

GI SPECIAL 2#B43

**BUSH'S BULLSHIT:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. Army soldier searches a building in Najaf Aug. 22. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

“Enormous Crowd” Breaks Siege Of Najaf; Defies Occupation Cops, U.S. Troops, Sistani Mouthpiece: U.S. Troops “Bewildered” As Mahdi Troops Join Celebration

26 Aug 2004 CBC News Online & by Jean-Marc Mojon, AFP & BBC 8.27.04

Further up the stream of at least 20,000 demonstrators, in the Al-Jadida neighbourhood outside the Old City, a surreal scene unfolded as bewildered

American soldiers trapped in their tanks watched as posters of Sistani and Moqtada posters were waved in their faces.

NAJAF, IRAQ

The gates of Najaf's Imam Ali shrine were forced open Thursday by a sea of weeping and chanting Shiite Muslims, ending a siege of the shrine which had lasted for days and weeks of fighting with US forces.

Akir Hassan, 63, woke up at 6:00 am (0200 GMT) to heed a call by his spiritual leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to leave his village south of Kut to converge on the revered mausoleum.

Tears ran down his wrinkled face and his feet barely touched the ground as the elated crowd squeezed through the gates and into the shrine's courtyard.

He and the others were greeted like heroes by the 300 besieged Sadr militiamen inside.

"God is great. This is democracy, this is the new Iraq, this is the greatest defeat we could have inflicted on the Americans. It's the most beautiful day in my life," he shouted, hurrying inside the main mausoleum to pray.

"We have been on the road since yesterday. *When we reached the area, the national guard and the Iraqi police tried to prevent us from heading towards the shrine, but there was nothing they could do,*" said 20-year-old Hussein Noma, from the town of Amara.

Sadr's Mehdi Army fighters brandished their Kalashnikovs and rocket-propelled grenade launchers as they watched the seemingly endless flow of marchers flowing into the holy site.

Some of them were looking for relatives they have not seen in months, others pounced on biscuits, sweets and soft drinks.

Further up the stream of at least 20,000 demonstrators, in the Al-Jadida neighbourhood outside the Old City, a surreal scene unfolded as bewildered American soldiers trapped in their tanks watched as posters of Sistani and Moqtada posters were waved in their faces.

The presence of the US troops in the neighbourhood underlined that the battle was not over and that a tense "armed truce" could follow the jubilation.

THESE ASSHOLES TRIED TO KEEP THE PEOPLE OUT:

Al-Sistani arrived earlier Thursday, leading a convoy of an estimated 20,000 followers on a peace march. *Iraqi police barred the marchers from entering the*

city. (This reporter had his head up his ass, or was safely sitting in Baghdad pretending to know what was going on.)

"We have started contacts with Moqtada Sadr and in the coming hours we are waiting, hoping that we will succeed in saving the city from destruction," said Sistani spokesman Ahmed al-Khaffaf, *calling on people not to enter Najaf.*

But with military operations called off, an enormous crowd forced its way into Najaf's revered Imam Ali mausoleum, calling for peace.

"We answered the call of Sistani who ordered us to follow to Najaf to break the siege. *Police sort of tried to arrest us, but there was nothing they could do.* It's the end of the siege," said one demonstrator, Kazem Hamid.

"There is a truce, but the Americans have only withdrawn from the market in the Old City. They are still deployed along the edge of the cemetery and in the sea of Najaf," he said.

He said US troops opened fire on fighters who had tried to retrieve dead and wounded stranded for days.

During Al-Sistani's travel to Najaf, packed into hundreds of cars, pick-up trucks and buses, Shia faithful of all ages, including Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr supporters, waved green banners and pictures of al-Sistani, straddling all four lanes of the road.

At Tell al-Lahm, 100 km north of Basra, 4,000 residents, including tribal leaders, lined both sides of the road to welcome the convoy, which stopped for around 10 minutes.

After talks with government ministers in Basra late on Wednesday, an al-Sistani aide said the Ayat Allah wanted occupation troops to leave Najaf, Iraqi police to take responsibility for security and the government to pay compensation to those who have suffered in the fighting.

Militant leader Muqtada al-Sadr agreed on Thursday to a peace plan presented by Iraq's most revered Shia cleric, who rode into Najaf hours earlier to try to end the bloody three-week uprising.

The BBC's Alastair Leithead in Najaf says the deal allows everyone to save face.

It gives the Mehdi Army fighters an opportunity to blend into the crowds as they lay down their weapons and leave the shrine.

And Now, So Much For The Bullshit About Iraqi Sovereignty:

There was no immediate word if the U.S. military would accept the provisions on the agreement calling on its forces to leave Najaf.

US Attacks Najaf, Shrine Damaged

26 Aug 2004 CBC News Online & AFP

Before Al-Sistani arrived in Najaf, US tank and helicopter fire pounded the area around the shrine in Najaf on Thursday.

A dozen bullet holes were visible in the golden dome of the shrine and some of its golden tiles had come loose, said an AFP correspondent, one of three reporters inside the shrine.

Several missiles were fired from the air and tanks were still within 20 metres of the western side of the mosque, Shia leader al-Sadr's headquarters since his spring uprising against US-led occupation troops.

