GI SPECIAL 2B#2

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME

Coffin of Sgt. Melvin Mora Lopez at the cemetery of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, June 14. Mora Lopez, 28, was killed on June 6 in a mortar attack at Camp Cooke, north of Baghdad. (AP Photo/Gia Morales)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Baghdad Boils Over;
Deadly Fools In Command Trying To Hold Down 3 Million Pissed Of Shia

"I don't see this as an army," Qadir said. "It's an uprising against the occupation. Citizens of any country being occupied by another country would react in the same way."

June 08, 2004 By Edmund Sanders, Los Angeles Times.

Los Angeles Times special correspondents Raheem Salman, Saif Rasheed and Caesar Ahmed **(are the ones who actually risked their lives going out and getting the story, and this tiny credit was stuck at the very end. Fuck that.)**

The neighborhoods of Baghdad's worst slum are draped in black. Scores of mourning banners bearing the names of those killed in recent weeks hang from fences, balconies and buildings along Sadr City's dusty, garbage-strewn streets.

One banner laments a son killed "defending his country." Some bear photographs of the dead. A few have two, three, even four names squeezed onto a single black banner.

As Iraqi and U.S. leaders focus on ending the bloodshed in the southern holy cities of Najaf, Kufa and Karbala, Baghdad's back yard is quietly boiling over.

U.S. military officials estimate they have killed more than 800 Iraqis in Sadr City over the past nine weeks -" nearly a dozen a day -" in battles with the al-Mahdi Army, the militia of radical Shiite Muslim cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. That is more than twice as many as the number reported killed in similar fighting in southern Iraq.

At least 14 U.S. soldiers have died in and near Sadr City since April, including five killed Friday when their convoy was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade on the outskirts of Sadr City, and two killed Saturday by a roadside bomb at the same location.

Most of the Iraqi dead are young, unemployed men who joined al-Sadr's militia and have orders to shoot U.S. forces on sight. Others are bystanders caught in the cross fire, such as a 14-year-old boy killed Sunday by a roadside bomb targeting a passing U.S. convoy.

There are no gold-domed mosques here, no historical sites to draw the world's attention. As it has been for decades, residents complain, the suffering in Sadr City, ***a sprawling neighborhood of 3 million Iraqis*** who were severely oppressed by Saddam Hussein, goes largely unnoticed.

"So many people are dying here, and no one cares," said Mohammed Khala, 57, a video-arcade owner whose apartment was recently riddled with bullets and shrapnel from U.S. tanks attacking militiamen who had taken refuge behind his home. His hand was broken and his 5-year-old daughter suffered shrapnel wounds in the head, he said.

With few exceptions, street fights and gunbattles have been a nightly ritual. Al-Sadr's forces regularly mortar U.S. bases and Iraqi police stations used by American soldiers.

"The other day I was walking home and found a man just lying in the street," said Raad Mehemdawi, 32, a warehouse worker. "When I went to help him, I realized he was dead. I called his friends in the Mahdi Army and they came and carried him away."

Sadr City residents once welcomed U.S. soldiers. But over time, they say, many have lost patience with lingering electricity outages, sewage problems and perceived disrespect by soldiers of the community's religious leaders and symbols.

Last summer, soldiers knocked a religious banner off a transmission tower, sparking a small riot that ended with a U.S. helicopter firing into a crowd. More recently, residents say soldiers have taken to removing the ubiquitous pictures of al-Sadr from billboards and fences.

"People are very resentful," said Jalbar Braian, 45, a car salesman. "We just want the Americans to go away."

About a month ago, a local councilman who was working with the United States was kidnapped and hanged from an electricity pole.

Said Lt. Col. Gary Volesky, battalion commander of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division in Sadr City, "The police can't handle it." He said the area has 500 Iraqi police officers.

Police in the community are trying to avoid taking sides. One officer was demoted when he said he would refuse to fight the militia, according to Lt. Col. Raheem Qadir of the Nasr police station.

U.S. soldiers occupied Qadir's station house for nearly a month until he finally asked them to leave because their presence was drawing attacks from the militia, damaging nearby homes, Qadir said. **After the soldiers left, al-Mahdi Army fighters told him to remove the sandbags from his roof, which was being used by U.S. snipers. He complied.**

"I don't see this as an army," Qadir said. "It's an uprising against the occupation. Citizens of any country being occupied by another country would react in the same way."

Unlike southern Iraq, there are no truce talks or cease-fire negotiations in Sadr City.

In one day last week, al-Sadr's militiamen and U.S. troops engaged in 21 battles.

The heavy losses of the militia reflect the youth and inexperience of the ragtag army. Some are still in their teens.

On A Mission In Sadr City, Waiting Silently For The Expected

MICHAEL KAMBER, New York Times, BAGHDAD, Iraq, June 5

Members of Company A of the Second Battalion, Fifth Cavalry Regiment of the First Cavalry Division, thought they had a respite this week, a chance to inventory equipment

and take a break from the daily combat they have endured during the past two months in the Sadr City district of Baghdad. But around 2 p.m. on Tuesday, they got the call that Company C was taking fire from a mosque and school and needed backup.

Within minutes, Lt. Chris Cannon and the other 28 men of Company A's Third Platoon climbed into four Bradley Fighting Vehicles. They rumbled out of the base and onto the trash-choked streets of Sadr City to face ambush repeatedly.

Sadr City, a poor and predominantly Shiite neighborhood, has become one of the deadliest battlegrounds in Iraq.

The toll is easy to see in Lieutenant Cannon's platoon.

Since it arrived here at full strength in early March, nearly half the platoon has received Purple Hearts for combat wounds, and the unit has lost 10 of its original 39 members, with 2 killed and 8 seriously wounded.

