opinion experts said, if casualties continue at a relatively high rate next year and start to have the effect of undermining public confidence in the mission.

The number of soldiers wounded in action totaled 2,333.

The total wounded in action in counterinsurgency operations is now more than three times the 550 wounded in action during major combat operations.

Peter Feaver, a professor of political science at Duke University, said continued casualties could reach a "tipping point" at which the Bush administration loses the most important element in public support for the war: a belief that success is likely.

A single event that causes a large number of U.S. casualties, such as the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon, could push the public toward the tipping point, said retired Marine Lt. Col. Gary Solis, the Marine Corps' chief of oral history.

Eliot Cohen, a professor of national security studies at Johns Hopkins University, said that 3,117 service members "is, indeed, a lot of casualties."

But the effect, he said, is being mitigated by a number of factors, including improved medical care and body armor, that are keeping far more troops alive, and an almost total ban on news coverage of the wounded as they return to the United States at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington.

While stories have been written and broadcast about individual casualties recuperating from wounds received in Iraq, **there has been almost no coverage in the media of large aircraft arriving almost nightly at Andrews carrying war wounded from the battlefield.**

A considerable number of casualties in Iraq have been from the Army Reserve and the National Guard, meaning that while they, too, volunteered to serve, they went to war directly from their homes in communities across America.

"The deaths of Guardsmen and reservists is likely to start hitting home in the near future," said Larry Johnson, a former CIA and State Department analyst with ties to U.S. military Special Forces.

"The deaths of comrades hit them harder and have a more damaging effect on unit morale."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

The Karbala Raid: First Hand Report

By Robert Fisk in Baghdad 29 December 2003 Independent Digital (UK)

A severed arm with a hand still attached to it lay a few metres from the broken gates of the mayor's office in Karbala yesterday, a piece of humanity every bit as bloody as the story of the seventh-century Shia martyr Hussein, the golden dome of whose shrine could be seen through the smog to the east.

They said the arm belonged to a police major - one of 11 cops killed in the four ferocious attacks on Saturday in this most holy of cities - but others claimed it belonged to the man who drove the truck-bomb right up to the gates.

In the parking lot outside, stunned Polish and Bulgarian troops, many of them in the clapped-out Russian vehicles that Saddam's own army used until its demise eight months ago, looked at the scene with a strange mixture of awe and contempt. Four Bulgarians were killed a mile away when another man drove an oil tanker right up to their camouflaged headquarters.

When I approached one Bulgarian officer a few metres from the 20-foot hole that the bomb had blasted in the road, he turned away in tears.

In all, 19 men were killed in the Karbala massacre: 11 policemen, five Bulgarian soldiers, two Thai soldiers and a civilian - one of the highest death tolls for car bombings in Iraq since the country was "liberated" last April. The government of Bulgaria - part of the "New Europe" of the United States Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld - was one of President George Bush's most enthusiastic supporters during the invasion.

Beside Karbala University, where the Bulgarians maintained a battalion headquarters, the scene was of equal devastation. The tanker had been driven across a playing field towards the three-storey building and the soldiers on guard had opened fire before he reached the inside perimeter wire.

Bushra Jaafar, 19, was in biology class on the campus at 12.30pm when she heard the first shots being fired at the truck. "Professor Hussein told us all to get away from the windows because he guessed what was happening," she said at her slum home yesterday. "Then there was a huge explosion and all the glass came in."

Part of the tanker was blasted half a mile from the attack, high into the air, to land in Bushra's own backyard. Her father, Nuri, a 54-year old veteran of the Iran-Iraq war, said the other explosions followed within minutes. This was exemplary timing - four separate attacks in only minutes - and the defenders were woefully unprepared.

The Bulgarians had smothered their headquarters in camouflage netting, just as the Soviet army had once taught them to do, but had not secured the football pitch. The bomber had reached the barbed wire at the main gate when he blew up his truck and part of the outer walls had come cascading into the forecourt.

Bulgarian troops, under Polish command in this central sector of Iraq's occupation force, could be seen wandering along the broken roof and through the piles of rubble outside, kicking the wire that had proved so useless, clambering over the new collapsed mobile phone tower whose iron supports had been sheered away by the blast.

