

GI SPECIAL 2#B51

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME



West Point's Military Police Company Honor Guard carries coffin containing US Army PFC Kevin Cuming, at his burial in White Plains, New York September 3. Cuming, age 22, was killed in Baghdad, Iraq when a rocket propelled grenade struck his vehicle.
Photo by Chip East/Reuters

Ordered To Lie: Soldiers Who Lied Prosecuted; Officers Who Ordered Them To Lie Go Free

September 01, 2004 Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The officer who oversaw hearings for three Fort Carson soldiers accused in the drowning death of an Iraqi man has advised against prosecuting one of them on manslaughter charges, the soldier's attorney said.

However, Capt. Joshua Norris, who represents Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Perkins, said Tuesday that the officer did recommend that Perkins be court-martialed for allegedly helping cover up the incident.

Norris said Ayers' recommendation to pursue a cover-up charge against Perkins could be controversial because three senior officers, who were granted immunity, said at the hearing that they ordered the soldiers to lie to investigators.

U.S. Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., has asked for a congressional hearing to look into why Perkins and the others were charged with lying to investigators but their leaders were not.

"There is something unholy about allowing senior officers to create a situation and get away with it while junior officers face punishment," said retired Coast Guard Capt. Kevin Barry, a former military judge who now works as a lawyer in Virginia on court-martial cases.

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.**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Sniper Kills Sniper

September 3, 2004 By Mary Vorsino, Honolulu Star-Bulletin

A Schofield Barracks soldier was killed Wednesday while on patrol in northern Iraq, a family member and Army officials said last night.

A relative identified the soldier as Army Spc. Joseph C. Thibodeaux III, 24, of Lafayette, La.

His brother said Thibodeaux was a career soldier who had orders to teach at Army sharpshooter school next August.

"He was very proud of that," he said. "He was almost cocky about it."

Thibodeaux went on reconnaissance missions in Iraq and was also part of an elite team that taught marksmanship to other soldiers, his brother said.

Thibodeaux's brother, Jerome, said that his family was notified yesterday afternoon of the soldier's death.

The Army told family members that Thibodeaux was shot in the head when he got out of his armored car to inspect damage to the vehicle by a roadside bomb.

In a telephone interview from Louisiana last night, Jerome Thibodeaux also said his brother was in the first car of a three-vehicle convoy, and the only soldier killed in the attack.

Family members got to spend two weeks with the soldier last month, when he was home on leave.

His brother said that Thibodeaux was determined to finish his one-year stint in Iraq but was also looking forward to moving on.

"He knew it was his job, and he was ready to get it over with," Jerome Thibodeaux said. "He just wanted to get it done. ... **He lived as if he was invincible, and now he finally is.**"

Besides his brother, Thibodeaux is survived by parents Joseph and Becky, and sister Brittany. Services are not yet scheduled.



Members of the Mehdi Army listen to instruction during a military training session in Basra (AFP/File/Essam al-Sudani)

U.S. Soldiers Wounded Near Tikrit

9.3.04 By KIM HOUSEGO & Associated Press writer Pamela Sampson

U.S. soldiers were wounded when they were hit by shrapnel when their convoy came under attack while on patrol near the city of Tikrit.

Two 1st infantry Division Soldiers were wounded when AIF attacked their patrol at about 6 p.m. September 2 near Ad Duluiyah.

Samarra Latest No-Go Zone for U.S. Troops

September 3, 2004 JIM KRANE, Associated Press Writer

Over the past few months, insurgents in Samarra have deposed the U.S.-picked leaders and put to death people suspected of collaborating with them, making the northern Iraqi city the latest no-go zone for Iraqi and American troops.

"It's true that we can't go into Samarra very often," said U.S. Army Capt. Scott Synowiez, an intelligence officer at a 1st Infantry Division base on the outskirts of the city. "Whenever we go into Samarra we do get attacked, without a doubt."

The casualty-averse U.S. military — approaching 1,000 war dead — has little desire to expand the conflict.

On Saturday, Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and a group of 11 tribal sheiks and other prominent citizens began discussing the standoff. U.S. troops are staying out of the city as negotiations continue.

"We've told them 'We're not going in until you guys have control of the situation,'" 1st Infantry spokesman Maj. Neal O'Brien said. **(And that means never.)**

Samarra, an ancient city of 250,000 known for its 9th century spiral minaret, is controlled by about 500 resistance fighters according to the U.S. military.

The police chief and mayor still live in Samarra, but have lost all authority. The city council president resigned last week after insurgents blew up the council building.

The guerrillas have also kidnapped and executed residents suspected of collaborating with the Americans. With the U.S. military on the city's outskirts, Samarra's insurgents slip out of the city to mount their attacks.

