

GI SPECIAL 2#B36

FUCK STOP-LOSS: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



TIME TO GO HOME: American soldier in Najaf Aug. 17. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

Stop-Loss “Time-Bomb” “I Can’t Get Out”

August 17, 2004 BY ARNOLD ABRAMS, STAFF WRITER, Newsday

Luis Prosper has spent 24 years in the Army, reached the highest rank given to a non-commissioned officer -- sergeant major -- and was awarded a Bronze Star for heroism in Iraq.

Now he wants to leave.

"I think I've earned my retirement," said Prosper, 41, a member of Georgia-based 3rd Infantry Division, which returned from more than a year's combat in Iraq last August and recently was told it will be sent back. **"But I can't get out."**

That's because of "Stop-Loss," a Pentagon policy announced in June. **The program, which applies only to the Army, prohibits soldiers from retiring or leaving the military three months before their unit is deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. It also keeps them in place for three months after their unit's return.**

Stop-Loss could force thousands of soldiers to remain in uniform for a year or more after their contracts expire. As a result, many frustrated and angry people would have to put lives on hold.

"This is a time bomb," said a Defense Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "And, like so much else the administration has done in connection with Iraq, it could produce some very bad results."

Like the predicament facing one Long Islander, who insisted on anonymity for fear of retribution from Army officials. After completing three years' active duty and returning to civilian life, this man, in his mid-20s, signed a one-year contract with the 69th Infantry Regiment -- the "Fighting 69th" -- a recently activated reserve unit in the New York National Guard.

Because his contract ended on June 4, two days after Stop-Loss was announced, the Long Islander had to remain with the unit, now training in Texas for deployment to Iraq in the fall. **"I did my job and fulfilled my duty. But the government has reneged on its contract."**

Despite officials' explanations, the new programs have been criticized by servicemen, military analysts and leading politicians.

Families affected by the policy's restrictions will continue to be frustrated.

"Whatever happens in terms of the larger picture, I would be very upset, to say the least, if my son is hurt in Iraq," said the mother of the Long Islander forced to remain in the 69th Infantry Regiment. "It's a crapshoot for anyone in the military, of course, but his odds have been skewed by government manipulation. He's been put in double jeopardy."

MORE:

Texas Soldier Fights Stop-Loss

Press release:

<http://www.carlwebb.net/press-release.html>

Austin, TX – A local Austin soldier and political activist is fighting to avoid being sent to Iraq under an approved federal program designed to supplement the number of active duty troops in Iraq. Carl Webb, 38, is a member of the [Texas Army National Guard](#) and a U.S. army veteran.

In 2001 following a 7-year break in service, he enlisted in the National Guard expecting to serve for only three years. His term of service ends August 22, however, less than two months shy of the end of his service completion he was informed that his term had been involuntarily extended and he would be sent to Fort Hood for training and deployed to Iraq in November.

Webb is one of many reservists who is being compelled to serve in the war in Iraq under the [stop-loss program](#). This program keeps soldiers scheduled for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan from leaving when their term of service ends. More than 10,000 soldiers are covered under the rules now, according to the [Virginian Pilot](#).

Webb, who served in the [U.S. Army for 7 active years](#), is conscientiously objecting to being sent to Iraq for numerous reasons. The reasons that the U.S. government used to justify the imperialist war in Iraq have proven to be unfounded; however, even if they had been, Webb still would oppose the U.S. going to war against the Iraqi people.

“The war is unethical and illegal U.S. aggression,” he said. “It’s all about oil and profits.”

He is also vehemently against the use of the stop-loss program that imposes a lengthened term on reservists and soldiers who have already fulfilled their military service. **The program, however, has its limitations. It only applies to individuals who are within 90 days of being deployed to Iraq.**

“This policy is practically an unofficial draft,” he said. “It is conscription against a person’s will.” **Moreover, service people are not informed of the possibility of being forced to fulfill a compulsory extension when they sign up.**

In an effort to have the stop-loss program revoked, Webb is in the process of consulting legal counsel to protest his deployment orders and is considering taking legal action that could include filing a class action lawsuit against the United States government.

“In my mind this policy is not only unethical, it is illegal,” Webb said.

For additional information or to set up an interview contact Carl Webb at (512) 443- 5616 or carl.k.webb@us.army.mil.

End of press release.

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:

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed In Sadr City, Baghdad

8.19.04 Al Jazeera

US occupation forces backed by dozens of tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles have overrun Baghdad's Sadr City suburb, a powerbase for Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr, witnesses said.