Students in the university had been cut by thousands of splinters of glass - altogether, 126 were wounded and one civilian was killed - **but members of Iraq's new American-paid police force were, as usual, the principal victims.**

Imad Naghim, a 30-year old police recruit, had been sitting opposite the mayor's office in a car with four of his comrades when the bomber arrived. He had spent almost 24 hours in surgery and was in the emergency recovery room at the Hussein Hospital yesterday when he opened his eyes in front of us and waved with a bloody hand and mouthed the words Salaam Aleikum - peace be upon you - at us. His forehead, jaw, body and thighs were encased in plaster and his face was pitted with dozens of tiny red impact points.

"One of his comrades in the car also survived," his uncle Adnan told us quietly. "The other two men in the car were killed instantly. He was very lucky." Imad did not know how lucky he was. Two of his friends were already buried. **But how come the truck had reached the gate of the mayor's office? There are concrete chicanes and a roadblock outside manned by American troops of the 101st Airborne Division and more Iraqi policemen.**

A senior police officer, senior enough to wear a black leather jacket and jeans rather than a uniform, emerged to tell us that the bomber had followed a convoy into the street outside, had simply "tailed" the rear vehicle past the American-Iraqi checkpoint and reached the gate where he immolated himself in a clap of sound and brown smoke that blasted police and civilian cars around the parking lot like toys. An Iraqi police colonel was in the convoy. So how had the bomber known the convoy was coming?

No one in Karbala yesterday mentioned what so many Western security men in Baghdad have long suspected: that the insurgents, the rebels fighting the occupation armies and their Iraqi security men, must have their spies inside the new police force.

How else did the bomber know that he had to wait for the convoy to arrive? There was to be an address by the colonel, the head of the traffic police department in Karbala, and every cop must have known of the meeting. **The other three bombers had presumably been instructed to stage their attacks at the same moment. That is planning beyond what we have previously imagined in Iraq.**

Bushra Jaafar and her college friends had been worried ever since the soldiers set up their base next to the university campus. "We knew they would be a target - the teachers all knew, which was why Professor Hussein understood what the shooting meant." Yet Bushra - a symbol of the best kind of "New Iraq" - was angry when she was told there would be no more classes for a week. "I am ready to go back to my university now," she said.

Across Karbala yesterday, the Bulgarians mounted some half-hearted checkpoints around the city, as if those who had sent the bombers to their targets would cruise the streets 24 hours later.

In the great shrine of Hussein, the martyr cut to pieces in 686 AD, thousands of pilgrims, most of them Iranian, poured through the golden doors as if the Iraqi insurgency was in another century. Almost every major Iraqi city has now been assaulted by bombers. Only Basra has been spared - so far.

And the British are in Basra.

Two U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Mosul

December 29, 2003 By Michelle Faul, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraqi rebel suspects lobbed a grenade and fired on soldiers searching homes for insurgents in the northern city of Mosul on Monday, precipitating a firefight that left three Iraqis dead and two soldiers wounded, the U.S. military said.

In Mosul, soldiers searching for rebels in a residential part of town were attacked by small-arms fire and a hand grenade, said Sgt. Robert Woodward of the 101st Airborne Division, which has its headquarters in Mosul. The soldiers fired back and broke into the house, killing three Iraqis and suffering two wounded who are in stable condition, he said.

Earlier, Maj. Hugh Cate of the same Airborne Division said a U.S. military vehicle in Mosul was attacked by RPGs and small-arms fire but that there were no injuries or damage.

Also Monday, U.S. troops in Mosul defused a roadside bomb found at a major traffic intersection.

The Kirkuk police chief also reported that overnight a lone gunman attacked the office of an organization working with the U.S.-led administration, and killed a police officer guarding the building.

In the northern city of Mosul, U.S. troops guarding a bank fatally shot an Iraqi man who tried to stab them with a knife, said bank guard Mohammed Ahmed. (December 30, Christopher Torchia Associated Press)

TASK FORCE IRONHORSE SOLDIER DIES FROM ILLNESS

December 29, 2003 Release Number: 03-12-30C

TIKRIT, Iraq – A Task Force Ironhorse soldier died from an undetermined illness at approximately 12:20 p.m. Dec. 28 at a logistical support base 10 kilometers west of Baiji. The soldier was in a medical facility at the time of the incident. Medical personnel attended to the soldier immediately but were unable to revive him.