Video CDs purchased in Samarra show three local men confessing as American spies. The videos end with statements saying collaborators must be killed. The fate of the men is unknown.

One man, in a T-shirt and jeans, was filmed giving a rambling monologue describing how Iraqi collaborators have recorded rebel leaders' conversations or took their pictures

using concealed devices given them by the Americans. **He mentions that some of the U.S. spies are double agents who pass information to the insurgency.**

Synowiez, the intelligence officer, keeps tabs on the rebels from Forward Operating Base MacKenzie, on the city's edge. He characterized the fighters as nationalist Iraqis once affiliated with Saddam Hussein's Baath Party.

"These guys are well-trained and they're motivated," Synowiez said. "They'll stand up and fight."

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/>

US Shells Iraqi Collaborator Soldiers

03 September 2004 Aljazeera.Net & VOA News & By Abdul Hussein al-Obeidi, Associated Press

Iraqi security and hospital officials in Fallujah say two Iraqi soldiers and two civilians were killed when U.S. forces shelled a checkpoint in the flashpoint city west of Baghdad.

Capt. Majid Ahmad Salim, the Fallujah Brigade's commander in the southern part of the city, said the fire came from U.S. tanks outside the city.

Later, a second official, Dr Nabil Khuri, identified the two Iraqi soldiers and said the area hit was an Iraqi army camp bordering a residential neighbourhood.

The officials say six other Iraqis were wounded. **It is not clear why the Iraqi troops were fired on.**

U.S. General Promises To Destroy Baghdad "Holy Places"

Sept. 2, 2004 By JIM KRANE, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, IRAQ - The fight with renegade Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr is not over and the U.S. military must retake his stronghold in Baghdad's Sadr City slum, a top U.S. commander said Thursday.

Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commander of the Fort Hood-based 1st Cavalry Division, said action is necessary before the volatile cleric has a chance to rebuild his Mahdi Army, which was devastated in recent fighting. **(Too late, done that.)**

Chiarelli said the group has laid bomb traps throughout the northern part of the district.

"There's a tremendous amount. I don't even want to venture a guess as to how many are there," Chiarelli said of the makeshift bombs, often fashioned from large artillery shells pilfered from old Iraqi military depots.

If it comes to a showdown with the U.S. military in Sadr City, no ultra-sensitive Muslim holy places will get in the Army's way, Chiarelli said, harking to how sensitivities over damaging the revered Imam Ali Shrine prevented a full-bore attack on al-Sadr's militia in Najaf.

Militiamen remain heavily armed and in control of the northern half of Sadr City, a densely populated district of small alleys filled with booby traps and hidden bombs, Chiarelli said.

The job will take a matter of weeks, Chiarelli said, giving no timetable for the start of an operation. (Famous last words. There are only about 1,000,000 armed people there, who hate the Occupation. Of course Chiarelli won't be doing any fighting up close and personal to keep Bush in charge of somebody else's country. Worthless piece of shit that he is, that's what he will command the troops to die for.)

As More Terror Bombings Kill Civilians, Fallujah Resistance Challenges U.S. Command: "Bring It On"

03 September 2004 Aljazeera.Net & Middl East Online

A US air strike in a residential area of the city killed 20 people on Wednesday.

The US military has been using heavy artillery and aerial assaults on alleged resistance positions in Falluja since the city became a no-go zone for US troops.

(In plain English, the Occupation got whipped, and can't do anything about taking free Fallujah back, so every day more civilians are killed out of pure spite.)

A Sunni Muslim insurgent leader in the strong Sunni bastion of Fallujah Friday challenged American troops to fight to the death as angry demonstrators protested the latest US air raid on the town.

"This war will be over, only with their dead bodies or ours, and, if they want it like this, welcome to death," said Sheikh Abdullah Junabi, who heads the Mujahedeen (holy warriors) consultative council that effectively rules the town.



20 killed in US air strike. (Middle East Online photo)

Junabi was cheered by a crowd of several hundred demonstrators, still furious at Wednesday night's US air raid on Fallujah that killed 20 people.

"Air strikes are cowardly. Get down and face us on the battlefield," the crowd chanted.

Junabi and other speakers also accused the Americans of dismissing the town's entire police force late last month on the grounds that they were collaborating with the insurgents.

One of the dismissed officers, Colonel Sabbar al-Junabi, told the crowd: "The American forces asked us to dissolve the Fallujah police while we are ensuring stability in the city.

"Has anyone heard of explosions or crimes in Fallujah. The Americans want the army and police in Fallujah to follow their orders or they threaten to dissolve us."

Police sources in Ramadi confirmed Junabi was fired on August 26 after a meeting with a US military officer and representative of Iraq's interior ministry.