According to the US military, fifty al-Mahdi army fighters and two US soldiers were killed in the fighting which ensued from the US advance into the area on Wednesday.

Second TF Baghdad Soldier Dead In Sadr City, Aug. 18

8.19.04 CJTF 7 Release #040819c

Baghdad - A Task Force Baghdad Soldier was killed by small arms fire Aug. 18 around 6 p.m. in eastern Baghdad.

Marine Killed In Najaf

8.19.04 CJTF 7 Release #040819a

Camp Fallujah -- One Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action Wednesday in Al Najaf.

Marine Dead In Vehicle Accident

8.19.04 CJTF 7 Release #040819a

Camp Fallujah: A Marine died after a vehicle accident in the Al Anbar Province.

Polish Soldiers Kill Each Other Escaping Ambush

WARSAW, Aug. 19 (Xinhuanet)

A road accident in the central Iraqi city of Hilla killed two Polish soldiers and injured five others in the wake of an ambush near their Babylon base in southern Iraq, Polish news agency PAP said Thursday.

The troops were on a routine road patrol when their convoy was fired on in Hilla, said Colonel Zdzislaw Gnatowski, spokesman for the Polish army chief of staff.

Two Polish vehicles crashed into one another while trying to escape the ambush

Sadr Says "Either Martyrdom Or Victory" (But No Attack By Puppet Government)

SOMETHING LESS THAN TERRIFIED



Mahdi Army troops chant slogans outside the shrine of Imam Ali in the holy Shiite city of Najaf 8.19.04 .(AFP/Hassan Abdulzarah)

8/19/2004 NAJAF, Iraq By ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI, Associated Press Writer & United Press International & By Michael Georgy, NAJAF, Iraq (Reuters) & (KUNA) & (CNN)

Militant Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr rejected on Thursday a government ultimatum to disarm his militia immediately and pull them out of a holy Shiite shrine here without conditions, an al-Sadr aide said.

Haidar al-Tourfi, an official at al-Sadr office's office in Najaf, said he received a text message from al-Sadr rejecting the demands.

"Either martyrdom or victory," the message said, according to al-Tourfi.

"They are all very proud to be in here and seem to be very adamant about staying in here," CNN reporter Kianne Sadeq said. "They aren't going anywhere until the fighting is over."

Thick smoke poured into the sky as the boom of dozens of explosions shook the old city and automatic rifle fire crackled through the air.

Two of the mosque's minarets have been damaged in recent fighting, and al-Sadr loyalists said a clock in one of the towers caught fire, Sadeq reported.

Al-Arabiya said U.S. troops attacked from three locations. The fiercest fighting took place in what is called "Najaf Sea," or Abu al-Kheir Street, about 1,000 meters (1,093 yards) behind the Imam Ali Mosque, the network said.

But fighting eased an hour later, indicating the government's threatened offensive was not yet under way at the mosque where Sadr and his Mehdi Army militia have holed up. Fighting subsided in the southern Iraqi holy city shortly before sundown on Thursday.

The two-week rebellion has badly dented Allawi's authority, killed hundreds and rattled world oil markets. Oil prices hit a new record of \$47.96 for a barrel of U.S. light crude.

Daoud vowed to liberate the Imam Ali Mosque but declined to say whether the government would storm the site itself.

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In Baghdad, Associated Press Television News footage showed the streets of Sadr City nearly deserted Thursday as tanks moved through the area. Mahdi Army soldiers, some with homemade weapons, ran through the streets.

Smoke was seen rising over the area as U.S. armored vehicles, some scarred by gunfire, drove by.

The bodies of two men wearing Iraqi National Guard uniforms were lying dead in the street as a crowd danced around them. Someone then covered the bodies with carpets.

"The tanks and the armored vehicles are besieging Sadr City now," al-Kaabi said, pledging to follow in the footsteps of al-Sadr, whose followers have been fighting with U.S. and Iraqi forces in the holy city of Najaf for two weeks.

"They are killing the innocent civilians just as Saddam did, and their destiny will be shame in this life and the other life," he said.

Witnesses said U.S. tanks rolled toward the center of Sadr city from 10 different fronts in an attempt to crush the al-Mehdi Army.

U.S. Army sources said helicopter-backed troops advanced into Sadr City despite heavy resistance by Shiite gunmen, who fired rocket-propelled grenades and mortars to push back the offensive.

Battles were still going on Thursday and explosions were heard in various parts of Sadr City as U.S. helicopters and F-16 fighters hovered overhead.

The Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa on Thursday called for an immediate end to military operations in Najaf and said Iraqi civilians must be spared.