Thailand Sending Soldiers To Protect Soldiers

Thailand said it was committed to Iraq, and will send an additional 30 troops to provide security for its other troops. (December 29 Christopher Torchia Associated Press)

TROOP NEWS

Body Armor Lies Roll On; Pentagon Promised Armor By Nov. 15, Now Say “End Of December”

(Last fall, Army Times reported Rumsfeld promising all troops in Iraq would have body armor “by November 15.” As hundreds more dead and wounded U.S. soldiers flood back to the USA, that promise got buried with the war dead. Now they say “the end of December.” Don’t hold your breath.)

December 29, 2003 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

“It is outrageous for our troops to go without adequate body armor and unconscionable that hardworking people like Pene Palifka need to spend \$1,100 of their own money to buy protective equipment for their family members,” Rep. John Larson, D-Conn said. “The men and women of our military are putting their lives on the line every day overseas and deserve the best, most up-to-date protective gear.”

Sen. John Kerry said stories abound of “fathers and mothers, wives and others paying for personal body armor out of their own pockets and shipping the much-needed equipment to Iraq.



WANTED FOR PREMEDITATED MURDER: THESE COLD KILLERS PROMISED BODY ARMOR FOR EVERY SOLDIER IN IRAQ BY NOVEMBER 15, 2003. THEY LIED. THEY USUALLY DO, ABOUT EVERYTHING

“Lives and blood will always be the cost of war,” Kerry said. “But it is a dereliction of duty to send anyone into harm’s way without basic protective gear. **It is disgusting for family members to have to take on this burden of outfitting their loved ones for war.**”

Under pressure from Congress, troops and their families, the Defense Department put in a rush order for Interceptor body armor that includes ceramic plates for extra protection. **Les Brownlee, acting secretary of the Army, told the Senate Armed Services Committee in November that all troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan should have the improved body armor by the end of December.**

2003 Military Times Poll:

Army Support For Iraq War Barely Over 50%--25% Opposed

(Note that the poll includes officers and also note the paragraph below pointing out many soldiers polled did not feel free to express their real opinions.)

December 29, 2003 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times staff writer

Fifty-six percent of those in the Military Times Poll approved of Bush's handling of Iraq.

"Fifty-six percent is not very high in terms of support," said Andrew Bacevich, a professor of international relations at Boston University and a retired Army officer. "There is plenty of reason to be skeptical of the handling of Iraq on the part of the people who are paying the price."

The Army, which has borne the heaviest burden in Iraq in terms of workload and casualties, also is less approving than the rest of the military: 52 percent approved of Bush's Iraq policy, while about one in four opposed it.

In dozens of follow-up interviews with men and women who responded to the poll, only one would go on the record with objections to the war in Iraq.

Army Spc. Chris Stewart said he spent seven months in Iraq as a mortarman with the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Armored Division, before he was evacuated for treatment of combat stress. "I don't think we should lose any more people doing this," Stewart said. "The patrols aren't causing stabilization. All we are is a giant target for those people."

The poll also demonstrates a large obstacle to probing military members' opinions on controversial political issues: their hesitance to express those opinions publicly, even behind the anonymity of a poll.

About one in five Military Times Poll respondents either declined to answer questions about Bush and Iraq or said they had no opinion.

Seventy-seven percent of those polled agreed with the notion that the military is stretched too thin to be effective; 14 percent disagreed.

Said author and retired Army officer Ralph Peters "The people at DoD should take that number into consideration, but they won't," Peters said. "Rumsfeld ... doesn't give a damn about the troops being away from their families or anything else. He just wants to pour more money into Lockheed Martin."

Nearly half of women surveyed said they had been the victim of sexual harassment in the military.

Rumsfeld Stopping Soldiers From Leaving When Term Of Service Up: “I’m Furious, I’m Aggravated” “Involuntary Servitude” “We Don’t Ever Trust Anything We’re Told”

By Lee Hockstader The Washington Post 29 December 2003

Chief Warrant Officer Ronald Eagle, an expert on enemy targeting, served 20 years in the military -- 10 years of active duty in the Air Force, another 10 in the West Virginia National Guard. Then he decided enough was enough. He owned a promising new aircraft-maintenance business, and it needed his attention. His retirement date was set for last February.

