

GI SPECIAL 2#B23

**NO MISSION. NO HELP ON THE WAY. NO HOPE.
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



U.S. patrol near Haifa Street, Baghdad July 22. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

Iraq Vets Condemn The War

7/8/2004 By Jeremy Edwards, The Daily Texas

Soldiers who recently returned from Iraq joined with veteran groups Wednesday to speak out against the Iraq war and call for U.S. troops to be brought home as soon as possible.

"This occupation is not the answer to what's going on in Iraq, it is the problem," said Cpl. **Michael Hoffman, a Marine who returned home last year after serving in the first wave of troops to cross into Iraq in March 2003. "Our troops are just targets. We need to end the occupation, bring the troops home now and return Iraq to what it should really be - a sovereign country."**

The soldiers told stories about being underpaid, over-deployed and under-equipped, spending months without adequate body armor and having to go without water in the 140-degree heat. They railed against the Bush administration,

saying that the government went to war under false pretenses and failed to plan adequately.

"When my unit was preparing to go to Iraq, we had a 20-year Marine Corps veteran who came up in front of us and said, 'Don't think you're going to be heroes when you go to Iraq. You're not going there because of weapons of mass destruction. **You're going there for one reason and one reason alone, and that's oil,**" Hoffman said. **"What we knew going into Iraq, other troops have figured out for themselves."**

The soldiers were invited to speak by a coalition of anti-war groups, including Vietnam Veterans Against the War Inc., Veterans for Peace Inc., Military Families Speak Out and Bring Them Home Now, all of which reach out to members of the military community.

(The reporter left out the new organization Hoffman was speaking for: Iraq Veterans Against The War: <http://www.ivaw.net/>)

Conservative groups said that the soldiers represent only a disgruntled minority.

"Liberals try to point to that and say there are a few soldiers speaking out against the president," said Sachiv Mehta, chairman of the College Republicans at the University. "It's a moot point to argue that a few military members are against the war when a clear majority support it. It's an obvious given, that a great majority of the soldiers fighting the war support the war and the president."

But Hoffman said that the disillusionment felt by soldiers is more widespread than it appears. Many Iraq veterans are frustrated and angry about the war, but feel that they can't speak out because of potential repercussions, he said.

"There are a large number of veterans and reservists in federal employment, and they're afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out, which is a very real concern with this administration right now," Hoffman said.

The soldiers who spoke on Wednesday said that based on their experiences, they expected the ranks of anti-war veterans to keep growing.

"We have worn out our welcome in Iraq," said Capt. David Harris, who spent 14 months in Iraq as part of the occupation force.

"I supported this war at first, because my administration led me to believe it was the right thing to do, to depose the government of Saddam Hussein and free the Iraqi people. *They called it Operation Iraqi Freedom, but what we need is freedom from the Iraqi operation.*"

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 WAR REPORTS:

Fierce Resistance Offensive Hits Mosul

August 05, 2004 From correspondents in Mosul, Iraq (FP) & 8.4 Reuters

14 people were killed in clashes last night between police and insurgents in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, officials said.

Two other people were killed in a separate bomb blast.

Fighting erupted at around midday (6pm AEST) southwest of Mosul on the west bank of the Tigris River, bringing the sound of loud explosions and heavy gunfire, an AFP correspondent said.

"The police are shooting everywhere and there are RPGs being fired back," said a Reuters correspondent in the city. "The fighting seems to be going on around a highway bridge and is very fierce. There have been five or six loud explosions."

The correspondent said one firefight began at about 12.45 p.m. (9:45 a.m. British time) in the Sinjar neighbourhood to the southwest of Mosul, Iraq's third largest city. Other battles raged to the north, in the centre and to the south of the city, he said.

Police tried to seal off the Sinjar area and were fighting guerrillas street-to-street near the highway.

A military spokesman in Mosul confirmed that "multi-national forces supported" Iraqi security forces as they responded to the **coordinated attacks**.

Insurgents attacked the Nabi Girgis district police station with rocket-propelled grenades and guns, the governorate spokesman Mr Galawi told a news conference.

Armed assailants also tried to force their way into a branch of the Al-Jazeera bank in the New Mosul district, but security guards fought them off, wounding some insurgents, Mr Galawi said.

US troops had fanned out across various city districts, near the main multi-national base, taking up positions in schools, which were empty during the long summer vacation.

At least five bridges were cut off. Masked gunmen took up positions in streets across the southwest of the city, leaving police and national guardsmen deployed on the bridges.