The noise inside a Bradley is like an amplified meat grinder, and the smell is of choking dust and diesel, gunpowder and sweat. On a recent morning, four infantrymen and a reporter in the back of the Bradley sat silently in the darkness. Lieutenant Cannon and the gunner, Sgt. Bryan Shockey, sat up in the turret. Specialist Scott Williams, the driver, sat alone up front.

For an hour, the four vehicles maneuvered through the crowded streets until they approached the mosque where Company C had been attacked. They took up a box formation, about 50 yards apart from one another, keeping watch and waiting for an Iraqi police unit to come search the mosque.

In the turret, Sergeant Shockey kept the machine gun and 25-millimeter cannon moving, his thermal-imaging scope revealing piles of garbage, broken-down cars, a poster of Moktada al-Sadr, a funeral tent.

In the back, the soldiers watched a screen that showed what the gunner saw. Their faces were lighted with a green glow, and as the air in the vehicle grew hot and close, sweat soaked their uniforms.

Suddenly, the stillness was broken by a sharp explosion, and a wall nearby erupted in a shower of concrete. Staff Sgt. Matthew Mercado grabbed the radio, shouting: "On the right, an R.P.G. hit! It went over us!" A moment later, another explosion, this one closer. The 65-ton vehicle rocked violently, and a chorus of expletives erupted from the men in the back.

Voices shouted from the radio as the gunner looked for a target. "Eleven o'clock! Look 11 o'clock!" said one. The gunner swiveled the turret. "No, that's not it, try 9 o'clock," Specialist Todd Singleton yelled from the back.

The gunner scanned again and again, but the street was deserted. There was no movement, just low buildings as far as the eye could see, balconies and rooftops by the hundred, alleyways by the dozen, all perfect hiding places. A few faces peaked out from an doorway in the distance, but no weapon was discernible. The Bradleys held their fire.

The insurgents here play cat and mouse with the soldiers, popping out for seconds, just long enough to fire a rocket-propelled grenade or an assault rifle, then melting back into the shadows. They have picked up on the inherent shortcomings of armored vehicles: the gunners have a narrow field of view. If they are pointing even a few degrees away from the shooter, they will not see the weapon's muzzle flash.

Sergeant Mercado sat smoldering like a pit bull on a leash. "If they let us dismount, we could kill those guys in five minutes," he said. He grabbed the radio and requested permission from Lieutenant Cannon to open the three-inch-thick rear hatch.

The lieutenant scanned a landscape. "Permission denied," he answered. As if seconding his judgment, another rocket exploded, this one just yards from the Bradley. Shrapnel clanged off the rear door. Up front, Specialist Williams threw the Bradley into gear and moved 50 feet back, trying to deprive the insurgents of a stationary target.

A half-dozen more explosions rocked the vehicles over the next half hour, many coming within yards. But then the commander of another Bradley, Sgt. George Scheufele, spotted insurgents with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher hiding behind a truck about 400 yards away.

Lieutenant Cannon radioed headquarters for permission to use the vehicle's cannon and high-explosive rounds. The streets were empty, and injury to civilians was judged unlikely, so permission was granted.

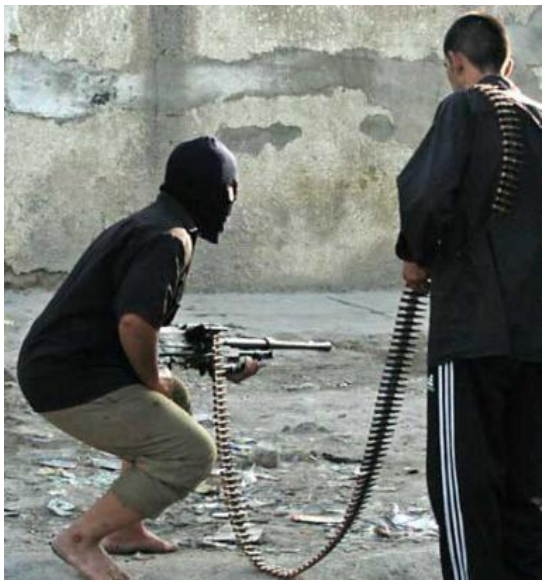
Sergeant Shockey waited patiently. The men came crouching around the corner again, the R.P.G. visible. He squeezed the trigger, and the Bradley echoed as the gun fired. At 400 yards, the first shot was dead on. He squeezed again, a three-round burst, and the men and the truck disappeared in a ball of flames.

Within minutes, two dozen Iraqis emerged from buildings to push cars away from the flames and pull down a tent where gunmen had been seen taking cover. But Company A was moving out. **Over the radio, the soldiers heard that the Iraqi police had refused to check out the mosque.**

Three of the Bradleys reversed direction up the street. The fourth waited for several long seconds, until a man reappeared from the alleyway, this time with an AK-47 rifle. The Bradley's machine gun barked, and the man tumbled backward. Then the vehicle fell into formation behind the others, and they went clanking back through the streets of Sadr City.

They wasted no time getting back to the base, partly because they would likely have to go back out again before the night was over. The night missions are the violent ones, with ambushes nearly certain. Gunfire and explosions echoed through Sadr City after dark.

WELCOME TO SADR CITY



An armed Shi'ite militiaman holds a machine gun while fighting off U.S. forces trying to enter a Baghdad suburb June 10. **Militiamen loyal to Sadr fired automatic weapons and lobbed hand grenades at U.S. forces, which responded by sending helicopters to fire at targets in the sprawling Sadr City slum, Reuters television footage showed. (**Reuters)

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/

Car Bomb Kills Mercenaries, Occupation Workers; Crowd Yells "Down With The USA;" Soldiers Can't Stop Them And Withdraw

Jun 14, 2004 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer & BBC News

A car bomb shattered a convoy of Westerners in Baghdad Monday, killing at least 13 people, including three General Electric workers and two bodyguards.