Iraqis demonstrate terror bombing of civilians in Fallujah following Friday noon prayer. (AFP/Fares Dlimi)

Hell On Wheels

September 3, 2004 By T. CHRISTIAN MILLER, Los Angeles Times

It is 9 p.m. on a Wednesday, and Melvin Winter is going to war.

The 44-year-old truck driver from Greenville, Texas, turns the key of his white Mercedes flatbed truck, revs the engine and rolls up to a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. On this side is Camp Anaconda, a U.S. supply base. On the other is Iraq.

"Put your game face on," he says, strapping on a helmet and bulletproof vest as the call to roll out crackles across the radio. "It's time to put on the gloves."

No job is more dangerous than driving a truck. Of the 18 U.S. citizens killed in Iraq while working for Halliburton, 11 were truckers.

Recently, Halliburton's convoys have been taking hits every day on some routes. The truckers endure sniper fire, car bombs, roadside explosions and rocket-propelled grenades. Iraqi insurgents mount ambushes to pick off trucks from behind. They throw bricks and drop 8-foot-long steel pipes from overpasses.

There is not much the drivers can do. The Army provides security escorts, but **the insurgents plant bombs along the relatively few cross-country routes the trucks must travel. Then they simply wait for a convoy, which sometimes pass as frequently as every half-hour on well-traveled routes.**

Not all of Halliburton's trucks are bulletproofed. Their windshields shatter. Bullets pierce the cab.

Mostly, the drivers punch the gas, and hope for the best.

"Sometimes it's so calm and peaceful out there. Other times, you roll out the gate and think: I hope I make it, I hope I make it," says Lou Hadley, who has been driving trucks here for nearly a year.

On this run, the convoy is carrying a load of tires, engine parts and other supplies into Baghdad from Camp Anaconda, about 60 miles to the north.

Nearly all the drivers went to work for Halliburton for the money.

Halliburton won't disclose sums, but drivers have boasted of salaries of as much as \$100,000 with bonuses -- with \$80,000 of it tax free, as long as they stay in Iraq for a year. It's a long haul. ***The truckers work 84 hours a week -- that's 12 hours a day, seven days a week. (At \$100,000 a year, that means your life is worth \$24 an hour. Fuck that.)***

Home is a tent with 20 other cots and 5-foot-high divider walls in between. Meals are cafeteria style. Mortar attacks are constant.

"I'd say 90 percent of the people over here are in it for the money," says Winter, who is saving to trade up from a double-wide trailer to the 3,500-square-foot home he hopes to build one day. "One year over here, it's equal to two to three years working in the U.S. You can advance considerably."

If you make it a year. **Turnover is high, the drivers say. (Especially when you do the math.) One says he came to Iraq with about 20 friends. Of those, only three remain** a year later. Halliburton said it could not provide statistics for the truckers' turnover rate. But company policy is to send anyone home who wants out of their one-year contract, no questions asked -- but no tax benefits, either.

"If you don't get nervous, you're stupid. If you don't get nervous, it's time to go home," says Billy Lee Tripp, 44, a La Vernia, Texas, native who is as wiry as a stray cat.

Nervousness rises as night begins to fall. With an orange sun flaring in the west, the truckers and their military escorts gather in a circle to plan the night.

The route will take them right through the middle of "IED Alley," named for the roadside bombs that the military calls improvised explosive devices.

After the briefing, truckers and soldiers huddle in prayer. Then all scramble into their vehicles.

Winter goes over final preparations in his cab, pockmarked by a single round from an AK-47 that he calls his "lucky bullet hole."

Near at hand, he places bottles of water and lemon-flavored Gatorade, three packs of cigarettes and a handful of feminine products -- which can be used to stanch bleeding.

Then the convoy rolls out. In minutes, the landscape changes from the bustle of the base to a wide open plain of scrub and blacktop lighted by the moon.

Soon, the trucks turn onto the main highway leading toward Baghdad.

"From this point on, it's not safe," says Winter.

Thirty minutes down the road, fires burning in clumps by the side of the road become visible. Huge clouds of acrid black smoke roll across the road, maybe from trash burning, maybe from recent combat. The drivers run with the windows down, to keep the cab's windows from being shattered by explosive concussions.

"Mash the gas. Drive it like it's stolen," convoy commander Clay Henderson's voice comes across the radio.

The convoy bolts up onto an elevated highway that runs across marshland, providing a hellish view of fires, billowing smoke and haze. After a while, they join another highway. Suddenly, the radio crackles.

"AK-47. Right side. It's hitting your truck," a KBR driver calls out to the military escort in front of him.

Ahead, perhaps a thousand yards, red tracers light up the sky as the military escort returns fire. Radio calls report fire from the left and the right.

"It's pretty bad," one driver calls out.