Streets of this city of about 1.75 million people emptied after authorities imposed a curfew from 3pm (9pm AEST) until today.

Resistance troops forced shopkeepers to close in the Bab al-Toub, Yarmouk, New Mosul and Hospital neighbourhoods of the city centre, said police.

"Another group of gunmen was also going around distributing weapons to people and urging them to fight the Americans," said police officer Wael Ismail Ahmed.

"We received a letter from the insurgents asking us to back off and not to interfere in their fight with the Americans."

Earlier a man and a woman were killed, and two people wounded when a roadside bomb exploded in the path of a US military convoy, police said.

The clashes are the worst in Mosul since early April when insurgents fired at the provincial government's headquarters in this mostly Arab Sunni Muslim city with Kurdish, Turkmen and Christian minorities.

Extreme Danger: Professional At Work

04 August 2004 By Henry Chu, Los Angeles Times

A Marine died Tuesday after a mortar round hit his observation post north of Fallouja, the military said.

TROOP NEWS

Reserve Ranks Dwindle Away: "They've Had Enough"

8.4.04 By Greg Jaffe, Wall St. Journal

CLYDE, N.C.—On a cool, wet Saturday last month, the depleted 211th Military Police Company of the North Carolina National Guard mustered in a ragged line for weekend drill. Back-to-back deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq had taken a toll on its ranks.

Six months ago, the company's 109 soldiers were greeted as heroes when they returned from Iraq. A column of police cars, sirens blaring, escorted them from the airport to a welcome home parade. Businesses closed. The whistle at the local paper mill shrieked to announce their arrival.

But on this July morning, only 52 soldiers showed up for roll call. Four were AWOL, or absent without leave. About 30 had decided to get out of the Guard for good. Another 26, who had been temporarily assigned to the company to beef it up before combat, had returned to their regular units.

“After the second deployment, a lot of soldiers just said {forget} it,” says Capt. James Payne, the unit’s commander and an executive at Carolinas Healthcare System, a local nonprofit. “The overwhelming feeling is that they are tired. They have just had enough.”

Many soldiers in the 211th were convinced that, because they were Guardsmen and not active-duty soldiers, they had been given second-rate equipment.

They say they had to make due with older, less- effective flak vests, while their active- duty colleagues were protected by new Interceptor Body Armor, which includes special ceramic plates that protect vital organs. Their Humvees weren’t armored. Even their rifles were hand-me-downs from the 82nd Airborne Division. The sights were out of line and the barrels had too much give in them, the soldiers say.

Though they spent hours cleaning and repairing the guns, Capt. Payne says “not a soul in the unit had faith in them.’

On the rainy Saturday the 211th met for drill last month, Lt. Col. Tim Houser, who oversees three other military-police companies, stopped by to check on what was left of the unit.

‘What reasons are they giving for getting out? Is it because their wife’s mad at them, because they don’t want to deploy?’ asked the colonel, a tall and thin man with a salt-and-pepper crew cut. **(Asshole.)**

“The overwhelming reason is that they are just dog tired,” Capt. Payne answered. “When we ask them, they say they’ve had enough.

Reservists, Hawaii National Guard Off To Bush’s Slaughterhouse

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Aug. 3, 2004)

The 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, Army Reserve, will round out the Hawaii National Guard's 29th Infantry Brigade as it mobilizes for eventual deployment to Iraq. Aug. 16 and moves to Fort Bliss, Texas, by the end of the month for deployment training, per Department of Defense mobilization orders signed July 16.

The Army Reserve primarily consists of combat service and combat service support units. Other than the 100th Inf. Bn., the only other combat unit in the Army Reserve is an attack aviation unit based in the New England area.

The 100th Inf. Bn. has units in Guam, American Samoa and Saipan.

The 29th Infantry Brigade, the largest unit in the Hawaii National Guard, is headquartered on Oahu.

MORE:

Army Calls Up More Nebraska Reserves For War

August 04, 2004 Nebraska State Paper

HASTINGS – It has become a regular and familiar announcement. More Nebraskans are headed for war in Iraq.

A callup of the 295th Ordnance Company will involve some 30 troops.

The company is trained to handle munitions.

The Army confirmed the call up Tuesday.

A farewell celebration and ceremony is scheduled for August 8.