All entrances to the mosque were covered by elite US marksmen and it was impossible to enter or leave the building, as the heavy thud of al-Sadr's al-Mahdi Army mortar fire resounded from inside the shrine.

Continuing through the morning, after a battery of overnight attacks, US armoured vehicles took up position in Rassul street, which leads to the southern entrance of the Imam Ali mausoleum.

US snipers were hunkered down on the rooftops of neighbouring houses.

Mosque loudspeakers urged the fighters to jihad as sanitary conditions deteriorated in the mosque, effectively cut off by US troops since early Wednesday.

Occupation Troops Massacre Shia In Attacks On Kufa Mosque & Diwaniya

8.26.04 Middleeast.org & AFP & By ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI, The Associated Press

KUFA, Iraq, Aug 26: At least 74 people were killed and 376 wounded in a mortar attack at a mosque and shooting on demonstrators loyal to rebel cleric Moqtada Sadr in the southern city of Kufa, the Iraqi health ministry said.

Officials were unable to distinguish between those who died in the double mortar bombing at the city's main Kufa mosque, a Sadr stronghold, and **the shooting, which was blamed on occupation controlled Iraqi national guardsmen.**

"This is a criminal act. We just wanted to launch a peaceful demonstration," said Hani Hashem, bringing an injured friend to the hospital.

Hussam al-Husseini, an aide to rebel cleric Moqtada Sadr, said one mortar shell hit the mosque itself and two others hit near the mosque gates.

The compound of the mosque in Kufa was packed with people about to go to Najaf where Iraq's top Shia cleric is headed to try to end the conflict there. Kufa is a stronghold of radical cleric Moqtada Sadr

The shootings on the eastern side of Najaf came before Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, headed for the holy city for talks to end three weeks of fighting between Sadr's militia and US-led government forces.

Najaf governor Adnan al-Zorfi said no one would be allowed into Najaf before the arrival of Sistani. **(Killing them is one way to enforce that decision. And recruit another 10,000 soldiers for the resistance. Blood will be paid with blood.)**

Thousands of people chanting slogan in support of Sadr and denouncing Iraqi interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi were heading from Kufa for nearby Najaf **when they came under fire from national guardsmen** as they passed a military base, an AFP photographer said.

The shooting broke out not long after doctors said at least 25 people were killed and more than 100 wounded when two mortar bombs fell on Kufa's main mosque compound, controlled by Sadr's militiamen.

The bombs exploded in the compound and by the door of the mosque, where hundreds were gathered preparing to welcome Sistani.

Hospitals as far away as Hilla, more than 50 kilometres (30 miles) away, were swamped by the casualties from both incidents and were not able to give a precise toll.

Cars and ambulances picked up the wounded to rush them for treatment, but the demonstrators still appeared determined to reach Najaf.

Later national guards also fired on demonstrators from Diwaniya, 50 kilometres away, who tried to enter Najaf from the east. An AFP photographer saw bloodstains and shoes on the ground.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

SOLDIER KILLED IN MORTAR ATTACK

August 26, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 04-08-35C

BAGHDAD, Iraq – One Task Force Baghdad Soldier was killed in a mortar attack in Baghdad, at approximately 9:40 p.m., Wednesday.

Mortar Blast Inside Government Compound

August 26 Agence France-Presse

A mortar bomb exploded inside the central Baghdad compound, where the seat of the interim Iraqi government and the US embassy is located, AFP correspondents witnessed.

A plume of smoke could be seen rising above the zone after the blast rocked buildings in the heart of the capital just before 11:30 am (0730 GMT).

Resistance Blows Up 20 Pipelines: Iraq Oil Exports Cut in Half; British Official Tells Silly Lie

August 26, 2004 9:33 p.m. ET, By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS & Energy Security

BASRA, Iraq (AP) -- A sabotage attack on a cluster of about 20 oil pipelines in southern Iraq has cut exports from the key oil producing region by half, a top oil official said Thursday.

Eight parallel pipelines that link the Rumaila oilfields to the Zubayr 1 pumping station were hit in Berjasiya, 20 miles (32 km) southwest of Basra, when a bomb exploded under a bridge at 9:00pm and caused it to collapse. (Highly professional demolition team at work.)

An explosion at 7:00 am near Al Madhatiya in Aawazel area, about 18 miles (30 km) south of Hilla, on gas pipeline which transports gas from Basra to other southern towns set the pipeline ablaze.

An attack on the reversible Strategic Pipeline linking oil fields in the north and south of Iraq sparked fire 19 miles (30 km) west of Babylon.

The pipelines were attacked late Wednesday in Berjasiya, 20 miles southwest of the southern city of Basra, an official with the state-run South Oil Co. said on condition of anonymity.

Oil exports out of southern Iraq average about 1.85 million barrels a day. The oil official said Wednesday's sabotage cut exports to 900,000 barrels. The country's southern pipelines export 90 percent of Iraq's oil.

The pipelines, which connect the Rumeila oilfields to Berjasiya, were ablaze after the attack.

The official said it would take at least three days to repair the damage.

Earlier Thursday, Associated Press Television News footage showed huge plumes of black smoke and flames leaping from the Zubayr 1 pumping station, south of Basra. Emergency workers struggled to douse the fires with water hoses.