He said he received news of artillery "shelling and renewed clashes (in Najaf) with great uneasiness," Arab League spokesman Hossam Zaki said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press.

An al-Sadr representative in Baghdad, Abdel-Hadi al-Darraji, warned that fighting in Najaf could "ignite a revolution all over Iraq."

"We welcome any initiative to stop the bloodbath in Najaf," he told Al-Arabiya television. "Otherwise the battle will move to Baghdad, Amarah, Basra and anywhere in Iraq."



A building explodes as the first bomb drops during a U.S. aerial assault on targets in Najaf Aug. 19, 2004. **High-altitude jet fighters dropped four bombs in the area.** (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

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

Italian Armored Patrol Attacked By Resistance; Escapes “Safely”

Aug 19 (KUNA)

The Italian Defense Ministry, in a statement released in Rome, said Thursday a patrol of the Italian army was targeted with an armed attack in the city of Nasiriah.

The ministry said gunmen attacked with an RPG the patrol in northern Nasiriah, but nobody was hurt.

Troops of the patrol, including **four military vehicles and an armored personnel carrier**, called for the support of an Italian military helicopter, **which enabled the patrol to pull out safely from the engagement.**

Mortar Rounds Hit U.S. Embassy; Two Suits Wounded

BAGHDAD, Iraq (August 19, 11:47 am ADT)

A mortar attack on a building housing offices of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad Thursday wounded one American, an embassy spokesman said.

The mortar round hit the roof of one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces inside Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy said on condition of anonymity.

A gray plume of smoke could be seen rising from the multistoried building, topped by a green dome, after the blast. Dozens of U.S. diplomats work in the building alongside officials of the U.S.-led military coalition.

U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte, who works out of the nearby chancellery, was not in Baghdad at the time, the spokesman said.

The U.S. military said in statement earlier that two mortar rounds exploded in the Green Zone, injuring two people. The statement gave no other details and it was not clear if it included the mortar attack on the embassy building.

Thousands of American and Iraqi citizens work in the riverside enclave.

The building hit Thursday used to serve as the headquarters of the former U.S. occupation authority.

"One member of the embassy staff was close enough to be shaken, his ears were ringing, but he didn't require medical treatment," the official said. "The other was injured and required some medical attention, but nothing serious."

War Reports: The Resistance Point Of View

Iraqi Resistance Report for events of Sunday, 8 August 2004 through Wednesday, 11 August 2004. Translated and/or compiled by Muhammad Abu Nasr, member editorial board The Free Arab Voice

Monday, August 9:

Baghdad

Six US troops killed in Resistance bombing in al-Khalidiyah Monday. Three Iraqi Resistance bombs exploded at noon local time (11:00am Mecca time) as a US military patrol was passing towards al-Khalidiyah, west of Baghdad on Monday. According to the local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam, the blasts totally destroyed one US Humvee and knocked an American tank out of commission. Puppet police sources in al-Khalidiyah told the correspondent that six US soldiers who were on the Humvee were killed in the attack.

Mortars, Grad rockets fired at "green zone" Monday evening. Iraqi Resistance forces on Monday evening fired a barrage of Grad rockets at the US occupation headquarters in the so-called "green zone" as the Americans have dubbed the Iraqi Republican Palace. The local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam reported that two Grad rockets and a number of 120mm mortar shells slammed into the area of the "green zone." **The explosive yield of the Grad is reportedly 20 times greater than that of ordinary rockets.**

Al-Qa'Tim

Iraqi Resistance sharpshooter takes out American sniper on rooftop in al-Qa'Tim. An Iraqi Resistance sharpshooter was able to kill an American sniper at about 4:30pm on Monday afternoon, Mecca time, in the city of al-Qa'Tim on the border with Syria. The local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam reported that the American sniper was hidden on top of a house in the city when an Iraqi sharpshooter took aim at him from another, nearby house and fired.

US invader troops had begun to deploy snipers on rooftops in the city after the killing of 11 US soldiers, including one captain, on Friday, 6 August 2004.

Fallujah

Resistance uses new high-yield explosive in bomb attack near al-Fallujah Sunday. Two US Humvees were burned and destroyed completely when two Iraqi Resistance bombs blew up by a US troop column. The local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam in al-Fallujah reported Monday night that a truck driver who was near the blast said that

two Humvees were burned. He said that only one person was seen getting out of one of the blazing Humvees. After that one escaped, the US troops stood back out of fear that they might be falling into an ambush. The truck driver said that two American soldiers in the group appeared to become hysterical and began shouting so much that he feared they might kill him.