#1: Protest Works: Unit Returns Home

August 4, 2004 MANCHESTER, N.H., TheBostonChannel.com

It's a big welcome home Wednesday for local soldiers who've been serving in Iraq for 16 months who were scheduled to return home twice before but were delayed each time.

NewsCenter 5's Jack Harper reported that family and friends of the members of the 94th Military Police Company erupted with cheers at a ceremony at the JFK Coliseum.

Five members of the unit were given Purple Hearts for wounds received in battle, but despite the wounds, 100 percent of the unit returned home alive and well.

The unit shipped out in December 2002. In November 2003, they were extended five more months. In April 2004, hours before boarding buses to the airport to return home, the unit was sent back to duty.

In June, families of the 94th lobbied Congress and the Pentagon for the unit's return. Weeks later, the MPs and their families received the news that they were going home.

#2: Protest Works, Unit Returns Home

August 4, 2004 NBC 30

HARTFORD, Conn. -- A New Haven-based Army Reserve company that has been serving in the Iraq war since May 2003 is scheduled to return home Wednesday evening.

Connecticut lawmakers lobbied last month for a quick return of the 162 members of the 439th Quartermaster Company, **one of the country's longest-serving units. The unit was deployed in February 2003.**

The soldiers are slated to arrive at 6 p.m. in New Haven.

U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., and U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., both asked Acting Army Secretary Les Brownlee to bring the unit home and prevent its orders from being extended another time. The unit had its deployment extended twice previously.

Looking Like Troops' Votes Won't Get Counted

(The government won't let Iraqis vote for who they want. Why be surprised if troops get the same shitty deal?)

03 August 2004 By Erica Werner, Associated Press

Washington - **Thousands of votes from U.S. troops overseas could go uncounted again in November without emergency legislation extending deadlines for the ballots,** a Chicago election official warned President Bush in a letter Tuesday.

Nearly 30 percent of military voters who requested ballots in 2000 didn't get them in time to vote. Theresa M. Petrone, a Democratic member of Chicago's three-person Board of Election Commissioners, told Bush the problem could be solved if he proposed emergency legislation giving election officials up to 14 days after Election Day to collect and count ballots.

Critics have accused the Pentagon of doing little to improve systems for getting ballots to and from service members. A report by the Defense Department's inspector general in April said problems hadn't been fixed, and a required study by a new voting commission on getting ballots to military and other overseas voters is overdue.

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/>

Bergholtz Soldier Near Death

8/4/2004 By LOU MICHEL, News Staff Reporter

With one miracle behind them, the family of critically wounded Army Spc. John Pirinelli hopes for a second miracle of recovery at a U.S. military hospital in Germany.

The 23-year-old soldier from the Niagara County hamlet of Bergholtz was shot in the back while on patrol in Iraq last Wednesday. After he was stabilized at a field hospital near Tikrit, he was flown to Europe and is just starting to come out of a drug-induced coma.

It took something of a miracle to get two of four family members from the Buffalo area to his bedside on short notice, and now they are making a public appeal for prayer to save the soldier's life.

"When John's doctor called us Sunday to come to Germany, he painted a horribly grim picture, but now it is Tuesday and his surgeon says, "It's miraculous this boy is still alive," " Rise Pirinelli, the mother of the soldier, said in a telephone interview moments after leaving her son's bedside late Tuesday.

The bullet destroyed one of his kidneys and severed his colon.

"Before I left his bedside, his eyelids started to flutter when I told him I was going to lie down and come back later and stay with him for the night so his wife could have a break," Mrs. Pirinelli said, adding that her son has a strong faith, which she hopes will carry him through this ordeal.

Family members credit State Sen. George D. Maziarz, R-North Tonawanda, with assisting two relatives in obtaining passports at the last minute.

At about 4:30 a.m. Tuesday, the parents and brother and sister-in-law arrived in Frankfurt, Germany, and were met by Army officers who drove them three hours to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

Already at the hospital was the soldier's German wife, Katrin, who is six months pregnant with their first child, a son. Rise Pirinelli and the other family members joined the bedside vigil.

"We'll stay however long it takes. John is the real hero of our family," his mother said. To that end, family members in Western New York have organized a prayer service for John and for all the troops in Iraq. The gathering is set for 8:30 p.m. Thursday in Gateway Park, North Tonawanda.