Staff Sgt. Justin Fontaine, a generator mechanic, enrolled in the Massachusetts National Guard out of high school and served nearly nine years. In preparation for his exit date last March, he turned in his field gear -- his rucksack and web belt, his uniforms and canteen.

Staff Sgt. Peter G. Costas, an interrogator in an intelligence unit, joined the Army Reserve in 1991, extended his enlistment in 1999 and then re-upped for three years in 2000. Costas, a U.S. Border Patrol officer in Texas, was due to retire from the reserves in last May.

According to their contracts, expectations and desires, all three soldiers should have been civilians by now. But Fontaine and Costas are currently serving in Iraq, and Eagle has just been deployed. On their Army paychecks, the expiration date of their military service is now listed sometime after 2030 -- the payroll computer's way of saying, "Who knows?"

The three are among thousands of soldiers forbidden to leave military service under the Army's "stop-loss" orders, intended to stanch the seepage of troops, through retirement and discharge, from a military stretched thin by its burgeoning overseas missions.

To the Pentagon, stop-loss orders are a finger in the dike -- a tool to halt the hemorrhage of personnel, and maximize cohesion and experience, for units in the field in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. **Through a series of stop-loss orders, the Army alone has blocked the possible retirements and departures of more than 40,000 soldiers, about 16,000 of them National Guard and reserve members who were eligible to leave the service this year.** Hundreds more in the Air Force, Navy and Marines were briefly blocked from retiring or departing the military at some point this year.

In a recent profile of an Army infantry battalion deployed in Kuwait and on its way to Iraq, the commander, Lt. Col. Karl Reed, told the Army Times he could have lost a quarter of his unit in the coming year had it not been for the stop-loss order.

To many of the soldiers whose retirements and departures are on ice, however, stop-loss is an inconvenience, a hardship and, in some cases, a personal disaster. Some are resigned to fulfilling what they consider their patriotic duty. **Others are livid, insisting they have fallen victim to a policy that amounts to an unannounced, unheralded draft.**

"I'm furious. I'm aggravated. I feel violated. I feel used," said Eagle, 42, the targeting officer, who has just shipped to Iraq with his field artillery unit for what is likely to be a yearlong tour of duty.

He had voluntarily postponed his retirement at his commander's request early this year and then suddenly found himself stuck in the service under a stop-loss order this fall. Eagle said he fears his fledgling business in West Virginia may not survive his lengthy absence. His unexpected extension in the Army will slash his annual income by about \$45,000, he said. And some members of his family, including his recently widowed sister, whose three teenage sons are close to Eagle, are bitterly opposed to his leaving.

"An enlistment contract has two parties, yet only the government is allowed to violate the contract; I am not," said Costas, 42, who signed an e-mail from Iraq this month "Chained in Iraq," an allusion to the fact that he and his fellow reservists remained in Baghdad after the active-duty unit into which they were transferred last spring went home. He has now been told that he will be home late next June, more than a year after his contractual departure date. "Unfair. I would not say it's a draft per se, but it's clearly a breach of contract. I will not reenlist."

Other soldiers retained by the Army under stop-loss are more resigned than irate, but no less demoralized by what some have come to regard as their involuntary servitude.

"Unfortunately, I signed the dotted line saying I'm going to serve my country," said Fontaine, 27, the mechanic, who said he spent "20 or 30 days" fruitlessly researching legal ways that he could quit the Army when his contractual departure date came up in February. "All I can do is suck it up and take it till I can get out."

The Army's most recent stop-loss order, issued Nov. 13, covers thousands of active-duty soldiers whose units are scheduled for duty in Iraq and Afghanistan in the coming months. **Because the stop-loss order begins 90 days before deployment and lasts for 90 days after a return home, those troops will be prohibited from retiring or leaving the Army at the expiration of their contracts until the spring of 2005, at the earliest.**

The proliferation of stop-loss orders has bred confusion and resentment even as it has helped preserve what the military calls "unit cohesion." In the past two years, the Army alone has announced 11 stop-loss orders -- an average of one every nine or 10 weeks.