The truck driver said he had seen between four and six men aboard each Humvee. The force of the blast was so great that the truck of that nearby driver was also damaged, though there was one Humvee separating him from the blast.

It appears that the explosive used in this Resistance attack is what the Resistance has dubbed the Austrian explosive, one of the strongest explosives available. It is so powerful that a blast on one side of the road can destroy cars traveling in the opposite direction on the other side of the road.

Al-Khalidiyah

Resistance rocket totally destroys US tank near al-Khalidiyah, Sunday. The local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam reported that Iraqi Resistance forces **fired a Katyusha rocket** that totally destroyed a US tank that was traveling in an American column on its way to the main street in al-Khalidiyah, 75km west of Baghdad on Sunday.

Najaf

Sixteen US troops killed in an-Najaf Monday. In a dispatch posted at 9:05pm Mecca time the local correspondent in an-Najaf for Mafkarat al-Islam reported that 16 American aggressor troops had been killed around noon Monday when three Humvees were set ablaze in the course of the battles raging in the city.

The correspondent wrote that the Jaysh al-Mahdi attacked the three Humvees in the Wadi as-Salam area of the city. In the course of the attack, 14 Americans were killed inside the vehicles, while two others were walking beside the Humvees.

The correspondent reported that the Jaysh al-Mahdi was continuing to hold its own despite frontal attacks by US aggressor troops and treacherous **attacks behind their lines by the so-called Bravo Division of traitors infiltrated into their positions by the Americans.**

The correspondent acknowledged that the Jaysh al-Mahdi took a heavy pounding from US aircraft on Sunday after agents of the US planted metal disks in areas of Jaysh al-Mahdi concentration. The disks then emitted an electronic signal to American aircraft enabling them to strike at the militia's positions.

But in the last few days, the Jaysh al-Mahdi has begun to change its tactics, splitting up into small groups rather than concentrating in large forces, thereby frustrating US technological efforts to wipe them out. Many local witnesses reported seeing US troops fleeing from the Jaysh al-Mahdi which would attack US soldiers in small groups but from many angles at once.

On Saturday, 7 August, and Monday, 9 August, US forces have dropped cluster bombs on the city of an-Najaf, despite the fact that their use is internationally prohibited.

Two of the wounded persons, whose condition is serious, were transferred to al-Fallujah General Hospital, where the staff have considerable experience in the wounds inflicted by US aggressor craft.

Mafkarat al-Islam correspondent in an-Najaf killed covering the battle. The Mafkarat al-Islam website on Monday apologized to readers for shortcomings in their coverage of the fighting in an-Najaf, noting that their local correspondent in that city had been killed while covering the battle on Saturday. Mafkarat al-Islam strives to have coverage from the front lines of the fighting to minimize the influence of western news blackouts and censorship. At times, however, the courageous reporters fall as martyrs to the truth. The Iraqi Resistance Report extends fraternal condolences to Mafkarat al-Islam at this loss as well as expressions of esteem and appreciation of their heroic effort to break through the western wall of falsehood and silence in Iraq.

Basrah

Jaysh al-Mahdi seizes governor's office building in al-Basrah. The correspondent of Iranian al-Alam TV reported on Monday that Jaysh al-Mahdi militiamen, loyal to Shi'a religious leader Muqtada as-Sadr had seized control over the building housing the city government of the southern city of al-Basrah, the second largest city in Iraq. The liberation of the building comes after British aggressor troops occupying the city boasted that they would prevent al-Basrah from seeing any of the kind of fighting between the Jaysh al-Mahdi and the invaders that other cities " notably an-Najaf " have been witnessing.

Wednesday, 11 August 2004

Iraqi oil workers shut down pumping station serving Baghdad to protest puppet regime's support of US offensive on an-Najaf.

Iraqi oil workers at an oil pumping station in the south of the country on Wednesday declared that they were shutting down the station in protest against the support of the US-installed Iraqi "government" for the American offensive on the supporters of Shi'a religious leader Muqtada as-Sadr.

In a declaration, the oil workers said that the closing of the station in the city of an-Nasiriyah cuts off supply of refined oil and liquid natural gas products to Baghdad. Reuters reports that the statement said that the workers shut down the station in protest over the course taken by the US-installed Iraqi puppet "government" which they described as "inhuman" and which they denounced for its cooperation with the US occupation forces in attacking the city of an-Najaf, doing harm to the Shi'ah and their holy sites.

TROOP NEWS

Soldier Wounded In Ambush Finally Headed Back To Maine

August 19 Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — An Army Reserve sergeant from Maine who was wounded in an ambush in Iraq last September is scheduled to return home following his hospital discharge Friday, U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe said.