Squadron leader Spike Wilson, a spokesman for British troops helping maintain security in the area, said he was only aware of one pipeline breach, 12 miles west of Zubayr. He said it was not clear if that pipeline had been attacked, however.

“It's a minor pipeline, it hasn't impeded the export of oil at all,” Wilson said.
“Because the infrastructure of the pipelines are so old, they frequently just give way.”
(Right, all 20 at once.)



Iraqi workers stand near a burning pipeline south of Basra in southern Iraq.
Photo: Atef Hassan/Reuters

TROOP NEWS

“They Should Stop Now”

(Thanks to B who emailed this in B writes: “Their kid died to conquer a graveyard!”)

DoD Identifies Marine Casualty

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a Marine. Lance Cpl. Alexander S. Arredondo, 20, of Randolph, Mass., died Aug. 25 as result of enemy action in An Najaf, Iraq. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Aug. 26, 2004 HOLLYWOOD, Florida, BY AMY SHERMAN, HANNAH SAMPSON AND PHIL LONG. Herald.com

The dead Marine's grandmother, Luz Marina Arredondo Piedra, took a harsher view toward the American invasion of Iraq.

"They should stop this now," she said. "They send them like guinea pigs over there."

Foley said her son had been about 250 yards away from the Muslim shrine in Najaf where three weeks of fighting have raged between U.S.-led forces and the Mahdi Army militia of rebel cleric Muqtada al Sadr.

Jack Foley said he has opposed to the war in Iraq from the beginning.

"We never should have started something we couldn't cope with," he said. "We don't start wars. It's just a waste. I've always been worried about him, but I never thought it would happen."

Tyngsboro Marine Loses Leg, Not Spirit

August 26, 2004 By MATT MURPHY, Sun Staff

In his waking hours, Marine Cpl. Matthew Boisvert remains the brave soldier. It's when the wounded 21-year-old from Tyngsboro closes his eyes that the harsh realities of war haunt him.

Asleep in his hospital bed at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., yesterday evening, Boisvert seemed at rest, but his mother Brenda Newell said her son has nightmares each time he falls asleep, reliving the horror Aug. 17 when a roadside bomb detonated beneath the Humvee he was driving in Fallujah, Iraq.

Doctors had to amputate Boisvert's right leg Tuesday just below the knee cap after the limb, which was nearly severed in the explosion, became severely infected. Boisvert was transferred to intensive care Tuesday when he began running a fever and his blood pressure dropped, but despite their best efforts doctors could not save the leg.

Newell said Tuesday night was the worst experience she has ever had to go through, trying to comfort and help her son, barely into his 20s, accept his leg was gone.

Yesterday, however, Newell said that Boisvert had been upbeat and positive while awake.

"He's been joking around and being funny today. It's made everyone feel a lot better," Newell said from Boisvert's bedside. "But it's a little hard seeing him now, when he's awake he's not upset, but when he falls asleep he relives the accident again and again and again."

And when he wakes up, she said, he often forgets that his leg is gone only to reach for it and realize the truth.

Boisvert will undergo more surgery today when doctors plan to re-evaluate the leg and determine whether more needs to be amputated to prevent the spread of infection. Newell said doctors originally thought they would need to amputate higher, but because the Marine was recovering well yesterday, they were hopeful that would not be necessary.

The prognosis on Boisvert's arm remained positive as well. The explosion tore away the muscle from Boisvert's upper right arm, causing massive blood loss and nerve damage, but yesterday he began to regain more and more mobility of his right arm and fingers, including his thumb which doctors had thought to be permanently damaged.

Boisvert graduated from Tyngsboro High School in 2001 and enlisted in the Marines that August, shortly before the Sept. 11 attacks.

According to his parents, Boisvert said he was on routine patrol driving along a military supply road when the Humvee he was driving struck a bomb sending an explosion through the vehicle. One of four Marines in the Humvee, Boisvert was the most seriously injured and was dragged from the burning vehicle by two unharmed lieutenants.

Though Boisvert will likely remain in Washington, D.C. for treatment, neither Newell nor Paul Boisvert could bring themselves to set a date for their own return.

"I'm too afraid of him getting comforted by a stranger," Newell said. "After last night I never want to leave his side. I need to be with him for the tough stuff."

Pay Chaos: 95% Of Mobilized Reserves Get Fucked Over:

August 25, 2004 By Sean D. Naylor, Army Times staff writer

The way the Army pays its reservists is so flawed that the service cannot guarantee timely and accurate payments. And that's a failing so severe that it

threatens the Army Reserve's ability to retain its troops, according to the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress .

In a report released August 23, GAO documented a slue of systemic problems in the way the Army provides active duty pay to mobilized Army Reserve members. In eight Army Reserve units selected as case studies, **95 percent of the troops experienced at least one problem with their active duty compensation.**

Particularly noteworthy were problems concerning hardship duty pay and the tax benefits to which troops deployed to combat theaters are entitled.

Good News: Vermont Guard Not Going To Iraq Yet-- Bad News: Stop-Loss Extended Again

August 26, 2004 By Wilson Ring, The Associated Press

MONTPELIER -- The Vermont National Guard might wait another three months before getting a mobilization order that could send about half of the state's soldiers to battlefields in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The Department of Defense on Wednesday extended by 90 days the alert for about 1,300 members of the 86th Brigade, a combat unit that includes two tank battalions and support units.