Often in the past year, the Army has allowed active-duty soldiers to retire and depart but not Guard and reserve troops, many of whom have chafed at the disparity in policies. Some Guard troops and reservists complain their release

dates have been extended several times and they no longer know when they will be allowed to leave.

"We don't ever trust anything we're told," said Chris Walsh of Southington, Conn., whose wife, Jessica, an eighth-grade English teacher, is a military police officer in a National Guard unit in Baghdad. She may end up serving nearly two years beyond her original exit date of July 2002, Chris Walsh said. **"We've been disappointed too many times."**

For many soldiers who had planned on leaving the military, the sudden change of plans has been jarring.

Jim Montgomery's story is typical. Montgomery, an air-conditioning repairman in western Massachusetts, did a three-year hitch in the Army in the '90s and then signed up for a five-year stint in the National Guard. His exit date was July 31, 2003, after which he planned to devote himself to getting his electrician's license -- and to the baby he and his wife, Donna, expected in November, their first.

The Army had other plans. In March, Montgomery's maintenance unit was sent for training to Fort Drum, N.Y. In April it deployed to Kuwait, and since May it has been stationed in southern Iraq. With each move, it became clearer to Montgomery that his July exit date from the Guard would not materialize. The latest he has heard is that the unit may be coming home in April, but even that is uncertain, he said.



COMPLETELY UNWANTED, VASTLY OUTNUMBERED: U.S. Army soldiers of 1st Battalion, 22nd Regiment, (1-22) of the 4th Infantry Division, talk onboard their M1 tank in front of a mosque in Tikrit, Iraq, on Dec. 29 **BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**

Last month Montgomery rushed home on a medical emergency when Donna had complications in childbirth. She and the baby are fine now, but Montgomery is frustrated by his cloudy future.

"Some guys who are Vietnam vets are with us," he said in an interview at his home in Holland, Mass., shortly before he was to return to his unit in Iraq. "They said even in Vietnam, as difficult as it was there, you knew from the time you hit the ground to the time you returned it was one year -- whereas with this it's really up in the air."

More frequently, the military response to griping about stop-loss is bluntly unsympathetic. "We're all soldiers. We go where were told," said Maj. Steve Stover, an Army spokesman. "Fair has nothing to do with it." **(Typical lifer asshole. In Vietnam his life expectancy would have been about 7 days before the customary regrettable accident.)**

Marine Demands Apology From Corps For Anthrax Shot Punishments; He Got Demotion, Others Got Criminal Records

Jeanette Steele San Diego Union-Tribune 12.27.03

Anthony Fusco would like the Marine Corps to say it's sorry and then some. The Camp Pendleton Marine was demoted from corporal to lance corporal this year for initially refusing to be vaccinated for anthrax.

Now a federal judge has ruled that the Pentagon's mandatory vaccination program is illegal, and the program was temporarily halted this week.

Fusco, 23, feels he's been vindicated, and he's upset about the reduction in rank and loss of pay.

"I believe they owe me a big apology on that," the former switchboard operator said.

He was the first Camp Pendleton Marine to be charged for refusing the vaccine after mandatory vaccinations were restarted in 2002. **Fusco eventually had the shot because disobeying the order could have meant a bad conduct discharge, ruining his chances for a civilian job in law enforcement.**

Now, with his enlistment up this month, Fusco believes something is owed to him and other servicemen and women who were vaccinated under protest **or who got criminal records for refusing.**

At least one Marine in Southern California, Lance Cpl. Kevin Lotz, was convicted this year.

Fusco wants a settlement process started.

"What about (those) people who got kicked out (of the Corps) and had to go to jail?" he said. "Meanwhile, I've got the shot and now they are saying it's an experimental drug.

"What are you going to do now, give everybody their lives back? You already ruined all these people's lives," said Fusco who lives in Santa Clarita with his wife.

Steve Robinson, director of the National Gulf War Resource Center, agrees with Fusco.