Sgt. Curtis Mills of Shapleigh was wounded Sept. 22 when a bomb rocked his Humvee along the main route in Ramadi.

Mills, who works as a mail carrier in Sanford, underwent surgeries for multiple shrapnel wounds on the right side of his body and has **spent nearly 11 months in rehabilitation at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.**

Mills sought Snowe's help in getting discharged from Walter Reed Medical Center so he could return to Maine for further medical treatment. Maine Medical agreed to complete Mills' remaining surgeries at no cost, Snowe said.

Bush Punches Their Ticket For Hell: Maryland Soldiers Leave For Iraq



Aug 19, 2004 Towson, MD (WJZ)

As fighting rages on in Iraq today, a group of Maryland National Guard troops is on their way to join the battle.

Fifty-two members of the 129th Signal Battalion left Towson this morning to begin preparing for Iraq.

The soldiers will train in Texas for a few weeks before making the journey to the Middle East.

They say will be overseas at least a year.

Battalion members come from National Guard Armories in Towson, Cheltenham, Pikesville and Cumberland.

THANKS BUT NO THANKS



Protesters march in El Salvador Aug. 16 demanding the government not send troops to Iraq. The banner reads: 'One can't have peace when there is hunger- The unemployed of Soyapango' 'No to the war in Iraq' (AP Photo/Luis Romero)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Mahdi Army Attacks, Destroys Basra Oil Company Hq

Aug. 19, 2004 ASSOCIATED PRESS

BASRA, Iraq — Shiite militants loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr broke into the headquarters of Iraq's South Oil Co. today and set the company's warehouses and offices on fire, witnesses said.

The insurgents broke into the oil company compound late Thursday, drove off security guards in a gun battle and shot rocket-propelled grenades into the warehouses, which held drilling equipment and other gear.

The explosions ignited a fire that burned at least 10 warehouses to the ground. The fire then spread to the company's offices.

When firefighters showed up to douse the flames, militants shot at them and the emergency workers fled.

Smoke spread throughout the entire compound, and **the electricity in the headquarters went down.**

The British military, which patrols the southern city, had no immediate comment.

Oil Guard & Truck Driver Killed In Kirkuk

KIRKUK, Iraq, Aug 19 (AFP)

An Iraqi truck driver supplying multinational troops was shot dead Thursday as he drove south from the main northern city of Kirkuk, police said.

He was killed when his convoy of trucks came under attack by unknown gunmen early Thursday, said police Colonel Arkan Hamad al-Obeidi.

UNIDENTIFIED attackers killed an Iraqi security officer working for the state-run Northern Oil Co early today, police said.

Two other security officers were injured in the assault 10 kilometres from the northern city of Kirkuk, police Colonel Sarhat Qadir said.

Killings and kidnappings of people working for the US-led foreign forces still in Iraq are frequent.

As Marine Brass Meet With Collaborator Najaf Police Chief..... Hq Mortared, 8 Cops Killed, 30 Hurt

August 19, 2004 Canadian Press & August 20, 2004 Agence France-Presse

NAJAF, Iraq (AP) - **A barrage of mortar rounds slammed into Najaf's police headquarters in the holy city of Najaf on Thursday, killing at least seven police officers and wounding 31 others, a hospital official said.**

Police chief General Ghaleb al-Jazairi said he was in conference with officers of the US marines spearheading the attack on Sadr's militia when the mortars struck at around 1.30pm (7.30pm AEST).

Three bombs fell around the concrete building but the fourth exploded against an air conditioner on the first floor, causing havoc and carnage in the adjoining room.

An AFP correspondent who went to the scene found the tiled floor covered in blood that was already turning brown, while uniforms and blankets were also stained.

Windows were shattered, furniture overturned, shoes scattered about and a gaping hole punched in the wall, while the stench was barely tolerable.

Some of the survivors looked dazed, their police shirts covered in blood.

One of the survivors, 33-year-old Salah al-Hanawi, said, "We were new recruits just drafted in and we didn't even have our uniforms".

He said: "We were on the first floor when we heard an explosion. **We began to rush downstairs but others who were more experienced advised us to shelter in this room. "It was our bad luck,** because the second bomb had our names on it. Six of my colleagues are dead or wounded, I am the only one unhurt."

The eight dead and 30 wounded were carried or dragged by their comrades to the ground floor, leaving trails of blood throughout the building. They were loaded on to pick-up trucks and taken to hospital.