The alert extension also extends the "stop loss" order that prevents soldiers in the alerted units from leaving the military.

Vermont National Guard spokeswoman Lt. Veronica Saffo said she didn't know how many Vermont guard members would like to leave the military but were unable to do so because of the stop-loss order. **(Easy to find out. Just let everybody out from under the fucking stop-loss and see who stays around. Duh.)**

Vermont National Guard Capt. Gregory Knight, who commands a tank company in Enosburg, said his soldiers were awaiting their orders.

"In some respects we are all frustrated. We all want to know and we want to hear it officially," Knight said. "It provides kind of a low-grade stress for the soldier, the employer and the families." (It's Knight that's "low grade." Waiting to find out if you're being sent to a meatgrinder where the whole population wants your blood is more than "low grade" stress.)

Pull The Troops Or Face An Impeachment Movement: Vets Demand End To Occupation

By MIKE FERNER *Boston* <http://www.counterpunch.org/ferner07282004.html>

As military veterans wrangle over whom to support for president, one veterans' organization has fired a shot across the bow of whoever will occupy the White House next year.

Over 400 Veterans for Peace (VFP) members gathered last weekend in Boston for the organization's annual convention, hearing from Daniel Ellsberg, historian Howard Zinn, former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter, members of Military Families Speak Out, and the newly-formed Iraq Veterans Against the War.

They also passed a resolution in the form of a memo titled "To White House Occupant After Jan. 20, 2005," demanding

"[T]hat the next U.S. president announce, within 10 days of taking office, that he will withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq within 60 days, and that if this 10-day period following the inauguration passes without a publicly-announced decision to withdraw all troops from Iraq within 60 days, Veterans for Peace chapters around the nation will begin a campaign including, but not limited to, petitions calling for the impeachment of the president.

The resolution states, "The United States presence in Iraq is causing, not preventing, destabilization and violence. Veterans for Peace is committed to ending this immoral, unjust war of empire regardless of who wins the 2004 U.S. presidential election."

Concurring with that sentiment as he addressed the vets assembled at Emerson College, Ritter said, "Iraq is on fire. We are the fuel for that fire and we need to withdraw it."

VFP membership has grown to over 4,000 since the Bush administration ordered the invasion of Iraq last year. The organization has over 80 chapters throughout the U.S.

Mike Ferner is a member of Veterans for Peace from Toledo, Ohio. He returned from a second trip to Iraq earlier this year. He can be reached at: mferner@utoledo.edu

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/>

Uncovering A Hidden Classic— Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead

By Sgt. Martin Smith (USMC ret'd)

“The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.”—Eugene Debs at a rally in Canton, Ohio on June 16, 1918.

Eugene Debs' powerful anti-war speech that sent him to prison for speaking against World War I is just as relevant today.

Working class people have always been the cannon fodder of wars, and working class troops are currently entering battle in Najaf while the Generals relax in their air conditioned rooms. After reading Norman Mailer's masterpiece about World War II, The Naked and the Dead, for the first time recently, I recalled Debs timeless quote. Upon publication, Mailer's work received unprecedented critical acclaim; yet today, it is rarely acknowledged because it challenges assumptions about World War II as “the good war.”¹

Mailer's work is the story of a suicide mission by a reconnaissance patrol that must assess the Japanese rear on the island of Anopopei during World War II. If the soldiers survive and return without trouble, General Cummings plans to send out a company for a surprise attack, a daring tactical offensive that would likely lead to his promotion.

From the beginning, the mission is fraught with problems. Lt. Hearn, the newly assigned platoon commander, has no field experience; Wilson, married with a daughter, contracted a painful case of Gonorrhea and can barely function; and anti-Semitism directed at Roth and Goldstein, divides the platoon. Other obstacles develop as tensions mount between Lt. Hearn and Staff Sergeant Croft over leadership of the platoon, and fatalities, a near mutiny, exhaustion, and finally a furious hornets' attack, force the mission to be aborted.

Throughout the work, the soldiers feel that their lives and mere existence as cannon fodder belie the myth that they are working for a grand and noble cause. Through literary device and masterful prose, Mailer unmaskes the hidden motives behind the U.S. involvement in World War II, exposing a class society that is at the core of imperialism and its naked aggression.

¹ Norman Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1948).

Nakedness is a significant theme throughout the work. Mailer undresses the characters and reveals the material conditions behind their motivations and fears.

He explains how the various grunts in Staff Sergeant Croft's platoon elect to join the army not out of some patriotic fervor to fight fascism per se but rather out of the dire circumstances and lack of opportunities they find at home.

Many simply join up in hopes to make something of themselves. As Gallagher, an Irish Catholic from South Boston, puts it, "I'm tired of my job, I'm getting' a better one...Something big...I'm on my way, I'm going places," bragging to a girl to impress her that he will rise above his working class roots.²

Others join to escape. Red, for example, grew up in a company-run mining town in Montana and lost his father in a mining accident, decides while working at a flophouse to join up rather than get married. Similarly, Martinez, a Mexican American from San Antonio, gets Rosalita pregnant and joins up only to find himself weeding the officers' yards and playing houseboy at their parties.