At first, furious crowds began hitting the burnt-out cars.

Moments after the thunderous blast, which shook the heart of the capital, young men raced into the street, hurling stones at the flaming wreckage, taking belongings of the victims and chanting slogans against the occupation.

Crowds rejoiced over the attack, dancing around a charred body and shouting "God is Great" and "Down with the USA!"

Iraqi police stood by helplessly — unable to control the crowd only weeks before they are to assume more security responsibility under the U.S. exit strategy.

US troops beat one man with a stick, but the troops and Iraqi police withdrew when they failed to restrain the crowd, Associated Press reported.

As flames and smoke enveloped the vehicles, youths taunted American troops and threatened Western journalists.

Crowds chanted "Down with the USA!" and set fire to an American flag. Young men gleefully displayed a British passport and identification card issued by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

As the police left, the crowd poured kerosene into one of the vehicles and set it on fire. Heavy, black smoke poured from the vehicle. About 20 youths danced around a charred body.

The dead included three employees of Granite Services Inc., a wholly owned, Tampa, Fla.-based subsidiary of General Electric Co., and two security contractors employed by Olive Security of London. The Westerners included one American, two Britons, one Frenchman and one victim of undetermined nationality, officials said.

GE said Monday it has no plans to pull its workers out of the country. "We remain committed to the reconstruction of Iraq," said GE spokeswoman Louise Binns. **(GE "remains committed" to the profits from their billion dollar contracts.)**

The attacks have sent contractors scurrying from Iraq.

The bomb exploded as three SUVs carrying the contractors were passing through Tahrir Square, setting light to their 4X4 vehicles and destroying a building.

Body parts and fragments of clothing lay scattered around the street. The explosion destroyed a building and left a huge crater surrounded by burnt-out, mangled cars.

Even some of the wounded were angry at the Americans.

REAL BAD PLACE TO BE. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW.

June 11. A car bomb went off as a U.S. military convoy was passing on a highway southwest of Baghdad, but **it was not clear if there were any American casualties**, Iraqi police said. **(Right, one look and you can tell everybody walked away from this one in perfect health.)** (Bob Strong/Reuters)

Falluja Convoy Hit

Jun 14, 2004 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

In other violence Monday, a roadside bomb struck an Army convoy of 20-vehicles about three miles north of Fallujah, witnesses said. It could not be immediately determined if there were any casualties.

Grenade Attack On U.S. Kut Patrol

Jun 14, 2004 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

In Kut, authorities said attackers hurled two grenades at an American patrol. One Iraq on a motorcycle was wounded in the crossfire, witnesses said.

<u>TROOP NEWS</u>

Peace Movement Ranks Grow;

Enlisting Numbers With Military Ties

Jun. 01, 2004 By Eils Lotozo, Philadelphia Inquirer Staff Writer

Mildred McHugh had never attended a political protest until a few months ago. Now she's a regular at antiwar demonstrations, carrying a sign that reads, "Bring my son home."

"I feel so outraged about the way we were misled about the war," said McHugh, 44, of Pennington, N.J., whose soldier son, Steve, is stationed in Iraq's Sunni Triangle. "I need to be out here and feel like at least I'm doing something... . If it doesn't save my son, it might save someone else's."

A member of Military Families Speak Out, McHugh is the newest of recruits to an increasingly energized peace movement.

As U.S. involvement drags on in a hostile Iraq, the death toll rises, and American public opinion shifts, peace groups are finding new allies and using a range of tactics aimed at influencing policy.

Ex-Marine Michael Hoffman, who was in the Iraq invasion force, isn't discouraged. Hoffman, of Morrisville, plans to keep up the "whirlwind" schedule of antiwar speaking engagements he's been on since his discharge a year ago.

"I realized going into it the reasons given for the war weren't adding up," said Hoffman, 24. "And a lot of the guys felt as strongly as I did. But we had to put that aside because the main thing was to get home and help our friends get home."

Hoffman said those questions persist. He recalled a protest where he spoke in March in Fayetteville, N.C., that attracted soldiers from nearby Fort Bragg.

"They weren't in uniform but I could tell by their haircuts they were military," he said. "They told me, 'We can't get up and make a speech, but you need to keep doing what you're doing.' "

"During the Vietnam War it took years for people to realize what we were doing was built on a construct of lies," said Dave Cline, president of St. Louis-based Veterans for Peace. "With Iraq, it's only taken a year. This is Vietnam on speed."

In one week last month, said Cline, his group enrolled 150 new members. "There's been a steady increase in people who say, 'I can't be quiet any more.' "

One of the most surprising developments, though, has been the growing number of military members and their families who are joining peace activists to protest the war.

Lansdowne's Pat Gunn was inspired to join after her son Jason, who had been severely wounded in Iraq, was redeployed by the Army - against a doctor's orders, she said. "It's not working," Gunn said of the U.S. occupation. "It's time to put something else in place." Author Paul Loeb, who has written about social activism for three decades, said he's seen the peace movement broaden its geographic reach.

"The protests aren't just in the predictable places, like Seattle or Berkeley or New York," said Loeb, author of *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time*. "What is very clear about this movement is that it is everywhere."

Loeb recalled an e-mail from a soldier's mother in El Paso, Texas. "She said, 'I kissed my son good-bye when he was called up and then I went off to a peace march.' "

Command Shows How To Recruit For The American Resistance Movement; Kick A Loyal Marine In The Teeth

June 4, 2004 By Scott Lamb, Salon.com. Scott Lamb is an editorial fellow at Salon.