At Najaf's Hakim hospital the doctors are overwhelmed with casualties from the fighting. In one emergency room the wounded lay groaning, with deformed and bleeding faces or shattered legs.

After the attack, a police force raided a local hotel where journalists were staying, saying they suspected some of the reporters helped the attackers locate the police station.

"Why did it happen?" yelled another. **(With officers of the forces that invaded and occupied your country meeting with their chief local skank, what did you expect? As for the idiots who command you, look at the bullshit they pulled at the hotel.)**

The bombardment was further evidence that Iraqi police have the most dangerous job in the country, targeted both by Sadr's Shiite militia in the south and the Sunni guerrillas in the north.

They are accused of collaborating with the US forces who invaded Iraq in March last year to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein, and being lackeys of the government set up by the occupier. (Golly gee, imagine that!)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"He Must be Killed or Captured" The "Rebel Cleric" and the Siege of Najaf; Who Is Responsible For Dead Troops?



8.19.04Mahdi Army fights back (UPI)

August 19, 2004 By MIKE WHITNEY, Counterpunch

Understandably, the western media has demonized al Sadr, lambasting him as a "firebrand" or better still "the radical cleric". They have been successful in dismissing him as a "David Koresh in black robes"; a comical figure with the unmitigated gall of defying the empire.

The media has a long history of lampooning populist leaders who resist American coercion.

Those who support the Iraqi resistance shouldn't be deterred by these feeble attacks on his character. Nor should it matter.

The leaders who take up this battle against the occupation are on the front lines of the resistance to America's global war. They are doing their job... they don't need to be perfect.

It's more important that we see the correlation between Al Sadr's struggle for liberation and the effort of American's to reestablish civil liberties and the rule of law at home. Al Sadr is simply an intermediary in the fight against the same forces that are arrayed against the American public; the forces of extremism and self-righteousness.

We should be grateful for his courage.

As for the American servicemen who are killed in battle; as author Arundhati Roy says "They are conscripts in a poverty draft" fighting for a cause that is not just.

Responsibility for their deaths lies with George Bush not Muqtada al Sadr or the Iraqi resistance.

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

The Army That Hides Its Face

August 10, 2004 By Todd Pitman, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A single muzzle-flash from a rooftop 200 yards away sends a 14-man patrol of U.S. and Iraqi troops crouching behind mud-brick houses in a poor Baghdad neighborhood at dusk.

The joint patrol is key to Washington's exit strategy: putting Iraqis in charge of their own security so American troops can go home.

"We're trying to push them out as much as possible," 1st Lt. Christopher Gebbia said of the six Iraqi national guardsmen accompanying his group.

The majority of Iraqis are opposed to the U.S. military presence, and insurgents view Iraqi security forces as traitors and American stooges.

Guardsmen are aware of the perception, and many serve surreptitiously.

Fearing retribution, Gebbia's translator and two of the Iraqi soldiers wrapped black scarves around their faces to hide their identities from residents.

U.S. Politicians Confused By Al-Sadr's Motives



August 19, 2004 By KEN GUGGENHEIM, Associated Press Writer

Kenneth Katzman, an Iraq specialist at the Congressional Research Service, said the result has been a U.S. policy that has been "lurching one day to the next between going after him, cease-fire, go after him, restraint."

"I think it's just confusion," he said.

Al-Sadr has tapped a vein of Iraqi and Arab nationalism and populism, particularly among poor Shiites angered by the presence of American troops.

Another Turkish Firm Gets Out Of Iraq

20aug04 From correspondents in Ankara, Herald and Weekly Times

A SECOND Turkish firm said today it was withdrawing from Iraq to save the life of a Turkish worker who was facing execution at the hands of his kidnappers.

Tepe construction company said in a brief statement, carried by the Anatolia news agency, that it had decided pull out all its workers from the war-torn country in order to secure the release of Aytullah Gezmen.

Mr Gezmen - a translator working for the Bilintur catering company, which is part of Tepe holdings - went missing in Iraq last month along with another worker, Murat Yuce, who was later executed by masked kidnappers.

Indian Truck Drivers In Iraq Going On Solidarity Strike; Say Company Assholes Fucking Over Their Captured Brothers

August 19 Amit Sharma, Hindustan Times

INDIAN EMPLOYEES of the Kuwait and Gulf Links (KGL) company have decided to “strike” work for indefinite period to show solidarity with their three colleagues taken hostage by militants in Iraq.

In a telephonic interview with Hindustan Times from Kuwait, they said the aim was to spur the company management to a “speedy and fruitful” effort for the early release of abducted truck drivers Sukhdev, Anataryami and Tilak Raj.