Chemical Detectors Recalled, Can't Detect Chemicals

(Bloomberg.com, August 3, 2004)

The Air Force is recalling chemical detectors made by BAE Systems and used in Iraq and Afghanistan after an audit by the Pentagon inspector general found that the units were rushed into use despite poor test results. The recall involves 100 handheld "ChemSentry" detectors.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

No Oil For Blood: Pipeline Scorecard July 2004

August 3, 2004 Energy Security

70. July 3 - Fire in Al-Maqalai, southeast of the Az-Zubayr oil fields, on one of the two pipelines that feed the southern terminals resulted in a drop by half of Iraqi oil exports to 960,000 barrels per day. Exports in the South fell from 84,000 barrels per hour to 40,000. While one Iraqi oil official said, "Fire is raging in the 42-inch pipeline on the Faw Peninsula. It was sabotage," an official from the Southern Iraqi Oil Company said "News that one of the key oil export pipeline in the Faw peninsula was attacked by saboteurs are baseless."

71. July 3 - bomb blast during changing of the guard at an oil storage facility south of Baghdad in Al Latifiyah killed six Iraqi National Guard soldiers and wounded five more.

72. July 4 - attack on pipeline that carries oil from the northern oil fields to the south at point near Musayyib, about 50 miles (80 km) southwest of Baghdad.

73. July 6 - blast on gas pipeline that feeds multiple power plants in the center and north of Iraq and a gas canister factory in Taji, north of Baghdad, that provides gas for many homes. Head of the Northern Gas Company, Huner Hassan, said "A device exploded

along the pipeline about 90 km (56 miles) south of Kirkuk, sparking a fire." He noted "This is going to affect electricity production for the country and the production of gas for domestic use."

74. July 10 - explosion at approximately 6:30am local time about 55 miles (88 km) west of Kirkuk in the Safra area on a gas pipeline that runs from the gas fields in Kirkuk to a power station in Bayji sparked a fire on, according to the Northern Gas Co. head of security, Ahmed al-Hassan, less than a meter of the pipeline.

75. July 14 - Northern Oil Company police officer was shot to death while manning a checkpoint near a pipeline in Riyad, approximately 80 km southwest of Kirkuk.

76. July 15 - explosion on pipeline running from the northern oil fields to the Beiji refinery.

77. July 15 - holes were drilled on a major southern pipeline that runs to offshore export terminals. The damage occurred in the al-Askari district, 20 km south-west of Basra, according to head of the Iraqi Border Police, Staff Brigadier General Ali al-Mousawi. It appears this may be the work of looters.

78. July 15 - explosion near Fatha, some 55 miles (90 km) west Kirkuk, at about 8:40 a.m. (0440 GMT) on oil pipeline that runs from the major oil fields in Kirkuk and the Turkish port Ceyhan. The resulting fire has been extinguished and repairs on the pipeline are expected to begin July 17.

79. July 16 - attempted mortar attack on northern oil pipeline that runs from Kirkuk to Ceyhan failed. According to a security official at the Northern Oil Company, Ahmad Hassan Afif, "A mortar round was thrown at about 8:10 am (0410 GMT) on the pipeline near to Riad, 35 kilometres west of Kirkuk, causing a fire in a pool of oil created by leaks, but failing to cause any other damage."

80. July 17 - attempt to blow up natural gas pipeline failed as saboteur's bomb exploded prematurely, killing him but not damaging the pipeline.

81. July 19 - explosion on oil pipeline that runs through al-Debis region northwest of Kirkuk, supplying oil for domestic use in refineries and power plants.

82-83. July 23 - two blasts on 125 mile (200 km) long oil pipeline that runs from al-Daura refinery in Baghdad to Beiji, at point about 12 miles (20 km) south of Samarra.

84. July 24 - explosion southwest of the town of Samarra, 60 miles (100 km) north of Baghdad, sparked a fire on pipeline that carries oil from Beiji refinery to Baghdad.

85. July 24 - blast in the vicinity of Tharthar Lake, 100 miles (160 km) southeast of Kirkuk, on oil pipeline that runs from the oil fields around Kirkuk to Al-Dura power station, south of Baghdad.

86. July 28 - premature explosion killed two saboteurs who tried to place a bomb on an oil pipeline near Kirkuk. The pipeline was not damaged.