And then, just as suddenly as it began, the shooting stops. Henderson calls on the radio for injuries. The radio stays quiet.

"It didn't hit nobody," Henderson says. "Keep rolling."

The trucks speed up briefly, but then slow again. Ahead, brake lights from another convoy fill the road, a major highway with four lanes in both directions.

The truckers get nervous. The highway that had been filled with Iraqi cars is empty. The stretch of road had seen both sniper fire and bombs in the past.

"There's not enough traffic. Be advised of it," one trucker calls out.

The convoy comes to a halt. Gunners in the military escorts train their weapons on the moonlit fields and low, two-story homes around them.

The truckers don't know what is happening. Neither does the military. The radio is filled with unanswered questions. The convoy has stopped in the middle of one of the most dangerous places in Iraq.

The convoy ahead begins to move. The truckers who have hopped out of their trucks to take shelter jump back into the cabs.

Half an hour later, the convoy hits the exit for the Baghdad airport, where the truckers are dropping off their load at a military base.

The trucks pull into a dusty parking lot. The drivers climb down, drop their trailers and talk quickly among themselves.

"It was a good run," Winter says. "It was only small-arms fire."

Then they get back to work. It is 12:30 a.m. The moon is high. Time to make the run back to the logistics base, through the same gantlet of gunfire and smoke.

The road awaits.

TROOP NEWS

More Troops Sacrificed To Bush's War For Empire

September 3, 2004 By Gregg K. Kakesako, Honolulu Star-Bulletin

Army Sgt. Darlene Shakur, a soldier and mother of two, will leave Schofield Barracks later this month on her first and possibly last deployment of her nearly 20-year career.

"I'll probably retire after this one," said Shakur, 38, who will leave behind her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Shakur.

The Shakurs were among the 250 members of the 17th Corps Support Battalion, which held a farewell ceremony yesterday at Schofield Barracks' Hamilton Field. The battalion, whose jobs range from cooks to providing laundry and motor pool services, is part of the 45th Core Support Group.

Lt. Col. Patricia Matlock, battalion commander, said the 250 soldiers will join 100 members of the 540th Quartermaster Company, which left Schofield Barracks in January for Mosul. **They are expected to be in Iraq for a year.**

Already in Iraq are 4,500 soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team. Two months later another 5,500 soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team left Wahiawa for a year in Afghanistan.

During the 11 years the Shakurs have been married, the longest time they have been separated has been about 30 days for field exercises.

"One of us were always back and with our boys," said Jerry Shakur, 38. "It generally worked out for us." He is stationed at Tripler Army Medical Center, where he is in charge of training and educational services.

Darlene, a 1984 Radford High School graduate, said this time she knew it would be different.

That meant she had to be "upfront" with their sons, Nicholas, 10, and Brandon, 7. "I told them I was deploying to Iraq and that I would be gone for a year. I told them the truth," she said.

HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?



Army Spc. Jennie Baudendistel hugged and kissed her 2-year-old daughter, Caitlin, after receiving a lei. She is leaving while her husband, Staff Sgt. Theo Baudendistel, stays home.

Poland To Withdraw Its Troops From More Of Iraq: Defense Minister

Sept 3 (AFP)

Poland will hand over another part of the zone it administers in Iraq under a planned reduction of its forces next year, Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski said in an interview published Friday.

Amid strong popular opposition to the Polish troop deployment and continued unrest in the embattled country, the government in Warsaw is under domestic pressure to significantly scale back Poland's military involvement in Iraq.

Coalition Of The Really Shaky: Bulgaria Wants End Date For Troops

September 03, 2004 By Nevyana Hadjiyska, Associated Press

In a carefully worded speech, intended to both calm anti-war sentiment and confirm Bulgaria's policy in Iraq, Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov voiced hope that the future elections in Iraq, scheduled for January 2005, **"might allow a reduction of coalition forces, and of the Bulgarian military contingent there."**

Even Col.'s Getting Screwed Out Of Their Pay

8.30.04 Army Times
Letters To The Editor

Thank you for writing about reservists' pay problems. I was activated with only one week's notice into an unfamiliar unit 6,000 miles from my home in Hawaii, and then traveled an additional 6,000 miles with it to plus up active forces.

I have been home since June and am still trying to resolve pay problems that plagued the activation. **It took months to start getting my medical special pays, and when they arrived, the amounts were wrong and further complaints were required before I finally got the correct amount. Other than a tiny token payment (1 percent of the actual amount due), I did not start to get my temporary-duty pay reimbursed until after I was home from deployment, and I am still having trouble getting the final month's payment.**

I did not receive my cost-of-living allowance payments through the entire activation, but I finally did get that after complaining through the entire chain of command.

I never received the uniform allowance that was authorized.