The Pentagon orders the military spokesman featured in the acclaimed documentary "Control Room" not to talk -- and now he plans to walk.

There's a moment a half-hour into "Control Room," Jehane Noujaim's widely acclaimed new documentary about the Arab news channel Al Jazeera and media coverage of the war with Iraq, when U.S. press officer Lt. Josh Rushing discusses his reaction to the brutal images of captured and killed American soldiers that Al Jazeera chose to broadcast in March 2003 -- to the condemnation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

"The night they showed the POWs and dead soldiers ... it was powerful, because Americans won't show those kinds of images," Rushing says. "It made me sick to my stomach." The viewer then expects him to proceed in the same vein of patriotic rhetoric he's been using up to this point in the film -- he is, after all, a Marine -- but instead what follows is an unexpected, and profoundly moving, observation.

The previous night, Al Jazeera had shown similarly graphic images of Iraqis killed during a bombing in Basra, and Rushing calls them "equally if not more horrifying." At the time, though, he admits they hadn't bothered him as much. "I just saw people on the other side," Rushing says, "and those people in the Al Jazeera offices must have felt the way I was feeling that night, and it upset me on a profound level that I wasn't bothered as much the night before. It makes me hate war."

Rushing comes across as a sympathetic character in the movie -- earnest and thoughtful, a patriot and a skeptic -- with shrewd observations about partisan media coverage (Al Jazeera *and* Fox) and the failure of U.S. media to fully explain what is happening in the Middle East. But now the Pentagon has silenced Rushing, 31, ordering him not to comment on the movie. And as a result, the 14-year career military man, recently promoted to captain, plans to leave the Marines, his wife told Salon in an interview Thursday.

When first contacted by Salon about Rushing on Thursday, the Pentagon denied even being aware of the film, much less any order regarding Rushing. Lt. Col. Jim Cassella at the Pentagon press office said, "I can't remember us ever telling people not to speak to the press. We have the principles of information that the secretary of defense has signed which mandates that we are forthcoming and honest with the American people. **As a matter of policy, we don't go around telling people they can or can't talk to the press."**

He referred Salon to the Marine Corps, but there, too, the first response was denial that this sort of thing even happens. Capt. Dan McSweeney, commenting on whether Marines are typically asked not to talk to reporters, said, "I haven't heard of that going on except under extreme circumstances; in the middle of an operation, I can see that being the case."

Later in the day, however, McSweeney confirmed that "Captain Rushing is not available for interview on this topic." And on Friday, the Pentagon released the following statement to Salon about Rushing: "The reason why he's no longer able to talk to the media is that he is no longer in the billet that he was at the time, so he is no longer the appropriate person to speak to regarding this documentary."

Rushing is back in the United States and is no longer involved in active operations, though he is still on active duty and would not speak to Salon for this story.

According to sources close to the film, the Pentagon first became aware of Rushing's involvement in the film after filmmaker Noujaim appeared on an MSNBC show, by which time Rushing had already spoken with several media outlets, including the Associated Press and the Village Voice. On MSNBC May 13, Noujaim recounted a story -- not captured in the film, and one that Rushing also told the Voice -- about some friction between Rushing and other Marines caused by his closeness to Al Jazeera reporter Omar Al Issawi, who is also prominently featured in the documentary.

"One guy told me I better check the name on my uniform, meaning the Marine Corps," Rushing said to the Voice.

Shortly after Noujaim's MSNBC interview, according to a source close to the film, the Pentagon told Rushing he would be giving no more interviews.

Paige Rushing, Capt. Rushing's wife, said her husband is now trying to leave the Marines because of his treatment over the issue. Rushing enlisted when he was 17, and has been in the military ever since.

"I think he's been on the precipice of moving on with his life," Paige Rushing said. "He's been doing this his entire adult life, and he's looking for something that would allow him more creative freedom, and maybe more freedom in general. **I think this is the straw that broke the camel's back for him, just feeling so muzzled and restricted."**

She says she can't understand why her husband has been asked not to speak about his involvement with the documentary. "I can understand, perhaps, if he'd wanted to stage an anti-administration rally, but it wasn't anything like that. This was a personal experience, and I still don't understand why they have such a problem with him speaking."

"Everything that my husband represents in the military -- the defense of freedom, and hopefully the expansion of freedom throughout the world -- that's what a soldier is supposed to be, one would think. But it seems that he's denied some of those basic freedoms, and I really have a problem with that. I love the Marine Corps, I believe in everything he does, but it's very disappointing and disheartening to me that this occurred. He's not an anti-military person. This is something he's devoted his life to, and he really believes in everything the military represents."

In "Control Room," it's clear that Rushing is committed to his duties -- early on, after debating Al Jazeera's Hassan Ibrahim about the existence of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, he pointedly tells the camera, "I'm not going to back down from my point that we're here to help the Iraqi people" -- and his position as a press officer is described as presenting America's military operations to the worldwide media.

And while no one will confuse Rushing with an antiwar activist, some of his comments in the film are surprising in their candor.

At one point he says this of his media diet: "When I watch Al Jazeera, I can tell what they're showing and then I can tell what they're not showing by choice. Same thing when I watch Fox on the other end of the spectrum. " Later on, while talking to Ibrahim about Arab perceptions of America, he says, "No American connects the Palestinian issue and this issue. They're completely different. They might as well be on other sides of the world as far as they're concerned."

Later still, he tells Ibrahim, "If I get out of the Marine Corps and do anything, I want to do something with the Palestinian issue. I don't think Americans are getting good information about it, I really don't."