After spending time on Anopopei and in the Pacific theatre, however, many troops begin to question the true motives behind capturing a desolate island from the Japanese and putting their lives at risk.

As Red ponders about the dead, "of course they died in vain, any GI knew the score. The war['s] just t.s. [tough shit] to them who had to fight it...fighting a war to fix something works about as good as going to a whorehouse to get rid of a clap."³

In a dramatic scene, a member of the platoon, Wilson, dies from a stomach wound after some of his team attempt to carry him to safety. Symbolic of the deeper feeling of loss and despair amongst many, Ridges weeps "from exhaustion and failure and the shattering naked conviction that nothing mattered."⁴

Mailer shows how the working class, as in all wars, must labor for someone else, for generals and politicians out for promotion and popularity instead of looking out for the welfare of their troops.

Red expresses the feeling of many soldiers about the war: "What have I got against the goddam Japs? You think I care if they keep this fuggin jungle? What's it to me if Cummings gets another star?"⁵

Mailer also points out the stark differences between the working class troops and the officer class. "They slept with mud and insects and worms while the officers bitched because there were no paper napkins and the chow could stand improvement," Mailer writes.⁶

² Mailer, 270.

³ Mailer, 578.

⁴ Mailer, 682.

⁵ Mailer, 128.

⁶ Mailer, 76.

The character of General Cummings, in particular, with his silk monogrammed handkerchiefs, represents the emerging military industrial complex. **In a glaring example of class disparity, the General divides the meat rations so that half went to the 180 enlisted men and the other half went to the 38 officers.**

Cummings explains his grander purpose: “Break them down. Every time an enlisted man sees an officer get an extra privilege, it breaks him down a little more...they also fear us more...Every time there’s what you call an Army injustice, the enlisted man involved is confirmed a little more in the idea of his own inferiority.”⁷

Thus Mailer lays bare the realities of class between the officers and the enlisted men, challenging the notion that all America was united for a common cause.

In a series of monologues between General Cummings and Lt. Hearn, Mailer reveals the twisted ideology that infests the ruling class. To maintain control, Cummings explains, “There’s one thing about power. It can flow only from the top down. When there are little surges of resistance at the middle levels, it merely calls for more power to directed downward, to burn it out.”

Such an attitude, prevalent amongst the Generals and war planners still today, explains the ideology behind the war atrocities that were committed during World War II. Yet the actions of the U.S. speak louder and more deadly than the General’s words. The terror bombing of the German city of Dresden, a brutal war crime, by U.S. and British planes, killed more than 100,000 people, mostly civilians. Then the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs, killed over 210,000, with another 130,000 dead from radiation and illness over the next five years.⁸

The scale and level of terror that was unleashed by the U.S. during the war are accepted today as a necessary evil in the stated goal of fighting fascism. Yet the real purpose of U.S. aims, as a signal to the Soviet Union of plans for a share and division of the globe, is rarely mentioned. Written in 1948, Mailer’s novel foresaw the U.S. role as an emerging superpower.

As General Cummings explains to Lt. Hearn what “the good war” is really about:

“For the past century the entire historical process has been working toward greater and greater consolidation of power...Your men of power in America...are becoming conscious of their real aims for the first time in our history. Watch. After the war our foreign policy is going to be far more naked, far less hypocritical than it has ever been. We’re no longer going to cover our eyes with our left hand while our right is extending an imperialist paw.”⁹

The General and policy makers like him are a product of a system that has always and will continue to create atrocities and war crimes, as during the Vietnam War at My Lai and as revealed by the prison abuse scandals at Abu Gharib.

⁷ Mailer, 175.

⁸ Howard Zinn, *On War* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2001),

⁹ Mailer, 322.

Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo were military defeated by World War II. But after 40 million people declared dead, “the good war” was unable to exterminate the larger problems that continue to cling on and cloak us—classism, racism, nationalism, and imperialism.

As Admiral Gene LaRocque, explained to Studs Terkel about the war:

“We’ve institutionalized militarism. This came out of World War Two...It gave us the National Security Council. It gave us the CIA, that is able to spy on you and me this very moment. For the first time in the history of man, a country has divided up the world into military districts...

“I hate it when they say, ‘He gave his life for his country.’ Nobody gives their life for anything. We steal the lives of these kids. We take it away from them. They don’t die for the honor and glory of their country. We kill them.”¹⁰

If you’re looking for a brilliant work that debunks the mythology of “the good war,” read Norman Mailer’s The Naked and the Dead. You’ll uncover a novel that the Bushes and Kerrys, with their talk of preemptive strikes and war on “global terrorism,” would prefer remained hidden.

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.**

Typical Command Idiocy

Letters To The Editor,
Army Times
August 23, 2004

Apparently any document that is going to the chief of staff of the Army has a new rule applying to it that states the word “soldier” is to be capitalized. Now in our neck of the woods, the commanding general and the garrison commander have each decided that the word soldier will be capitalized in any document that comes to them. This is to have consistency across the board.

We have awards, leave forms, commendations and numerous other documents that are being kicked back because of one letter not being capitalized. Needless to say, many of these documents are already running behind the suspense date.

¹⁰ Zinn, 204.