“The company has been keeping us in the dark. They never gave us a satisfactory reply when approached about the steps being taken to end the hostage crisis. **The lame explanations gave us the impression that our associates' release was not a priority”**, said Narinder Singh, an Una resident who went to Kuwait in Antaryami's batch.

Singh said given the company's response, the Indian employees were feeling insecure. **Nangal-based Mahesh, another truck driver who has been serving KGL for the past many years, said all Indian employees have strongly endorsed the decision.**

Monu, a close friend of Antaryami, also from Una, said the general feeling is that had the company not been lax in its negotiations with mediator Sheikh Hisham-al-Dulaimi, the captors would have released the hostages on August 7.

Since then, the company has done precious little to re-establish contact with the captors and resolve the crisis, he added. The token protest begins Friday or Monday, they said.

Guest Comment:

Soldiers In Revolt

By Sgt. Martin Smith (USMC ret'd)

Underground newspapers were an important part of the GI movement during the Vietnam War.

The military officially admits that 245 underground newspapers existed during the Vietnam War, while David Cortright has catalogued near 300 in Soldiers in Revolt.

Civilians trying to outreach to the emerging GI movement started many papers, like *Vietnam GI*, and others were printed by troops themselves, some on bases and even on ship. Such papers are estimated to have had a readership in the tens of thousands; *Vietnam GI* alone had a mailing list of three thousand troops stationed in Vietnam.

Undergrounds were a means to dispel the lies of military policy, provide alternative information from an enlisted person's vantage, report on the spreading resistance movement, give practical legal advice on GI rights, and most importantly to organize. The most common story was the pitched battle between the lifers, career officers and NCOs, and the enlisted.

Upon my research, I've learned that *Vietnam GI* was the most widely circulated in the early part of the GI movement from '67-'69 and was started by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet out of Chicago. Sharlet had become disgusted with the student anti-war movement, in particular with SDS chapters, which were generally dismissive of GI organizing; however, Sharlet tragically died of cancer, and the paper did not continue.

Having read *Vietnam GI*, the paper took up the enlisted troops' issues and spoke to them in a way that the official base papers, particularly *Stars and Stripes*, could not—it told the truth. **The paper talked about the frequent jamming of the M-16s and the huge contracts that the weapons manufacturer was receiving while troops died due to malfunctioning rifles.**

The issue of troops being forced to buy war bonds to finance the war effort was another complaint. In addition, the false reports in *Star and Stripes* were exposed and questioned in *Vietnam GI* by troops who were on the ground and actually experienced the lies printed in the official military newspapers, thus provoking larger questioning of the war effort and other official justifications given for the war.

Many articles in *Vietnam GI* focused on individuals who refused to be sent to Vietnam and spoke out, such as the Fort Hood Three and a religious service held by nine troops to celebrate their resignations.

Another story discussed how George Bennick threw a rifle at an officer in Vietnam and refused to fight anymore.

Lt. Sue Schnall is also mentioned for marching in a peace parade in her dress uniform and dropping anti-war leaflets over military bases in flight. When court-martialed Schnall said, "Generals wear their uniform when they speak out in favor of the Vietnam War, so why can't we?"

The battle between the lifers and the enlisted was the most common story. A common complaint was the regimentation and perceived unnecessary military discipline enforced on enlisted troops.

Many could not understand why spit shined boots and perfectly starched cammies were necessary in a war zone and complained of how lifers made slaves of their bodies for degrading and unnecessary work. **In one planned act of resistance, troops sabotaged numerous trucks and humvees before a large command inspection after numerous petty inspections had been taking place.**

In response, the petty inspections stopped.

Another reminder of the contrast between the cushy existence for staff NCOs and officers was the stark contrast highlighted between Cam Ranh Bay, a huge built up military city which had six Olympic size swimming pools, football fields, tennis courts, staffed largely by lifers and the brutal existence humping the fields by grunts.

The paper took up the issue of racism as well. Blacks received the most degrading and dirty work despite the claim of racial harmony by the brass. Riots were common, especially after the assassination of MLK, both stateside and in Vietnam. **Another example given of black resistance was the refusal of 43 Blacks to be sent to riot control duty in Chicago because they would not be used to police and fire upon their own working class communities.**

After '68, the political content of the paper began to deepen and started questioning why the U.S. was in Vietnam, providing an anti-imperialist critique. The paper suggested the war was about controlling natural resources, tin and tungsten, and not about stopping communism.

This became more obvious when troops discussed capturing National Liberation Front (NLF) fighters who had never heard of communism but said they were simply defending their homeland. The fierce resistance offered by the NLF was sharply contrasted with the passivity of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops and was also a bone of contention.