Nouhaim's reaction to the silencing was similar to Paige Rushing's. "The smartest thing the Marine Corps could do right now is to have him as their spokesperson," she says. "He's someone who blasted apart all of my stereotypes about the military; he's somebody who, on a daily basis, interacted with Arab reporters -- he was on both sides -- and he's somebody with a great deal of useful insight into what was going on. I don't understand it."

She also said that Central Command had been very supportive of the film, and that after the MSNBC interview, the Pentagon requested a copy, though she's not sure if anyone's seen it. She also added that Rushing is a compelling figure not only for Americans, but for Arabs as well. "People trusted him," she says, and for Arab viewers, he comes

across as someone who has the potential to change the way they look at the American military. **"And he was really excited about talking to the lefty press. These are channels that the U.S. military doesn't address very often, and it was very disappointing to me that he was just silenced."**

The movie, which opened in selected theaters on May 21, is going to be distributed nationally starting June 11. It has received near-unanimous praise (In Salon, Andrew O'Hehir called it "surprising, puzzling and in many ways brilliant") from outlets as diverse as the New York Times, the New York Post and the Christian Science Monitor. It created considerable buzz after appearing at the Sundance Film Festival in February. Currently appearing only at New York's tiny Film Forum, it is breaking that formidable film house's box office records. According to the film's distributor, more screens were added after its success in Manhattan; it will be showing on well over 150 screens by the end of June, and more will be added in the later summer months.

U.S. military press officer Lt. Josh Rushing, in a scene from "Control Room, "a new documentary about Arab news channel Al Jazeera and press coverage of the Iraq war.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Majority Of Iraqis Say Get Out Now

06/08/04 By Ghali Hassan http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article6290.htm
Most Iraqis consider the appointees as irrelevant traitors serving U.S. interests.

Recent public opinion polling has showed a dramatic increase in grassroots hostility toward the American occupation. Between October and April, the percentage of Iraqis viewing the United States as an occupier rather than a liberator more than doubled, from 43 % to 88 %, according to the Centre for Research, an Iraqi polling firm that works for several U.S. contractors.

The majority of polled Iraqis want the occupiers to leave Iraq immediately and allow the Iraqis to manage their own affairs.

Only 1% of those polled Iraqis agreed that the goal of the US was to establish democracy in Iraq. Sadly, the so-called Iraqi "Foreign Minister" thanked the occupying forces for the mass slaughter of Iraqi civilians, and for the destruction of the nation of Iraq.

Mr. Hoshyar Zebari said: "We thank President Bush and Prime Minister Blair for their dedication and commitment. We really appreciated what you did for us" I do not know what the people of Fallujah would say to that?

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

Collaborator Senior Officers Shot, Cops Killed In Kirkuk

June 14, 2004 By Robert H. Reid, The Associated Press

Two senior figures escaped death in separate attacks over the weekend.

The chief of Iraq's border police, Maj. Gen. Hussein Mustafa Abdul-Kareem, was slightly wounded Saturday in a shooting in Baghdad.

Police Maj. Gen. Majeed Almani Mahal was hospitalized with wounds received Saturday in an ambush in Baqouba, 40 miles northeast of Baghdad, officials said.

In Kirkuk, overnight clashes between police and gunmen left two people dead and 11 people injured, six of them police, officials said.

Cops Blown Up In Salman Pak

14 June, 2004 BBC News

A car bomb was reported near the town of Salman Pak south-east of Baghdad. Police quoted by AP said a **car drove between police vehicles and exploded,** killing four people and injuring four others.

Occupation Cops Wounded In Mosul

Jun 14, 2004 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

In Mosul, four members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps were wounded when a bomb exploded as they were patrolling near a U.S. base.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Chaos and Denial — The Rumsfeld Unraveling

by Stan Goff, SSGT US Army (ret'd)

4.25.04 http://www.freedomroad.org/milmatters_23_chaos.html

Fractal: *An object having a fractional dimension; one which has variation that is self-similar at all scales, in which the final level of detail is never reached and never can be reached by increasing the scale at which observations are made.*

Mandelbrot Set: *Complex but structured pattern produced by an equation in which the result is fed back into the equation repeatedly; self-similarity.*

Dissociative Disorder: *Psychological dysfunctions characterized by the separation of critical personality facets that are normally integrated; this reduces anxiety by repressing disturbing thoughts or memories.*

It's the neocon military fractal, a Mandelbrot set as war doctrine, where the little parts magnified look exactly like the big ones, or perhaps its just regression to a medieval cosmology - microcosm reflects macrocosm, music of the celestial spheres and so forth. Who knows? But it's right there to see in the US occupation of Iraq, the dissociative disorder of GWB's Great Gamesmen.

The same pattern that got Donny Rumsfeld into his current strategic impasse - that is, concentrate military force on one point after another, picking them off one by one, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, DPRK, Syria, Venezuela, etc., to husband forces and not spread them thin - is now under consideration on a smaller scale inside Iraq, where the larger strategic vehicle has driven up to its hubcaps into a deep mudhole.

The whole concept fell apart in Iraq, where - and this may be a news flash for a few - the Bush administration is getting its proverbial ass kicked, politically and militarily, which kind of suggests that this Rumsfeldian sequence-theory didn't work.

Therefore, that is exactly what they are planning - on an INTRA-national scale - in response to the military stalemate created by the Madhi militia and the Fallujan resistance. They will attempt to tie up the leadership in both locations with a combination of threats and negotiations, while they figure out how to stand one area down so they can by turns give each location the Jenin treatment.