(For the endless lists of attacks since June 2003 see:
<http://www.iags.org/n080304.htm>)

Resistance Cripples Occupation Plans For U.S. Corporate Looters

(Philadelphia Inquirer, August 4, 2004, Pg. 1)

By kidnapping foreign workers, attacking civilian convoys and sabotaging infrastructure, insurgents have crippled Iraq's economy. Despite the lifting of international sanctions and the economic reforms that opened Iraq to foreign companies, **little foreign investment has materialized. Companies—even multinationals that do business in the farthest reaches of the developing world—are not willing to take the risk.**

Jordanian Hostage Says Kidnappers Had Nothing To Do With Resistance

Aug. 4, 2004 The Associated Press

Said Ahmad Abu-Jaafar, one of the freed captives, "The kidnappers have nothing to do with the resistance," Abu-Jaafar told The Associated Press by telephone. "The good people of Fallujah moved and save us from this."

Baghdad Madhi Army Troops Mobilized To Fight For Al-Sadr

Aug. 02, 2004 By TOM LASSETER, Knight Ridder Newspapers

During a firefight at the home of militant cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in Najaf, Madhi soldiers began to mobilize in Baghdad.

As news circulated of the confrontation in Najaf, pro-al-Sadr demonstrations broke out in at least two Baghdad neighborhoods.

News of the Najaf situation was read over loudspeakers in the Baghdad Shiite neighborhood of Kadhamiya, where a pro-al-Sadr protest broke out, witnesses said.

Later in the evening, the streets of Sadr City, an al-Sadr stronghold in Baghdad, were filled with cars and trucks carrying Mahdi members who brandished AK-47s, RPGs and even swords.

The men said they were awaiting orders to drive south to Najaf, but at about 11:30 p.m., the word began to pass around that the fighters should go home, because it was not clear whether al-Sadr was still surrounded.

MORE:

OOPS: Green Marines Stumbled Into Clash With Madhi Army

(Philadelphia Inquirer, August 4, 2004)

U.S. Marines accidentally strayed down a road near the house of Moqtada al-Sadr in Najaf and were not trying to arrest the radical cleric when they got into an hours-long firefight with his supporters on Monday, a Marine officer said. The Marine unit took command of the area only last weekend and was unfamiliar with the neighborhood. (As usual blame the troops, not the idiot officers in charge.)

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

OCCUPATION REPORT

Al-Anbar Province Governor Quits After Resistance Attack

04/08/2004 (SA)

Ramadi - The governor of Iraq's restive Al-Anbar province resigned on Wednesday after three of his sons were released by their kidnappers on condition he quit.

Abdel Karim Berges told AFP he resigned after his sons, aged 15 to 30, were freed in Fallujah following one week in captivity.

He paid no ransom, but bowed to the kidnappers' demand that he leave office, said the governor.

Ramadi's chief administrator Mohammed Abed Awad has taken over his duties.

The sons were kidnapped by gunmen who barged into and torched the governor's family home in Ramadi while he was at work.

Collaborator Cops Say Job Is For Shit

31 Jly 2004 By The Associated Press

Baghdad - Being an Iraqi police officer used to be a safe, cushy job that sometimes required chasing down pickpockets and car thieves, but left plenty of time for tea.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, however, insurgents armed with automatic weapons, mortars and car bombs have made law enforcement one of Iraq's most hazardous occupations.

"It used to be prestigious. ... People respected us, criminals were afraid of us," said 1st Lt. Amjid Mohammed, a 26-year-old detective at al-Bayaa police station, Baghdad's largest. **"Today it's the opposite: It's we who are afraid."**

Insurgents see police as collaborators with U.S.-led forces. They've blown up police stations all over the country, sometimes disguised as cops. They've gunned down officers in drive-by shootings as they left home for work, and they've battered police stations with mortar barrages and rocket-propelled grenades.

From April 2003 to May 2004 alone, 710 Iraqi police were killed out of a total force of 130,000 officers, authorities said. Until then, police say, an officer's death was nearly always of natural causes.

A truck bomb Wednesday targeted a police recruiting center in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, where hundreds of job applicants were gathered. It killed 70 people.

"We're being targeted all the time," said Mohammed, his face scarred from a car-bombing that destroyed the al-Bayaa station in October, killing 15 Iraqis and one U.S. soldier.

Police complain they're ill-equipped. The al-Bayaa station has just eight flak jackets, and lacks vehicles, arms and ammunition, said 1st Lt. Riyal Ahmed Ali, 24, a stocky jail guard.

Police only patrol in vehicles. Foot patrols are considered too dangerous, Ali said.

Now a 12-foot-high concrete blast wall is going up around the station.

"This will help, but it won't stop them," Khalaf said of the two previous car-bombings. "We are waiting for the third."