Why were we protecting the South Vietnamese if they wouldn't even put up a fight? In addition, history of troop resistance was featured, such as the Back Home Movement after World War II.

The most stirring feature of the paper was the numerous letters written by troops stationed in Vietnam. Many praised the paper for telling stories that *Stars and Stripes* would never print and others requested more copies be sent so they could distribute them on bases to their buddies.

Another excellent work about the resistance by troops in Vietnam is Andy Stapp's [Up Against the Brass](#), the story of one anti-war dissident who accepted his draft notice on May 13, 1966 and attempted to organize within the military.

Stapp joins a number of activists who didn't evade the draft but rather enlisted to organize within the military, including Howard Petrick of the Socialist Workers' Party. In

fact during World War II, many socialists joined up to organize against the war as well. Howard Zinn, author of A People's History of the United States, admits that he was radicalized by the experience of meeting a socialist in his unit during World War II.

Stapp's work is a good companion to the *Vietnam GI* newspapers in raising many of the same issues. **Stapp suggests the low morale of troops was due to anger at the war, long workdays, harsh punishments for petty offenses, and the arrogance of the brass.¹ Stapp discusses the fight against the brass and lifers and the racism apparent in all manifestations of military life, from dehumanizing Asian people as "gooks" to the use of people of color to fill the most dangerous assignments.** Stapp discuss how most of the ammo humpers, the unloading of hundred pound ammo containers from vehicle to rifle range, were notoriously filled by black GIs.

Stapp's greatest accomplishment was his attempt to form an organized union of servicemen. On December 24, 1967, Stapp's American Service members Union (ASU) became the first formal organization of the GI movement and drew up an eight point program as follows: an end to saluting and sir-ing of officers, rank and file control over court martial boards, an end to racism in the armed forces, federal minimum wages for all enlisted men, right of GIs to collective bargaining, right of free political association, election of officers by enlisted men and the right to disobey illegal and immoral orders.² ASU began an underground called *The Bond*, representing the bond between the civilian and GI movement. Yearly membership was \$1.00; and by July of 1969, ASU claimed 6,500 members, including many women and those stationed in Vietnam.

In one example of the unions' power, Stapp discusses how ASU members at Cam Ranh Bay drew up a list of grievances over long work hours and poor conditions on merchant vessels. While the Commanding Officer initially threatened the members with mutiny charges, he backed down when he realized that perhaps 75 GIs accused of mutiny charges would be national news. The CO shortened the work hours, and the ASU tasted victory.

The ASU claimed military justice was an oxymoron, and they took on the brass through the military courts. Non-Judicial Punishment (NJP) hearings and court-martials were known as little more than kangaroo courts, so the ASU responded by giving free civilian legal council for any member facing a court-martial. Often the civilian lawyers knew the existing military law better than the military, and the question of constitutional protections for GIs been a hot issue, particularly the right of GIs to disseminate and read the literature of their own choosing. ASU lawyers would fight for the constitutional rights of servicemen and often turned the court into a hearing against the Vietnam War.

Stapp's work is an amazing account of how one person can make a huge impact on a given struggle. But what was the broader impact of the ASU in Vietnam itself?

According to Cortright's book, The Soldier's in Revolt, ASU members were involved in a prison riot at Fort Dix, but Stapp's organization never materialized into an actual union of soldiers.

¹ Stapp, 86.

² Stapp, 88-91.

Cortright argues that Stapp was really more a one man show that an actual organization with force. Early discharges and harsh retribution for ASU members crushed Stapp's attempts to realize his dream of a union Army. **However, the memory of his legacy and potential for a democratic citizen militia should not be forgotten.**

CLASS WAR NEWS

Bush Tax Cuts Tilted To Rich

14 August 2004 By Vicki Allen, Reuters

WASHINGTON - One-third of President Bush's tax cuts have gone to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans, shifting more burden to middle-income taxpayers, congressional analysts said on Friday.

The report is by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Using the CBO's figures the top 1 percent, with incomes averaging \$1.2 million per year, will receive an average tax cut of \$78,460 this year, and have seen their share of the total tax burden fall roughly 2 percentage points to 20.1 percent.

In contrast, the report showed that households in the middle 20 percent, with incomes averaging \$57,000 per year, will receive an average cut of \$1,090 while their share of the tax burden would move to 10.5 percent from 10.4 percent.

The CBO report said about two-thirds of the benefits from the cuts went to households in the top 20 percent, with an average income of \$203,740.

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