The uprising sparked when Paul Bremer ordered the closing of the Shia newspaper, Al Hawza, and by US troops gunning down those who protested, has exposed the central paradox of the whole Iraq invasion - a paradox that Colin Powell apparently intuited, but being the perfect and obedient bureaucrat that he is, swallowed on command.

US military technology, organization, and doctrine is the highest stage of conventional military practice, the most formidable state armed body in history - designed in its own words to achieve "full spectrum dominance": dominance across the spectrum of conflict, dominance across the spectrum of technology, and dominance across the spectrum of terrain and climate.

But while Rumsfeld's whiz-kids from the arms industry were pinging around building zillion-dollar killer-drones and figuring out the mathematical equation at $1,000 an hour for dropping a feather from a rooftop into a coffee cup, the world was changing around them, and in response to them, and in ways that won't fit into equations, especially equations with inherently unstable solutions.

The howling winds of history, politics, and the "Orientalist" reduction of Iraqi culture doomed Rumsfeld's post-McNamaran mathematics before the northern ground offensive crawled out of Kuwait last year. Repeated blows between the neo-con eyes with the storm debris of this reality has not dissuaded them from their objective.

This tendency toward the exceedingly obtuse is causing a grand panic among the multilateral-finesse-wing of the ruling class, hence the Kerry I-can-do-this-better campaign pledges and the commitment of currency-raider George Soros' considerable purse to the project of bringing back some manner of von Papen to executive center-stage.

The reduction of potential resistance to numbers-of-people and the delivery-range-lethality of weapons systems was a process insulated in the thinking of the Bush War Cabinet from the implications of a society where almost 80% of the population is urban and over 60% of the population is now estimated to be 20-years-old or younger. This inexorable hypostasis of urban youth created the conditions for the multi-focal urban insurgency that has now all but neutralized any conventional military doctrine.

Confronted on one side by the Scylla of chialistic Christian-Zionism and the Jewish political Zionism concentrated in the jackpot electorates of New York and Florida, the stewards of empire are now faced with the Charybdis of mounting popular anti-Zionism/anti-Americanism that potentially threatens to topple the US satraps of the Muslim Crescent. The first satraps in line for this fury are the very surrogates they would appoint to rule Iraq.

The State, always the principle target of conventional warfare, is dissolved now by warfare. In the wake of the long standing Iran-Iraq conflict, facilitated behind the scenes by Western provocateurs, weapons proliferated with the fecundity of Mesopotamian dates. **Now resistance is multi-focal and bristling with arms.**

When the neo-cons conceptualized Iraq and its culture, they had already homogenized it.

Orientalism - that epistemological habit of Western white supremacy described by Edward Said wherein all things not "Western" are reduced to "Oriental" - recoded in Southwest Asia as "Islamic," is not a lens, but a mirror. The ideologues of the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and the Project for a New American Century use this "idealized cognitive model" as the stage for their round-the-bend drama of a modern Crusade. Their Orientalism is not designed to describe the Dark Other. The Dark Other is a foil for defining themselves. They therefore cannot see the evolving cultural complexity of Iraq. They are blinded by their imperial military narcissism.

There is an attempt afoot to make this model the basis for the relationship between the new colonizer and the newly colonized. **But because it is fundamentally a delusion, the cognitive reality is not keeping up a correspondence with the social reality simmering across the devastated urban terrain of Iraq.**

The locus of resistance is in the neighborhood, task-organized through kinship and circumstance and culturally organized by the vestigial relations of the rural communities a mere one generation past. The general structure that is emerging is not the centralized, bureaucratic structure of either a modern conventional military or a modern political party.

It is not hierarchically arranged like a pyramid, but coordinated like a web, and the coordination can now take place via the Fatwa, through which this growing sea of young, urban dispossessed get their basic directives: fight, hold, disappear, stand down. This provides every neighborhood the autonomy (and appropriate creativity) to exercise a tactical agility that no conventional military can match or defeat short of extermination, and which will - paradoxically - combine with higher and higher levels of political unity in response to every imperial crackdown.

The false unity of Islam inhering in neo-con Orientalism, then, is transforming itself into real unity of Islamic resistance in Iraq; one that may someday soon be culturally Arab-Islamic and politically nationalist. **It is already demonstrably anti-imperialist - perhaps the most important anti-imperialist phenomenon on earth for the present.**

On April 21, 2004, the Army News Service, an organ of the US Army Public Affairs branch, published what can only be described as an astonishing account of soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division patrolling in the Washash District of Baghdad. They encountered posters of Muqtada al-Sadr.

[Platoon Leader, 1st Lieutenant] Schonfeld found these posters in apartments and some shop windows. He said he hadn't noticed anything to suggest al-Sadr's influence in the neighborhood prior to this patrol.

After the initial dismounted patrol discovered the propaganda, Schonfeld received orders to re-enter Washash and remove the posters. These posters are considered illegal because of al-Sadr's extremist anti-coalition stance.

The first few posters were confiscated with great ease. On public display, they did not appear to belong to any one in particular and no resistance was given.

However, a few yards down the crowded market road, Schonfeld and his platoon came upon a shop selling framed prints. The lieutenant tried to explain to the owner of the shop that anti-coalition propaganda is illegal, and that the prints could not be displayed.

The man refused to remove them.

"We explained the best we could without an interpreter," said Cpl. Mark Steir, a team leader in 1st Platoon. "They started to get angry once they realized why we were taking them down. The further along we got, the community became more upset."

To make the situation more tension-filled, the loudspeakers of a local mosque addressed the neighborhood, drawing ecstatic shouts from the growing crowd of onlookers.

"There was a lot more finger-jabbing going on than usual," said Schonfeld. "A couple [people] even tried to grab our hands away from taking the pictures down."