MORE:

Pentagon Stops Anthrax Shots

Thom Shanker New York Times 12/27/2003

The Pentagon announced Tuesday night that it was at least temporarily halting its program of administering the anthrax vaccine, until the legal situation was clarified. **Even so, Pentagon officials continue to defend the vaccine as safe, effective and necessary for national security.**

Lawyers for the soldiers say nearly 500 active-duty members of the armed services have refused the vaccine, with close to 200 court-martialed as a result. From 500 to 1,000 pilots and flight personnel have left the Air National Guard or Reserves rather than take the vaccine, the lawyers say.

Dutch Soldiers Union Speaks Out About Depleted Uranium in Iraq; Finding Points To More DU Sources

27 December 2003 RISQ News

Dutch troops stationed in the province of Al Muthanna in Southern Iraq have found a 30 mm round of depleted uranium (DU) ammunition. This has been announced by the Ministry of Defence today. According to RISQ Associate Maarten H.J. van den Berg, the finding points at the presence of more sources of DU in the area.

The shell was found on the 10th of December in a so-called 'demolition pit' in the town of As Samawah. According to Mr. van den Berg, 30 mm DU ammunition has only been used in Iraq by American Apache helicopters and A-10 'Warthog' jets of the US Air Force.

As a RISQ Report on the issue published earlier this year confirmed 30 mm DU ordnance has been fired in airstrikes over As Samawah -- in 1998 and, more recently, during operation 'Iraqi Freedom'. Consequently, "it is more than likely that there are more sources of DU to be found in the area", Mr. Van den Berg concludes.

Already, unions of Dutch army personnel have raised concern about the incident. "Last week we talked to officials of the Ministry of Defence but they did not mention the incident", says ACOM chairman J. Kleian. **His colleague of the VBM, pointing at prior agreements with the Ministry on information-sharing, stated that "this is not something that should have been kept from the public".**

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/qi-special/>

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Songs Urge Iraqis to Rise Up Against Occupiers

By Sudarsan Raghavan December 28, 2003, Knight-Ridder

FALLUJAH, Iraq - **At the Sound of the Revolution music shop, lots of Arab pop stars look down from wall posters, but the hottest local one - resistance singer Sabah Hashim - needs no promotion.**

Hashim is part of a new and growing group of Iraqi resistance singers. **In one number in his latest collection, Hashim urges listeners to: "Carry your weapons and kick the heretic people out of your land. The people of Fallujah are like wolves when they attack the enemy."**

Such sentiments are especially popular in cities like Fallujah, where resistance to U.S. troops has been heavy. The music expresses – and maybe nourishes - rejection of the nine-month U.S. occupation.

"When I hear this music, it provokes me to help the resistance," said Nudher Aboud, 36, a jobless father who bought "The Anger" recently at the Sound of Revolution.

The store, whose name dates from its opening shortly after the Iraqi Baath Socialist party came to power in 1969, sells about 75 copies a week of "The Anger," said Ehab Thaya, 20, whose family owns the store.

Across town at another music store, Noori Hashim, 30, also reports brisk sales, mostly to young men but occasionally to women.

He pulls out a video CD version of "The Anger," whose cover shows Hashim in an Arabic headdress.

He sings against a backdrop of provocative images: an F-16 firing at a target followed by huge, orange explosions; Iraq women mourning their dead sons;

American soldiers arresting Iraqis. In one scene, a group of Iraqis celebrates around a destroyed U.S. tank.

Many resistance songs use heavily amped drums and guitars to generate a pulsating rhythm that sounds like modern Arab pop. Some is more religious. The music is rarely heard on local radio stations or in restaurants, but often played at weddings and other celebrations.

Many singers hail from Fallujah and Mosul - towns hostile towards the U.S. presence as well as frustrated over the lack of security, electricity and municipal services. **In recent weeks, more American soldiers have been killed in Mosul than in any other town in Iraq.**

"We will face death. We will never give up our land," sings Qassim al Sultan, a singer from Mosul. "We will remove America from the map."

"Today, let America and London hear that we will carry on with Saddam and that all Iraqis love him," sings Bassim al Ali. "Saddam is our father ... We will be his sword against the enemy."

Other songs play to Arab nationalism, and call on Arabs throughout the Middle East to rally and expel the U.S.-led occupiers.