I reviewed Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, and the word soldier does not need to be capitalized. It appears to me that some folks think they can change the rules of the English language on a whim. **When it comes to paperwork, those who are experts think that each document must be perfect.**

Why complicate our jobs and life by changing rules that don't need to be changed? We are soldiers and know what we are, without having a capital "S" on the word making us more confused about the rules of the English language than we already are.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey H. Bushke
Fort Wainwright, Alaska

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Najaf Battle Draws Teenagers Into War To Free Their Nation

NAJAF, Iraq, Aug 26 (AFP)

The battle-torn market is their new home and Moqtada Sadr's Mehdi Army their new family. Many kids have been yanked out of childhood and into the bloody war against the mighty US army around the Imam Ali shrine, often with their families' consent.

"How could I not be happy?", says Walaa Alami, a 15-year-old from this central Iraqi holy Shiite city, which has been the scene of intense fighting over the past few months between Sadr's militia and coalition forces.

"I can either help win this battle or die as a martyr. Either outcome would fulfil all my dreams," says Walaa, whose Kalashnikov assault rifle cannot hide the teenager's nascent moustache.

His friend Ihsan Karim, also 15, knows the streets of the covered market like the back of his hand. They rarely engage in serious fighting on the front line, but are used as couriers between the different combat sections.

"I have an old Russian rifle with only ten bullets but I am not afraid. Yesterday, I hit an American. I don't know if he's dead," says Ihsan.

The market is one of the last Mehdi Army strongholds around the shrine. Since a large US offensive on Wednesday, it also commands access to the last remaining entrance to the shrine.

Even so, fighters have to run to the eastern gate of the revered mausoleum across an open space which lies in the crosshairs of US snipers and is relentlessly pounded by tank shells.

Abundant weaponry -- including 120mm mortars, anti-tank missiles and rocket-propelled grenades -- and an intricate network of underground tunnels and passages punched into shop walls, allow the fighters to criss-cross the area and avoid sniper fire.

The biggest danger facing the militia is airborne, with US warplanes continuously firing missiles on their positions.

"I know it's dangerous but my three brothers are also fighting here and my father is one of the protestors in the shrine," says Ihsan.

"I am a fighter, this is who I am, and right I live here," says the teenager, giving a tour of the blood-stained market streets, littered with rubbish, empty cartridges, broken glass.

Mustafa al-Sadri, is a 19-year-old from the Baghdad slum of Sadr City, which was named after the assassinated father of the young cleric now spearheading the largest rebellion against the US-led coalition and the Iraqi government.

He left his family in April when the uprising began and has been carrying arms in the Mehdi Army ever since.

He seems unimpressed by the mass march to the shrine called for by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in a bid to put an end to the standoff.

"I will tell you this, I will continue my duty whatever happens and carry my weapons until the dust settles and many fighters here think like me," he says.

Badr al-Sadri, another youngster from the southern city of Basra concurs.

"Why should I give up the Mehdi Army? When you join, it's for life. Anyway, what else am I going to do? I have already missed my second chance to take my school exams. They started five days ago."

Kiss The Power Grid Goodbye

[World News] Ankara, Aug 26

Two Turkish companies have announced they will withdraw from Iraq in order to save the lives of their two workers kidnapped by Iraqi militants.

The two firms, Usluel and SA-RA, which were contracted in Iraq to upgrade the country's power grid, said they would shut down their offices in Iraq Thursday and withdraw their staff and machinery from the country, Xinhua quoted the Anatolia news agency as saying.

In the announcement, the two companies said the decision was taken without "hesitation" to save human lives and that they are now waiting for the release of the workers.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Thought For The Day

"Get things done that you think are important today because there might not be a tomorrow," Fort Bragg SFC Joseph Scott added. 8/25/2004 Debbie Tanna & Web Staff. 14 News

OCCUPATION REPORT

Iraqi Prisoners Went Hungry

(USA Today, August 26, 2004, Pg. 4)

Each day when inmates at Abu Ghraib prison lined up for meals in October 2003, dozens left hungry. Maj. David DiNenna, an Army operations officer at the prison near Baghdad, worried that soon hunger would turn to anger, and then there would be serious trouble. He was right.

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

Najaf Scum Go Ape-Shit Again; Collaborator Cop Cowards Attack Unarmed Reporters

Aug. 26, 2004 BY HANNAH ALLAM, Knight Ridder Foreign Service

NAJAF, Iraq — Iraqi police, some with their faces covered by ski masks, fired several shots as they stormed a hotel packed with journalists Wednesday, rounding them up at gunpoint and forcing them onto flatbed trucks bound for the local police station, where they were detained for an hour.