After several minutes of negotiation, Schonfeld was able to persuade the owner of the shop to remove the pictures, thanks to the help of a few English-speaking locals.

Moving along, 1st Platoon removed one more poster before a sizeable crowd formed and started throwing rocks.

"We've got a riot down here, sir," one Soldier yelled to Schonfeld, who promptly moved his platoon from the area to avoid an escalation of force.

The discovery of anti-coalition propaganda is a negative development for coalition efforts in this neighborhood. The coalition has several, such as a playing field, a refuse disposal plan, and a communal textile shop in the works, hoping to make Washash a better place to live.

"It was a significant event for us because there is not a very heavy presence of supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr in Washash. The people that we know in Washash have been supporters of [Grand Ayatollah al-Husseini al-Sistani]," said Capt. Ronald Hayward, commander of Company C, who gave the order to remove the posters.

"I think it was important [to remove the posters] because al-Sadr currently stands for all things that are anti-coalition," he said. "It's important to show [the people of Washash] that we can deal with the propaganda in a non-threatening way, rather than coming in hard and forcefully."

A decision is made remotely, by a commander who is not on the scene. Posters of a popular religious leader are declared "illegal" "anti-coalition propaganda," an explanation for removing them is given without an interpreter, and the mosque alerts the local population of the liberation-and-democracy action in progress. Then the stones take flight.

Here is the real fractal, the pattern at a local scale that matches the pattern at a national scale. Perhaps even international.

It would be easy to conclude that this kind of disconnect is operant only at the ground level, and that the high and mighty, in their omniscience, understand that this is all just a very high-stakes game. But the decisions of this administration from the very beginning are not good evidence for this hypothesis.

There is an obvious element of unadorned propaganda in the daily missives beamed out of the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon. But there is also a pungent whiff of self-referential naiveté. The Army news release is emblematic of how they are looking into a mirror and have convinced themselves that they are looking through a window.

They believe substantially in their own constructions.

And they have shown the collective capacity to compartmentalize these beliefs away from threatening counter-narratives, almost as if the entire cabinet - with the exception of the ever-obedient and long-suffering domestic servant, Colin Powell - had checked into the Walter Reed Army Medical Center to have the hemispheres of their brains surgically separated.

Dissociation "reduces anxiety by repressing disturbing thoughts or memories." It's more than a personality disorder. It's characteristic of our time and place. We live in a society that grows dissociation, and apparently there has been no inoculation against it among certain sectors within the ruling class.

The repression of disturbing thoughts has been reinforced from the outset by seeking the counsel only of those who already supported the prevailing ideology. Generalissimo Dick Cheney opted early for Ahmed Chalabi, the Iraqi ex-pat grifter with a cell reserved for him in Amman since the Jordanians convicted him of bank fraud and embezzlement.

On April 20th, Bremer's crew announced that they would now seek the return of the thousands of Ba'athists they had previously expelled during the post-invasion de-Ba'athification period. This was anathema to the temperamental con artist Chalabi and he took his criticism of the Coalition Provisional Authority public.

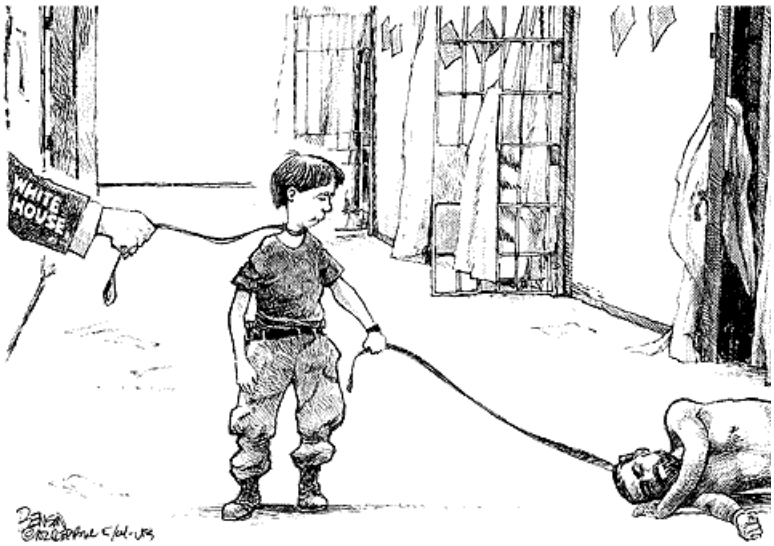
Bad choice. This is the same administration that eats its own young for any public criticism, and that will have non-compliant journalists killed outright in Iraq.

On April 24th, the Washington Post reported that when the dog-and-pony-show transfer of "sovereignty" happens on June 30th, Chalabi and most of his cronies will be given their walking papers.

Meanwhile, the renewed assault on Fallujah is being prepared, preface to the follow-on in Najaf… until it begins.

"Mirror, mirror, on the wall. Who's the strongest one of all?"

OCCUPATION REPORT



The Occupation Headquarters: As Island Of Delusion In A Sea Of Resentment

12 June 2004 By Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad

The US army is paralyzing the heart of Baghdad as it builds ever more elaborate fortifications to protect its bases against suicide bombers.

"Do not enter or you will be shot," reads an abrupt notice attached to some razor wire blocking a roundabout at what used to be the entrance to the 14 July bridge over the Tigris. Only vehicles with permission to enter the Green Zone, where the occupation authorities have their headquarters, can now use it. Iraqis who want to cross the river must fight their way to another bridge through horrendous traffic jams.