At the time that I came off active duty, the Army was close to \$10,000 in arrears to me, and two months after my return, it is still almost \$1,500 in arrears.

There is just no excuse for this many errors as well as for having a system in which it is so difficult to resolve errors. **(If a Col. has to go through all this to get his \$, with rank weight behind him, what chance does a Pfc. or Spc. have? Time to organize. Strength in numbers is basic military principle.)**

Reserve Col. Wayne David Levy
Honolulu

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Pipeline Still Burning; “Largest Attack Ever”

Sept 2 Ned Parker (AFP) & Sep. 03, 2004 By KIM HOUSEGO, Associated Press

Firefighters fought a massive oil pipeline fire in northern Iraq on Friday.

The fire that raged in Riyadh about 40 miles southwest of the northern city of Kirkuk, a day after saboteurs detonated explosives Thursday on the line linking fields near Kirkuk with the oil refinery of Baiji, said Maj. Gen. Anwar Mohammed Amin of the Iraqi National Guard.

The explosion Thursday on the line extending from fields southwest of Kirkuk to the oil refinery in Baiji set off a fire that pumped balls of fire and black smoke over the area. The fire continued to rage late Friday evening.

Oil exports were halted after saboteurs set ablaze part of a pipeline in what officials said was **the largest ever such attack**, sending thick clouds of smoke over the city of Kirkuk and some residents fleeing.

In Kirkuk, smoke billowed across the oil rich city after the pipeline blast, which came barely two weeks after the pipeline resumed production to the Turkish port of Ceyhan following months of sabotage attacks.

"The pipeline with Turkey was shut down," said Ahmed Hassan Ghafif, head of the Northern Oil Co's security for gas and oil pipelines.

Ghafif called it the largest strike against the north's oil infrastructure and the smoke and fire cut off the road between Kirkuk and Baiji.

He predicted it would take two to three days to douse the blaze and gave no estimate on when the pipeline would resume pumping its average of 600,000-800,000 barrels of oil per day to Turkey.

Repeated sabotage of Iraq's oil industry has cost the occupation more than a billion dollars in revenue.



Iraqi firemen attempt to control the fire on oil pipeline south of Baghdad blown up by resistance movement. (AFP/File/Karim Sahib)

Kufa Iraqis Defy Occupation; Refuse To Obey Orders To Disperse: Mahdi Army In “State Of War” With Occupation Cops

9.3.04 By KIM HOUSEGO & Associated Press writer Pamela Sampson & Arabic News.com & 9.;4.04 AFP, Najaf & Naseer Al-Nahr • Arab News

Police forces arrested dozens of Shia worshippers in Kufa and the nearby city of Najaf, which was devastated by three weeks of bitter fighting between U.S. forces and al-Sadr's Mahdi militia that ended last week.

Police vehicles blocked off the main road and officers fired shots in the air as people approached checkpoints ahead of Friday afternoon prayers, the major day of worship in Islam.

"We are afraid of violence after prayers in Kufa," a Sadr stronghold, one officer said.

Iraqi authorities failed to stop worshippers from entering Kufa on the first Friday after a peace deal between the government.

Worshippers set up a makeshift pulpit on the street outside the Kufa Mosque, streaming into the city on foot and ignoring authorities who tried to block traffic because they apparently feared the sermons might spark unrest.

Iraqi police and national guardsmen set up checkpoints, barring all cars from entering the city and limiting the number of worshippers allowed in for the Friday prayers. But the people went anyway, getting out of their cars and streaming into the city in hopes of hearing a sermon by Sadr.

Police and soldiers deployed around the mosque, which shut down last week after militants pulled out of it as part of the peace deal. **A banner erected around the structure read "The Kufa Mosque has been closed for maintenance and cleanup."**

Though Sadr abandoned plans to preach apparently in fear of exacerbating tensions, about 2,000 of his followers held the prayers on the street in front of the mosque, setting up a pulpit on the median strip.

"We consider ourselves to be in a state of war against the Iraqi police"
Ahmed al-Shaibani, an al-Sadr aide said.

On Thursday, confrontations that took place in al-Teifeh area to the south of Baghdad and 7 of the Iraqi national guards were injured.

“The People Hate Them”

03 September 2004 By Dexter Filkins, The New York Times 9.2.04 (AFP)

"The people hate them," Mr. Bikhaty said of the American soldiers. "The Iraqi government must tell the Americans to stay out of the city."

Negotiations to disarm the militia led by the rebel cleric Moktada al-Sadr began last week, after the withdrawal of the Mahdi Army from the holy city of Najaf, but they broke down this week.