At the station, **Najaf Police Chief Ghaleb Hashem al-Jazairi told the 60 or so journalists they were detained because the Dubai-based satellite television channel al-Arabiya had reported that Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most prominent Shiite Muslim cleric in Iraq, would arrive in Najaf today to lead a demonstration. (Very lame. Everybody in the world knew that, including just about everybody in Iraq.)**

The chief said his forces were unprepared for the news to go out Wednesday night and that as a result, at least two Iraqis who arrived early for the march were killed during clashes with police. **(When the resistance comes to cut his head off, he can try that excuse on them.)**

Some officers also blamed reporters for inciting violence against government institutions such as the police and armed services. **(Now that's fucking brilliant. The reporters caused the resistance movement. If it weren't for the reporters "inciting violence" everybody would just love having their country occupied by George Bush. Just like if it weren't for those pesky abolitionists, our darkies down here on the cotton plantation would have loved slavery forever.)**

"We were attacked by 14 mortar shells tonight and we expect more, **so you're going to stay with us in this room to see what we go through,**" one officer told the journalists crowded into the chief's office. **(Do they get to rape, steal and torture people too? How about kissing the ass of the nearest U.S. military officer? Is that part of the experience? How about wrapping shit over their faces, so their fellow citizens won't know who is betraying them to the occupation? Is that part of "seeing what we go through?")**

This correspondent was in her room on the hotel's third floor when she heard a loud boom that sounded like a mortar or rocket attack. When she peered over an indoor balcony, she saw at least four policemen running upstairs with guns drawn.

Other reporters were in the first-floor restaurant when the police rushed the building, brandishing pistols. "All the journalists out now or we'll kill you!" one officer yelled as he went room to room, kicking doors and dragging out reporters.

This reporter hastily grabbed a flak jacket, computer equipment and a camera before a police officer barged into her room, pointed an assault rifle in her face and ordered her out.

"Now, sister, now!" the officer yelled in Arabic.

Outside, dozens of dazed and outraged journalists stood in the darkness as large trucks rolled up the front drive. **Police roughed up a few reporters, but no one appeared seriously injured.**

At the nearby police headquarters, the journalists were ordered out of the trucks and into the chief's office for a news conference at gunpoint.

After several more minutes, the journalists were released. At Knight Ridder's insistence, the police chief's nephew drove the women reporters back to the hotel. The others climbed back onto the trucks.

(You'd think with all the weaponry floating around Iraq, the reporters could arm themselves. The occupation cops are not exactly famous for their courage.)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

As One Stench Leaves, Another Arrives

Aug. 24, 2004 by Leon Fisher, Unknown News

The horrible stench which offended the senses of the good people of Boston last month was not the result of a strike by garbage collectors, nor was it a clogged sewer system. It was the Democratic Convention.

In all of recorded history, has so much bullshit ever been piled so high and in so small an area as we saw and smelled in Boston a few weeks ago?

But it's a pile that might well be topped by the upcoming Republican Convention in New York City. Without a doubt, New Yorkers will be gagging on the colossal odor spewing out of Madison Square Garden upon the arrival of war criminals Bush and Cheney.

Hard on their heels, and braving this incredible stench, will be hundreds of thousands of protestors. And following the lead of the Democrats in Boston, heavy security will be in place including what has come to be known as "free speech areas."

These "free speech areas" are anything but that.

By forcing many thousands of protestors into areas far away from the convention centers, the Republicans will not hear them. And, if not granted a permit, they will be kept from marching, unable to be seen.

These tactics are a clear violation of the right to free speech and assembly. These rights are guaranteed to all Americans, and should be enforced by our public servants.

We must remember that the so-called candidates, the President, G.W. Bush, and the Senator, John Kerry, both have taken an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution. Unfortunately for America, the only things these two pieces of shit uphold and defend are their own selfish interests, and those of their puppet masters.

It is no wonder that the nauseating stench follows these turds wherever they go.

While Kerry and Bush pontificate about the virtues of liberty and freedom from within the safety of their fortress-like convention centers, the reality on the streets for the protestors is quite different. Menaced by the presence of large numbers of paramilitary police armed to the teeth, peaceful demonstrators are subjected to intimidation, physical and mental abuse, and arrest for the slightest infractions.

Yes, it has come to this, as more of the citizenry become distrustful of these liars who pretend to call themselves our leaders.

Well aware of the contempt in which they are held by growing numbers of disgruntled citizens, Washington's insiders and their financiers, fearing the people, draw ever closer to the creation of a police state.

In a desperate attempt to distract people from a failing economy and a rapidly-falling standard of living brought about by their criminal behavior, a war on terror has been conveniently manufactured. This war, supposedly against terrorism, is in fact a war against freedom, liberty, human rights, and a clean environment. It is a war against the people.

Rule by fear of terrorist attack has justified the passing of legislation to further erode the already-dwindling rights of the average citizen and to stifle growing dissent. This alleged war on terrorism is also justification to seize by force of arms the natural resources of other nations, in order to stave off the coming economic collapse here at home.

Things are not looking good for the Washington criminals, as more people are seeing them for what they really are, and beginning to realize that these "leaders" can not deliver what they promise. They can only speak now of trivial matters and distraction, no longer able to discuss matters of real importance, so badly has their credibility suffered.

When the Republicans set up their propaganda spectacle in New York City later this month, be prepared to see the further humiliation and disregard of the Constitutional rights of hundreds of thousands of protestors who dare to dissent. Despite the risks, true patriots -- the protestors -- will take to the streets, as they can no longer tolerate the oppressive stench of these human feces.

By the way, if you are planning to be in New York City during the Republican Convention, don't forget to bring your hip boots, you will need them. The manure oozing out of the Garden, I am sure, will be knee-deep.

**CONVENTION PROTESTERS
PLOTTING TO SPEAK, ASSEMBLE
Prepare for the Worst, Ashcroft Says**

August 25, 2004 The Borowitz Report

Attorney General John Ashcroft today revealed that the Justice Department has credible intelligence that protesters at next week's Republican National Convention are actively plotting to speak and assemble.