"Baghdad calls Arabs for militancy and martyrdom," sings Adnan Faisal. "From Mosul to Hillah, we are Arabs and we refuse to be insulted. We are ready for death."



THAT GOOD OLD FALLUJAH SPIRIT: An Iraqi resident of Fallujah, 30 miles west of Baghdad, throws stones at the municipal offices during clashes with policemen. (AFP/Marwan Naamani)

Resistance songs tinged with piety put the singers and listeners on higher moral ground and broaden the message's appeal in a country increasingly influenced by clergy and political Islam.

"God is the greatest," sings Hashim. "We can no longer endure heretics in the Prophet's land."

A senior corpsman at the Fallujah headquarters of the Iraqi Civil Defense Forces, a U.S.-trained Iraqi security group, said he thought there were two kinds of listeners.

"Some people who listen to them care more about the problems in their own lives, so they won't join the resistance," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he fears retaliation if it becomes widely known that he's working with Americans.

"For others, the cassettes provoke nationalist feelings against the Americans," he continued. "They're the ones who will fight."

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

I hate it when they say, 'He gave his life for his country.' Nobody gives their life for anything. We steal the lives of these kids. We take it away from them. They don't die for the honor and glory of their country. We kill them." - Admiral Gene LaRocque.

(For more see the article "Telling The Truth About Imperialism," Noam Chomsky, at www.isreview.org.)

How Vietnamese Resistance Reached Out To American Soldiers

From **The Amnesty Of John David Herndon**; Reston, Jr., James; McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1973. Available from <http://www.citizen-soldier.org/>

"In the spring of 1971, he [Herndon, who deserted the Army after 15 months in Vietnam because he opposed the war] gave an interview to the Rita Act newspaper on POW conditions at the camp outside Bien Hoa where he'd been a guard. On the back page of the same issue of the paper was emblazoned:

ANTI-WAR LITERATURE IS A SAFE CONDUCT PASS. CARRY THIS WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES IN NAM. THE COMMANDER OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMED FORCES HAS ORDERED: THAT GI'S WHO BY THEIR VISIBLE ACTIONS SHOW THEY ARE AGAINST THE WAR ARE NOT TO BE ATTACKED, THAT GI's WHO CARRY ANTI-WAR LITERATURE BE TREATED AS

FRIENDS NOT ENEMIES, THAT GI'S WHO ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE BE AIDED AS BROTHERS. CARRY THIS WITH YOU, IT MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE.

The basis for this information was a press conference given by Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, the foreign minister of the National Liberation Front and their Negotiator at Paris, on April 31, 1971. **She declared that "the South Vietnamese people and its armed forces are disposed to cease fire on American soldiers who do not undertake hostile actions against them," and invited American soldiers to negotiate local cease-fires with opposing forces.**

Later, Mme. Binh's spokesman Duong Dinh Thao, said that such truces had been commonplace among opposing Vietnamese in many areas throughout the war.

The purpose of the order, put out to all NLF troops earlier in the week, he said, was to "create conditions for U.S. soldiers and officers to escape the war."

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

Bremmer Farce Stumbles On

[Washington Post, December 29, 2003, Pg. 17]

Officials in Iraq have been told that the \$18.6 billion approved for Iraq's reconstruction is indefinitely on hold. They cannot issue requests for proposals, which will certainly delay the promised Feb. 1 date for contract awards and, therefore, the beginning of reconstruction.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**FBI THINKS PEOPLE WHO USE ALMANACS
MAY BE TERRORISTS**

AP - The FBI is warning police nationwide to be alert for people carrying almanacs, cautioning that the popular reference books covering everything from abbreviations to weather trends could be used for terrorist planning.

In a bulletin sent Christmas Eve to about 18,000 police organizations, the FBI said terrorists may use almanacs "to assist with target selection and pre-operational planning." It urged officers to watch during searches, traffic stops and other investigations for anyone carrying almanacs, especially if the books are annotated in suspicious ways.

The FBI noted that use of almanacs or maps may be innocent, "the product of legitimate recreational or commercial activities." But it warned that when combined with suspicious behavior -- such as apparent surveillance -- a person with an almanac "may point to possible terrorist planning."