"The Iraqi government is not serious, they have ignored our efforts, and now the Americans are driving around Sadr City with their tanks, insulting people and acting aggressively," Yusef al-Nasiri, a senior leader of the Mahdi Army said. "Nobody can guess what is going to happen next."

Some of the tribal sheiks of Sadr City said they were concerned that Dr. Allawi might have abandoned his efforts to disarm the Mahdi Army and to bring it into democratic politics; it appears he wants to crush the group by force, they said.

"We want to follow the prime minister, but this is a mistake," said Sheik Shaker al-Saady, a tribal leader in Sadr City. "We were all happy to hear Muktada say he plans to enter politics and declare a cease-fire. It made the people happy."

"Now, if the prime minister wants to divide the tribal leaders from other residents, it could create two conflicts involving the militia: one with the Americans and another with the tribal leaders," Mr. Saady said. "The prime minister needs to make a political settlement."

Another tribal leader, Qarim al-Bikhaty, said Dr. Allawi could reach a political settlement that included the disarming of the Mahdi Army if he would agree to get the Americans out of Sadr City. That, he said, was the source of all the problems there.

"The people hate them," Mr. Bikhaty said of the American soldiers. "The Iraqi government must tell the Americans to stay out of the city."

In Sadr City Thursday morning, US troops urged the Mehdi Army militia to turn in its heavy weapons.

"We call on the Mehdi Army to hand over their heavy weaponry according to an agreement with Naim al-Qaabi," troops on two tanks and two Humvees shouted through loudspeakers.

None of the militiamen in the sprawling Baghdad slum could immediately be seen handing over their rocket-propelled grenade launchers or mortars but the ceasefire ordered on Monday has so far been observed.

Al-Sadr Proclaims His Mahdi Army Unbeatable

9.3.04 By Abdul Hussein al-Obeidi, Associated Press

KUFA, Iraq — Rebel Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr declared U.S. forces can never defeat his Mahdi militia in a defiant speech read out to 2,000 supporters during the first Friday prayers since the end of a brutal three-week standoff with American troops.

"Many, but not all, think that the American Army is invincible. But now it's appeared only truth is invincible," Sheik Jaber al-Khafaji, said in a statement read on al-Sadr's behalf. "America claims to control the world through globalization, but it couldn't do the same with the Mahdi Army."

Al-Sadr portrayed the American withdrawal from Najaf's devastated Old City as a sign of U.S. military weakness. "We should keep in mind the lessons of what happened in Najaf," the cleric's statement said.

Resistance Captures Cops, Frees Prisoner

9.3.04 By KIM HOUSEGO & Associated Press writer Pamela Sampson

Friday resistance soldiers abducted four policemen and an Iranian after raiding their hotel room in the southern city of Basra.

The officers had been escorting the Iranian to the border under a deportation order, a senior Basra police official said on condition of anonymity. The official declined to provide details on why he was being deported, but said it was linked to the unrest in Najaf.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Texas Resistance Fights Back

September 1, 2004 Kim Petersen, www.dissidentvoice.org

The Bush administration's claims that the resistance consisted of a few Ba'athist remnants loyal to Saddam Hussein and subsequently foreign intruders has been adduced to be blatantly untrue.

Al-Sadr's Shi'a resistance movement has exposed this. Yet the shameless serial mislabeling of the enemy by the US continues; not only is the enemy anti-American but Centcom now also refers to the enemy as "anti-Iraqi." The Iraqi resistance is supposedly comprised of self-haters. The logical inference being: to hate the enemy is to hate oneself.

If a foreign country, say that great threat from the not-so-distant-past Nicaragua, were to make the two-days march to Texas and begin the conquest, how would these attackers be labeled? If not suicidal lunatics then invaders, right? When the Nicaraguan occupation begins, are they not occupiers? It is really quite simple.

Now when groups of Americans start fighting the Nicaraguan occupation forces, are they not a resistance force? Wouldn't most people scoff with unconcealed scorn at the US resistance movement being accused of being anti-American? Labeling the Americans fighting to liberate their country from foreign occupation as anti-Americans raises the preposterousness of the analogy.

Clearly it is blatantly ludicrous. What kind of journalist worthy of being called a journalist would write such nonsense? In fact it is too absurd to even pose as slipshod propaganda, and surely it is an affront to the intelligence of any readership (or so one hopes).

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

MEET THE DISGUSTING BUSH STOOGES YOU'RE DYING FOR



Iraqi President Ghazi al-Yawar (AFP/File/Cris Bouroncle)

**The Collaborator Army Is What You'd
Expect:
Cluster Fuck Squared;
Captain Mike Under Arrest**

12 August 2004 By Sara Daniel, Le Nouvel Observateur Hebdomadaire

Captain Smith, however, the American instructor of the Iraqi Army, still can't get over these ex-officers of Saddam's regime, who were considered the bad guys only a few months earlier, reintegration into the ranks of the new army: "To tell you the truth, I would never have imagined having to work with war criminals one day..." (Who the fuck do you think runs the government that commands you?)