Gigantic concrete slabs, like enormous grey tombstones, now block many roads in Baghdad. They are about 12 feet high and three feet across and for many Iraqis have become the unloved symbol of the occupation. Standing side by side, they form walls around the Green Zone and other US bases, with notices saying it is illegal to stop beside them.

It is the ever-expanding US bases and the increasing difficulties and dangers of their daily lives which make ordinary Iraqis dismiss declarations by President George Bush about transferring power to a sovereign Iraqi government as meaningless. As Mr Bush and Tony Blair were speaking this week about a new beginning for Iraq, the supply of electricity in the country has fallen from 12 hours a day

to six hours. On Canal Street yesterday, close to the bombed-out UN headquarters, there was a two-mile long queue of cars waiting to buy petrol.

Salahudin Mohammed al-Rawi, an engineer, dismisses the diplomatic manoeuvres over Iraq at the UN in New York and the G8 meeting in Georgia as an irrelevant charade. He said: "At the end of the day they cannot cheat the Iraqi people because the Iraqis are in touch with the real situation on the ground."

For many people in Baghdad the real situation is very grim. Twenty years ago Abu Nawas Street on the Tigris used to be filled with restaurants serving mazgouf, a river fish grilled over an open wood fire and a traditional Baghdadi delicacy. These days Abu Nawas is largely deserted and is used mainly by American armoured vehicles thundering down the road.

Shahab al-Obeidi is the manager of the Shatt al-Arab restaurant, where dark grey fish swim in a circular pond decorated with blue tiles. They may survive a long time. Mr Obeidi confesses that business is not good. These days Abu Nawas can only be entered from one direction and culminates in an American checkpoint.

We asked to see the owner of the restaurant and Mr Obeidi explained that he "fled to Syria 40 days ago after his son was kidnapped and he had to pay $20,000 to get him back". A problem, frequently mentioned by Iraqis, is that US security measures appear to be solely directed at providing security for Americans. For Iraqis, life in Baghdad is still very dangerous.

The reason why Abu Nawas is sealed off is that at the end of the street are the Palestine and Sheraton hotels, where many foreign company employees as well as journalists stay. A few hundred yards away is Sadoun Street, once a main four-lane artery in central Baghdad, but now reduced to two lanes opposite a side street leading to the Baghdad Hotel.

This was attacked by a suicide bomber last year, without much damage to the hotel, which was universally believed by Iraqi taxi drivers to be a centre for the CIA. About 30 shops within the *cordon sanitaire* around the hotel now face ruin. Nadim al-Hussaini, who has a shop selling large air conditioners, says: "My business has completely disappeared, first 30 to 40 per cent when they put up a concrete barrier and 100 per cent when they closed the road." In theory he should get compensation from the Coalition Provisional Authority, but so far he has seen no sign of it.

Next door, Zuhaar Tuma owns a café which is not so badly affected because he still has his regular customers, smoking hubble-bubble pipes and playing dominoes. He was a little more understanding about why the road had been closed, saying: **"I don't want to get blown up any more than the Americans do. But the real solution is simply for the Americans staying at the hotel to leave it."**

The same could be said of the thousands of other American officials and soldiers in central Baghdad. Had they based themselves on the outskirts of the capital they would have been far less visible. *But, cut off as they are in their compounds from real Iraqi life, they probably do not know and may not care about the sea of resentment that surrounds them.*

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY MISSING
'Here a Minute Ago,' Says Bremer

June 2, 2004 The Borowitz Report

Iraqi sovereignty went missing late yesterday afternoon, plunging into some doubt whether sovereignty could be handed over to the Iraqi people by the U.S.'s June 30 deadline.

News of the sovereignty's sudden disappearance was announced at Coalition Provisional Authority headquarters in Baghdad by interim leader Paul Bremer III, who expressed puzzlement at the sovereignty's whereabouts.

"To be candid, I have no idea where that sovereignty could have gone to," Mr. Bremer told reporters. "It was here a minute ago."

Iraqi President Ghazi Meshal Al-Yawar, who had been selected just hours before sovereignty mysteriously disappeared, expressed outrage and anger that U.S. officials had somehow permitted the nation's sovereignty to become mislaid, stolen, or worse.

"I agreed to let sovereignty be transferred to me, and then they went and lost it?" President Al-Yawar fumed. "I'm sorry, but that really sucks."

U.S. forces ransacked the offices of Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmed Chalabi for the twenty-seventh time yesterday after rumors swirled that Mr. Chalabi might have somehow slipped the sovereignty into his pants pocket and then sold it to Iran in exchange for a bag of shiny jewels.

But even after the search came up empty, President Bush insisted that sovereignty would be transferred on June 30 "whether there is any sovereignty or not."

Mr. Bush then proposed turning off all the lights in Iraq to enable the person or persons who took the sovereignty to return it anonymously.

The President's proposal drew praise from Mr. Bremer, who said that the plan was "extremely practical" because most of the lights in Iraq were already out.

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/**

(For more see the article "The B Team Gets Ready" at www.socialistworker.org.)

Dear Mr. President:

Message sent to the following recipients:
President Bush
Message text follows:

June 2, 2004 From David Honish

I was wondering if you believe in democracy?

I thought a display of relative numbers on a couple of subjects had interesting results, with an unscientific evaluation of the majority viewpoint. If one types VETERANS FOR PEACE into an internet search engine it generates about 721,000 responses.

In contrast, if one types BUSH PRAISED into a search engine it generates about 10,500 responses. I'm guessing that most of those refer to your father or horticulture?

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 PALESTINE

Mmmmm ... troubling ...

Cartoon: Steve Bell on Bush's reaction to Israeli house demolitions in Rafah.

steve.bell@guardian.co.uk

(To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org. The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.)

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