"These evildoers may speak or assemble without warning," Mr. Ashcroft told reporters. "We are preparing for the worst."

To foil the protesters' plot to speak and assemble, the Attorney General said that the Justice Department has established a special Anti-Speech and Assembly Task Force in New York City.

"This task force has its ears to the ground on a twenty-four-hour basis," Mr. Ashcroft said. "If they get wind of a plot to speak or assemble, they will pounce."

The Attorney General said that New York's Central Park would be off-limits to protesters for the duration of the Convention, but said that space for the protesters to speak and assemble was being reserved in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The Gitmo location was chosen, Mr. Ashcroft said, to facilitate military tribunals for the protesters immediately after they are done speaking and assembling.

Elsewhere, White House spokesman Scott McClellan said Vice President Dick Cheney was entitled to receive overtime pay as an emergency worker, explaining, "Everything Dick Cheney touches turns into an emergency sooner or later."

On the campaign trail, Mr. Cheney did not address the overtime issue but reiterated his opposition to gay marriage, saying, "I'm sure as hell not paying for one."

How Kerry Trashed His Principles For Flip-Flop Slop

AUG 25, 2004 By David Brooks, The Straits Times

I AM launching a major investigation into whether the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth organisation is secretly financed by the Kerry campaign.

For that organisation has begun to air ads drawing attention to Senator John Kerry's 1971 testimony against the Vietnam War.

If voters see that testimony, they will see a young man arguing passionately for a cause. They will see a young man willing to take risks and boldly state his beliefs. Whether they agree or not, they will see in Mr Kerry a man of conviction.

Many young people, who don't have an emotional investment in endlessly re-fighting the conflicts of the late 1960s, might take a look at that man and decide they like him. They might not realise that man no longer exists.

That conviction politician was still visible as late as the 1980s. When Mr Kerry opposed aid to the Contras, or took on former White House aide Oliver North, he did it with the same forthright fire.

But then, in the early 1990s, things began to evolve. First, Mr Kerry relied on his post-Vietnam convictions and ended up casting his vote against the first Iraq war that threatened his political future.

Then the political climate changed. Mr Bill Clinton came to power and suddenly the old Vietnam-era liberalism was no longer in vogue. The future belonged to triangulating New Democrats. Then Republican Newt Gingrich came in as House Speaker and the frame of debate shifted further to the right. Mr Kerry was now in a position to run for national office - and thus needed to be acceptable to a national constituency.

Mr Kerry's speeches in the 1990s read nothing like that 1971 testimony. The passion is gone. The pompous prevaricator is in. You read them and you see a man so cautiously calculating not to put a foot wrong, he envelops himself in a fog of caveats and equivocations. You see a man losing the ability to think like a normal human being and starting instead to think like an embassy.

Tough decisions are evaded through the construction of pointless distinctions. Hard questions are verbosely straddled. Mr Kerry issued statements endorsing the use of force in the Balkans so full of back-door caveats you couldn't tell if he was coming or going. He delivered a tough-sounding speech on urban poverty filled with escape clauses he then exploited when the criticism came.

Most people take a certain pride in their opinions. They feel attached to them as part of who they are. But Mr Kerry can be coldly detached from his views, willing to use them, flip them or hide them depending on the exigencies of the moment.

For example, on Aug 1, Mr Kerry told television commentator George Stephanopoulos: 'I think we can significantly change the deployment of troops, not just in Iraq but elsewhere in the world. In the Korean peninsula perhaps, in Europe perhaps.'

When President George W. Bush outlined a plan along those lines, Mr Kerry blasted the President, saying it was reckless to embrace the idea he had endorsed two weeks before.

Even more psychologically corrosive is Mr Kerry's continual suppression of sincere belief. Almost every American has a view about whether this Iraq war is worthwhile or a big mistake - except Mr Kerry. He has both called himself an anti-war candidate and said he would even today vote for the war resolution. He has either lost the ability to make a clear decision on this central issue, or he thinks it would be imprudent to express a view.

All this is odd for such a child of the 1960s. 'Authenticity' was such a big concept then. No one can accuse the current John Kerry of that. In fact, the Democratic Convention

dwelt obsessively on the period in his life when Mr Kerry was authentic, so it could evade the past 20 years of rising inauthenticity.

In short, he's not the flaming liberal Republicans sometimes try to portray. He's not flaming anything.

If today's Mr Kerry were called before that 1971 Senate committee, he would have prudently told the throngs he was for the goals of the war but against the implementation, for the idea but against the timing, for the troops but against this nuance and that nuance and the other one.

No one accomplishes much in politics without consuming ambition, but sometimes they are changed along the way.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

CLASS WAR NEWS

Biggest Tax Cuts Go To Richest 1%

By Jackie Calmes, Wall St. Journal, 8.14.04

WASHINGTON: The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office today will release the government's first multiyear projection of the Bush tax cuts by income class.

President Bush's three tax-cut laws will reduce this year's income taxes for the richest 1% of taxpayers by an average of \$78,460, more than 70 times the average benefit for the middle 20% of taxpayers, congressional analysts found.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.

Web Copies

For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/>

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> ; www.gifightback.org ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>