Trained, equipped, and controlled by the Americans, the new Iraqi army brings together former Saddam soldiers, tribal chiefs' protégés, and mostly many poor men simply in search of a salary. For a completely relative effectiveness ...

This morning at Camp Bravo in Baghdad's Amariya quarter, headquarters of the Iraqi Army's 303rd battalion, all routine patrols have been suspended. A big raid is about to take place on Abu Ghraib.

Today over 200 Iraqi soldiers of the "new army" and 80 American soldiers are supposed to participate in the operation.

Even if they're fighting in the same camp, Iraqi soldiers look on with envy at the American's metal plated bullet-proof vests. They complain about their equipment. About their salary. About their miserable lives.

Their neighbors consider them traitors because they collaborate with the Americans and many of their colleagues have been murdered when they went home. Some don't even hide their nostalgia for the Saddam era. To hear them tell it, the only thing different for them since the dictator's fall is the right to wear sun glasses during operations.

Everyone wears them: Imitation Ray-Ban or Calvin Klein stuck between the masks and the bandanas that hide their faces so no one can recognize them. The Americans stuff themselves into their armored vehicles. Only Captain Smith, the Iraqi soldiers' instructor, climbs into the simple pick-ups with open windows at the mercy of any grenade with us and "his men". On board the truck, we feel like live targets. A soldier kindly offers us a Kalashnikov: he's not sure he can protect us in case of an attack...

Captain Smith preaches to the Iraqi officers who are supposed to supervise the operation. One of them takes care of traffic instead of watching the men. One squad lingers in a house and loses the rest of the troop, but there's no major hang-up. A well-conducted raid. Men surprised in the shower, mothers who sob when their sons are arrested...

Whether they're conducted by Iraqis or Americans, all the raids are like each other. They all provoke the same feelings of malaise. We want to apologize for being there, to distance ourselves from the infraction, from the violence of these weapons that search the corners of houses taken by force in the softness of a Friday afternoon nap after prayer, the best moment to act, according to the Americans.

Eight men are arrested. One of them is thrown into our truck. An Iraqi soldier motions to me to give him my scarf to blindfold [the prisoner].

Smith respects his 240 soldiers. They have "behaved well" every time they've been under fire; even if he makes no bones about their motivations:

"They're here for the salary,\$150/month for the senior ranks. *Exactly like the Americans. Very few of us are here to defend our country...*"

"Some of them are informers in the guerilla's pay. You know, there aren't many innocents in this country."

Moreover, he knows that the last group of soldiers to be taken in inform the local sheiks. Colonel Mohammed, the Iraqi who commands the 303rd battalion, did want to engage them for the same reason, "but the American General Staff decided otherwise to please certain tribal chieftains...", he explains.

Captain Smith points out a big heavy-set guy, haggard and somewhat dubious looking, a new enlistee who answers to the name Abu Brahim. **"The Iraqis have intelligent hoodlums. Unfortunately, those are the ones who are fighting against us," he jokes.**

According to him, if the American General Staff imposed this sergeant, it's because he's the protégé of the Sheik of an influential tribe, but no one in the camp trusts him: he would inform the "terrorists."

Abu Brahim is covered in scars. His men tell us that he's a former Saddam Special Forces soldier. "To toughen us up, they made us kill animals and then eat them raw," one of his former comrades broadcasts. Abu Brahim hates to talk about this period of his life, however.

Because he is considered an American "collaborator", mortars have been launched against his house. The last time, his mother was wounded and his nephew died.

Like his men, he complains about the conditions of his life. About his salary which doesn't justify the risks that he runs: "Under Saddam, we got a plot of land and a sum of money. Today, we're less well treated than the police."

There's also the antiquity of the weapons and the presence of women in the unit that exasperate him: "We're heroes, what use are women to us, they do nothing but complicate the work!"

Obviously, this enlisted officer who commands a squadron is nostalgic for the Saddam years: "In those days, when we had complaints to present to our general, he settled everything within five days..."

Then, there is still and always the question of the transfer of powers. The humiliation of being commanded by the Americans is constant. Even here where the relations between the men are rather better than elsewhere.

Twenty five angry soldiers stand in front of Camp Bravo's gates. A whole squad is in revolt. All the soldiers are speaking at once. Humiliated men who demand reparations.

Hassan describes the corruption that eats away at the unit. He asserts that one of the sergeants and seven other Iraqi soldiers are taking kick-backs on contracts and selling the weapons they confiscate on the black market.