U.S.-Trained Collaborator Forces Hit By Defections

01 August 2004 By Doug Struck, Washington Post

Baghdad - **Five hooded men hopped out of a car at the checkpoint, heavily armed and clearly eager for blood. Iraqi policeman Maytham Talib figured it was time to quit his job.**

"Each one of them had an automatic weapon. The police, we had four rifles, but only two worked. We had seven bullets for each rifle. We ran," said Talib, 25. He had already seen two colleagues gunned down at a checkpoint and two others slain by a grenade. He fled, took a bus home and has not been back to work since.

Approximately 225,000 men and some women are listed as serving in the Iraqi security forces - nearly 88 percent of the recruitment goal. **But the numbers are debatable; the police carry 30,000 more names on their payroll than they can account for. Of those who exist, only a fraction have any training,** often consisting of a few weeks at a boot camp. Top officials insist they have relatively few resignations - no reliable figures are available - but **officers on the street say hundreds quit every month after getting their paychecks.**

"I'm waiting to finish this month and get my salary, and then I will quit," said Heider Abbas, a policeman in Baghdad who cited low pay. A laborer or shop worker, he said, "gets more than we do."

Training has gone slowly. **For the Iraqi army, only about 3,000 soldiers have been trained and deployed in the field,** according to Brig. Gen. James Schwitters, commander of the coalition training team assisting the army.

Only 6,000 police recruits have received training in a police academy, according to British Brig. Andrew Mackay, the coalition adviser for the Iraqi police. Another 21,000 have undergone a three-week training course, he said. At least 60,000 are untrained.

"There are a lot of people who want to quit. Last month, we got 250,000 Iraqi dinars [about \$170]. This month, we got only 210,000 dinars [\$145]. **Lots of guys are waiting until the end of the month to see what their pay is, and then they will quit. Our life is in danger out there, and no one takes care of us.**"

Iraq's Reject Occupation Courts

(Washington Post, August 4, 2004, Pg. 12)

Iraq's Central Criminal Court relies on a mixture of Iraqi law and rules laid down by the now-dissolved occupation authority. **Many Iraqis have refused to accept a legal system backed by the U.S. government, even if it is run by Iraqis.**

Irish-Americans Target Iraq Contract Linked To British Occupation Murder Of Irish Boy

Jul 30, 2004 By Tom Griffin, Asia Times Online Ltd.

LONDON - In the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, the role of private security contractors in Iraq has come under increasing scrutiny.

There was widespread surprise, therefore, when the US Army announced in June that it was to award a major security contract to Aegis Defense Services, the company run by British mercenary Lieutenant-Colonel Tim Spicer. Under the US\$293 million deal, Aegis will coordinate the work of up to 50 other private security companies in Iraq, and provide security teams for the US Project Management Office.

The deal faces opposition on a number of fronts.

It may not be Spicer's mercenary career that provokes the most serious opposition to the Aegis deal in Washington, but his British military record. Irish-Americans are actively campaigning against the contract because of Spicer's role as commanding officer of the Scots Guards in Belfast in 1992, when two of his soldiers shot dead 18-year-old Peter McBride.

The killers, Mark Wright and James Fisher, were convicted of murder, but were released early and allowed to rejoin their regiment after a lobbying campaign in which Spicer featured prominently.

"Despite numerous court rulings that held that the soldiers under his command murdered an unarmed 18-year-old boy and concocted lies to cover up their actions, Spicer has continued to claim that his soldiers should not have been prosecuted," said a spokesman for Irish human-rights group the Pat Finucane Center. "By his own admission he wanted to send Guardsmen Wright and Fisher back on patrol immediately after the murder."

The US decision to work with Spicer prompted an emotional appeal to Irish-Americans last month from the dead man's mother, Jean McBride.

"We are asking our supporters in the US to raise this directly with [Democratic presidential candidate] John Kerry and call for a congressional hearing into Tim Spicer's track record," she said.

"Given the involvement of private security firms in torture and murder in Iraq I shudder to think that Spicer has been awarded a contract to create the world's largest private army. As commanding officer of the Scots Guards he told a pack of lies about Peter's murder and dragged his name through the dirt. God knows what his own private army will do in Iraq."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bring the troops home...



....to protect citizens against these assholes!

Democratic National Convention on July 25

(From Green Left Weekly, August 4, 2004)

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.