"I don't think anyone would consider us a harmful entity," said Kevin Seabrooke, senior editor of The World Almanac. He said the reference book includes about a dozen pages out of its 1,000 pages total listing the world's tallest buildings and bridges but includes no diagrams or architectural schematics. "It's stuff that's widely available on the Internet," he said.

The publisher for The Old Farmers Almanac said Monday terrorists would probably find statistical reference books more useful than the collections of Americana in his famous publication of weather predictions and witticisms.



TERRORISTS AT THEIR FIENDISH WORK? Martin Beeler, left, looks at almanacs for sale at Strand Books in New York, Dec. 29, 2003. (AP Photo/John Marshall Mantel)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Resistance Attack Kills Security Chief And Cops

From correspondents in Kabul 29dec03 the mercury.news.com.au

SIX people were killed when a suspected suicide bomber detonated explosives strapped to his body after being arrested by intelligence agents near Kabul international airport, Afghan officials said today.

A Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility for the blast, which he said was aimed at International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) peacekeeping troops based at the airport.

Kabul police chief Baba Jan told reporters at the blast scene: "Chairman (Abdul) Jalal along with four bodyguards were killed while trying to arrest a terrorist who had explosive devices with him."

Jalal was the head of the 21st intelligence directorate, a department of the Afghan intelligence service.

The police chief said the suspect was carrying an explosive device which was taken from him, but he then detonated other explosives strapped to his body.

The intelligence officers' white Toyota Surf jeep was left a mangled wreck by the explosion.

"A terrorist carrying explosives in a pressure cooker was chased and arrested," one security source, who would not be named, said.

"After he was arrested he was put in the car and then the bomb exploded."

The Taliban spokesman said the attack had been carried out by a man named Abdullah, a 35-year-old from Chechnya.

Abdul Samad, told news agency AFP by satellite phone "He was walking toward the ISAF base in Kabul airport to carry out a suicide attack. The second option was if he could not reach the base he would target ISAF patrols or other coalition vehicles driving on that road, but he was arrested by Afghan security and he carried out the suicide attack and killed himself and five others."

The Taliban spokesman said other suicide bombers would attack ISAF troops, coalition forces and people working for the United Nations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"A group of 60 suicide bombers have entered Kabul city. Their target will be ISAF, the coalition, UN, and other NGOs or people working for foreigners.

"We are more organised now; we will focus our attacks on cities now rather than the borders," he said, referring to a wave of violence along the eastern border blamed on Taliban militants.

At least seven rockets have hit Kabul since the loya jirga or grand assembly opened on December 14, causing some damage but no casualties.

Ambush Kills Deputy Intelligence Chief

By Amir Shah The Associated Press 12.28.03

KABUL, Afghanistan - Resistance fighters ambushed Afghan security forces near the Pakistani border Saturday, and U.S. forces were drawn into the deadly gun battle that ensued, a local commander said.

The Afghan officials were traveling in a pickup truck when they came under fire. The province's deputy intelligence chief was killed instantly, and his boss, Qudratullah Mazedai, was seriously hurt, Baz said by satellite telephone.

Other passengers opened fire along with U.S. reinforcements, killing six attackers.

Biggest U.S. Operation Since Start Of War Produces Nothing Much

December 30, 2003 By Stephen Graham Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — **The U.S. military said Tuesday it killed 10 suspected rebels in a four-week old operation it has billed as the largest since the fall of the Taliban two years ago.**

Two Afghan soldiers also were killed, while two Afghans and two coalition soldiers were injured in action during Operation Avalanche, which ended Monday after four weeks, a military spokesman said.

The operation involved more than 2,000 U.S. troops in an area of southern and eastern Afghanistan the size of California, though there were no major skirmishes. U.S. troops and soldiers from allied nations such as Romania carried out hundreds of patrols and searches, uncovering weapons caches and making arrests.

Bomb Explodes Near U.N. House

Pakistan Tribune December 27, 2003

KABUL, December 27 (Online): A bomb exploded outside a house used by U.N. staff in the capital early Thursday, demolishing a wall and shattering windows but causing no injuries, police said.

The blast occurred about 5 miles from the Kabul University where a historic constitutional council is taking place.

Received:

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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/>

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