"When we've gone to denounce these practices, the Americans consigned us to quarters. They trained their weapons on us, insulted us. One of them spit on me, on me, who discovered three booby trapped cars last month!

"One of the American soldiers, Captain Mike, was furious; he asked his compatriots why they had humiliated us this way and threatened to leave. *Then they went and arrested him in turn.*"

The Amariya Camp Bravo grunts sympathize: "The Americans control everything. There's been no transfer of power for us, but there has been a transfer of risk. We're nothing but human shields. Two days ago, I was on patrol with them. They were in armored cars; we were in pick-ups. And, of course, it was our men who were killed when the bomb exploded."

With his majestic traditional coat and his blue eyes, Sheikh Hisham al-Dulaimi looks like a movie star when he arrives at Camp Bravo.

As he does every week, the president of the National League of Iraqi Sheikhs comes to negotiate with the Americans for the release of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Ever since the torture photos scandal in the prison that had previously symbolized the Saddam regime's cruelty, detainees are released by the busload. **Tribal chiefs guarantee their good conduct in writing and then that round is over. *Sometimes, it's even arranged before those guilty of acts of resistance are arrested.***

Sheikh Al-Dulaimi is one of the principal artisans of this new American pragmatism.

Since the power transfer, he helps some of Saddam's former intelligence agents to find new work. Every day hundreds of petitioners lobby in his offices to get his support for their reintegration into the administration or the army. "Reintegrating former Ba'ath Party members is the only way the Americans may hope to one day reestablish peace in Iraq," is the Sheikh's simple analysis.

Captain Smith, however, the American instructor of the Iraqi Army, still can't get over these ex-officers of Saddam's regime, who were considered the bad guys only a few months earlier, reintegration into the ranks of the new army: "To tell you the truth, I would never have imagined having to work with war criminals one day..."

U.S. Military Changes Arrest Techniques To Avoid Making Enemies (!); Army Forced To Admit Resistance Is Nationalism (!!)



Saurabh Das, AP file photo

September 03, 2004 By Jim Krane, Associated Press

“The Americans will only change Iraqis’ opinions toward them when they leave Iraq,” said Ahmed Kadhim, a 45-year-old teacher leaving a Shiite mosque in west Baghdad.

The U.S. military is avoiding once-common arrest techniques like bagging suspects’ heads, the U.S. commander in charge of the Iraqi capital said, **because such actions are considered humiliating by Iraqis and pushing new recruits into the insurgency.**

The Army’s 1st Infantry Division, which guards a swath of the Sunni Arab homeland north of Baghdad, started a “dignity and respect” initiative in April.

Soldiers are told to avoid handcuffing or blindfolding suspects — often done by placing a cloth sack over a suspect’s head — in front of their families

The arrest policy appears to conform with an emerging picture of Iraq’s insurgency that paints it as a growing movement of nationalist Iraqis, angry at the presence of foreign troops.

U.S. and Iraqi officials have often underestimated the number of rebels and misleadingly described them as radical Islamists or foreign fighters vying to install a regime akin to Afghanistan’s former Taliban government.

If ordinary Iraqis are tempted to join the guerrillas, U.S. troops would be wise to avoid provoking them. **(Kinder, gentler arrests by a foreign occupation should do the trick. These people really do live in a world where the sky is a different color.)**

"The Americans will only change Iraqis' opinions toward them when they leave Iraq," said Ahmed Kadhim, a 45-year-old teacher leaving a Shiite mosque in west Baghdad.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Colin Powell Babbles Bullshit

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell acknowledged that the Bush administration miscalculated the strength of the insurgency here but said the United States would "not become faint of heart" in enforcing its Iraq policy.

"What we have to do is to defeat this insurgency," Powell said in an interview Wednesday in Panama to Panama's TVN Channel 2. A text was released Thursday by the State Department. **"Let's remember what is causing this trouble. It's not the United States. It's not the coalition forces that are there."**

But he conceded that "it is clear we did not expect an insurgency that would be this strong."

(London, September 3, 1777. King George said today, "Let's remember what is causing this trouble in America. It's not England. It's not the British forces that are there. It is clear we did not expect an insurgency that would be this strong.")

Kerry National Security Advisor Says Kerry, Bush Have Same War Policy

August 8, 2004

Last month, Rand Beers, national security adviser to the Kerry campaign, opened a high-level briefing with a warning:

"In many ways, the goals of the two administrations are in fact not all that different." (David Rennie, 'Kerry "will not change foreign policy"', The Daily Telegraph, July 29, 2004)

"Bush and Kerry's battle for swing voters is actually not even a battle over the informed decisions of those individuals. It is a battle for support from donors and media moguls who provide the means to manipulate swing voters." (Albert, 'www.zmag.org' , July 28, 2004)

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