While Soldiers Died, Bush Buddies Looted Billions For Campaign Contributors From Iraq Funds

Aug. 4, 2004 By Ariana Eunjung Cha, Washington Post

Halliburton Co. and other U.S. contractors are being paid at least \$1.9 billion from Iraqi funds under an arrangement set by the U.S.-led occupation authority, according to a review of documents and interviews with government agencies, companies and auditors.

Most of the money is for two controversial deals that originally had been financed with money approved by the U.S. Congress, but later shifted to Iraqi funds that were governed by fewer restrictions and less rigorous oversight.

The CPA has said it has awarded about 2,000 contracts with Iraqi money. Its inspector general compiled records for the major contracts, which it defined as those worth \$5 million or more each. **Analysis of those and other records shows that 19 of 37 major contracts funded by Iraqi money went to U.S. companies and at least 85 percent of the total \$2.26 billion was obligated to U.S. companies. The contracts that went to U.S. firms may be worth several hundred million more once the work is completed.**

That analysis and several audit reports released in recent weeks shed new light on how the occupation authority handled the Iraqi money it controlled. They show that the CPA at times violated its own rules, authorizing Iraqi money when it didn't have a quorum or proper Iraqi representation at meetings, and kept such sloppy records that the paperwork for several major contracts could not be found.

During the first half of the occupation, the CPA depended heavily on no-bid contracts that were questioned by auditors. And the occupation's shifting of projects that were publicly announced to be financed by U.S. money to Iraqi money prompted the Iraqi finance minister to complain that the "ad hoc" process put the CPA in danger of losing the trust of the people.

Fareed Yaseen, one of 43 ambassadors recently appointed by Iraq's government, said he was troubled that the Iraqi money was managed almost exclusively by foreigners and that contracts went predominantly to foreign companies.

"There was practically no Iraqi voice in the disbursements of these funds," Yaseen said in a phone interview from Baghdad, where he is awaiting his diplomatic assignment.

Even Iraqi officials who served in the government during the occupation complained they had little say in the use of their own country's money.

Mohammed Aboush, who was a director general in the oil ministry during the occupation, said he and other Iraqi officials were not consulted about expanding the KBR contract. But he said he informed his American "advisers" at the CPA that the Iraqis felt KBR's performance had been inadequate and that he'd prefer that another company take over its work.

Aboush said he was ignored and that he believes the decision to go with KBR was political. "I am old enough to know the Americans and their interests and they are not always the same interests as the Iraqi interests," he said.

CHENEY URGES AMERICANS TO SEND HIM THEIR MONEY FOR SAFEKEEPING; Will Protect Assets Until Threat Has Passed

August 3, 2004 The Borowitz Report

In the face of terror threats to America's financial institutions, Vice President Dick Cheney today urged all Americans to send him their money for safekeeping until the danger has passed.

In a nationally televised address, Mr. Cheney said that in the current climate the only safe place for Americans to put their money "is with me."

Using a chart and pointer reminiscent of real estate infomercials, Mr. Cheney gave a series of easy-to-follow instructions showing the American people how to transfer all of their worldly assets to him via check, wire transfer, or big bags of money.

"Your money will be invested personally by me in high-yield, no-bid Iraqi reconstruction contracts," Mr. Cheney said.

In other terrorism news, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge announced today that the Homeland Security Department would soon replace the much-maligned terror alert color code with an official cry of "wolf."

Mr. Ridge demonstrated five different cries of "wolf" to correspond to the various threat levels, from a barely audible whisper of "wolf" meaning "low" to a full-throated scream of "wolf" indicating "severe."

"These new wolf cries will go into effect tomorrow, assuming there is a tomorrow," Mr. Ridge said.

Mr. Ridge also confirmed reports that the latest terror alerts were based on information found on a computer that turned up last week on "Antiques Roadshow."

Finally, President Bush backed away from his call to name a new terrorism czar, saying it was too important a job to be entrusted to a Russian.

Where's Rumsfeld?

Harold Meyerson (*Washington Post*, August 4, 2004, Pg. 19)

Rummy has all but vanished in the past six weeks or so. All those Pentagon news conferences and Sunday morning shows are suddenly Rummy-less. Somebody is clamming him up—probably until after the November presidential elections.

CLASS WAR NEWS

Cut Our Pensions? No Way!



Union members clash with police during a protest near the Senate against social security pension cuts in Mexico City, Aug. 04. Angry union members blocked main avenues in Mexico's capital and fought with police on Wednesday. (AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

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