GI SPECIAL 2#B7

(Soon to become Kerry's war.)
http://homepage.mac.com/leperous/PhotoAlbum1.html

42% Want U.S. Troops Out Now

June 22, 2004 By Richard Morin and Dan Balz, Washington Post Staff Writers

With fewer than 10 days before the United States turns over governing power to Iraq, the survey shows that Americans are coming to a mixed judgment about the costs and benefits of the war.

Fewer than half of those surveyed -- 47 percent -- say the war in Iraq was worth fighting, while 52 percent say it was not, the highest level of disapproval recorded in Post-ABC

News polls. Seven in 10 Americans now say there has been an "unacceptable" level of casualties in Iraq, up 6 points from April and also a new high in Post-ABC News polling.

A majority say the United States should keep its forces in Iraq until the country is stabilized, but the proportion who want to withdraw *now* to avoid further casualties -- 42 percent -- has inched up again to a new high.

The public is sharply divided over whether the war contributed to the long-term security of the United States, with 51 percent saying it has, a new low in Post-ABC polls. Three in four say the conflict has damaged the image of the United States throughout the world, and a majority believe the war has not improved prospects for long-term peace and stability in the Middle East.

Bush's overall job approval rating held steady at 47 percent, at its lowest point in Post-ABC News polls, while his disapproval rating reached a new high of 51 percent.

Big majorities said the new Iraqi government and not the United States also should control Iraq's oil industry and handle the distribution of aid from other nations.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. **Send requests to address up top. For copies on web site see:http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

U.S. Soldier Killed In Iraq Rocket Attack

6.27.04 AP

BAGHDAD, Iraq - A U.S. soldier was killed Sunday in a rocket attack on the outskirts of Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

The attack occurred at Camp Cuervo, a 1st Cavalry Division camp, military officials said.

Resistance Nails C-130, Kills One Passenger

6.27.04 TAREK EL-TABLAWY & CHRIS TOMLINSON, BAGHDAD (AP)

Insurgents hit a U.S. military transport plane with gunfire after it took off, killing one person.

The C-130 aircraft had just departed Baghdad International Airport at approximately 5:30 p.m. and was struck by small arms fire about 12 miles west of the airport, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

It returned to the airport and landed safely, but one person wounded in the shooting died, said U.S. Lt-Col. Mark Kimmitt.

Aircraft have been hit several times flying in and out of the heavily guarded airport, but Sunday's incident was the first reported death.

EXACTLY RIGHT.

NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DIME
NOT ANOTHER LIFE

Baghdad June 27. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

Explosions Rock Occupation Hq

6.27.04 TAREK EL-TABLAWY, BAGHDAD (AP) & Reuters

Explosions Sunday morning rocked central Baghdad as guerrillas fired a volley of rockets that hit in the Green Zone, the neighbourhood used as the headquarters of the U.S. occupation. No injuries were reported.

A powerful blast shook buildings in central Baghdad Sunday and smoke could be seen rising from inside the Green Zone headquarters of the U.S.-led coalition, witnesses said.

Salvadoran Troops To Move To "Safer Place"

MEXICO CITY, June 26 (Xinhuanet) **Salvadoran President Elias Antonio Saca said on Saturday that his country's troops deployed in the Iraqi city of Najaf will be moved "to a safer place" till their mission ends in July,** reports reaching here said.

Saca told a press conference in San Salvador that the decision to move the contingent of the Cuscatlan Battalion was made so that their humanitarian tasks are conducted "with a better protection."

In February, El Salvador sent about 380 soldiers to Iraq to replace another group of 360 soldiers that had been deployed there for six months to carry out reconstruction tasks.

El Salvador is the only country of the five that comprised the Plus Ultra Brigade, led by Spain in Najaf, that decided to maintain their troops in Iraq after the Spanish, Nicaraguan, Honduran and Dominican contingents withdrew

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THE BEST AMBUSH RESPONSE: GET THE FUCK OUT OF IRAQ IMMEDIATELY

A U.S. Army soldier raises his rifle during ambush response exercises at Camp Victory, near Baghdad June 27. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

Local Man Killed In Grenade Attack

June 27, 2004 By Bob Ussery, Staff writer, The Times-Picayune

When Brenda Jobin saw the man in military uniform at her New Orleans home Saturday morning, she froze. "My baby," she thought to herself.

The uniformed man told her exactly what she had feared he would. Her 23-year-old son, Army Spc. Jeremy Heines, had died in a firefight the night before in Iraq, killed when a rocket-propelled grenade punched through the windshield of his military vehicle.

Heines had joined the army after Sept. 11, 2001, and married a fellow soldier at Fort Hood, Texas, last year. They celebrated their first anniversary in Baghdad, while fighting the war.

Jobin's husband, Henry Jobin, answered the door on Saturday.

"I was fixing to go to work," said Brenda Jobin, manager of the restaurant at the Casino in City Park. "I just froze. I went into shock. He told both of us. Once I saw the uniform, I just (thought), 'My baby.' "

She said Jeremy was close to her and his stepfather. "He was my heart," she said. "He wanted to do his part for his country."

Heines' fellow soldiers in the 1st Cavalry's 1st Battalion characterized him as a perpetually upbeat guy who planned to come back to New Orleans and open a bar and start a family when he completed his service. He was nicknamed "Ketchup" and would sneak meals to Iraqi children and help his friend fight off war-induced depression. His fellow soldiers struggled, as did his family, to cope with his loss on Saturday.

"I never really saw him in a bad mood," Dejuan Williams, 23, of Louisville, Ky., said. Williams was separated from his helmet and weapon by the impact of the rocket-propelled grenade that claimed Heines' life.

"He always would put a smile on your face. You could be having your worst day, and he would just say, 'Look on the bright side' or make a joke, and you would be out of that bad mood in just a second."

'What could happen?'

Heines met his wife, Kristine Hanks of Florida, at Fort Hood, Texas, before they both shipped off to Iraq. He was never happier than when he spoke of her, another soldier said.

"He was the most outspoken guy I've every met about loving his wife," Spc. Christopher "Angel" Jesseman, 26, of Sanbornton, N.H., said.

Jobin last saw her son March 16 at Fort Hood, just before he shipped out for Iraq.

"He called me on my cell phone all the time and tried to e-mail us every couple of days," Jobin said. "I was always telling him to stay safe and keep his head down, and he'd tell me he drove a Bradley (armored vehicle) -- what could happen to him?"

She last spoke to him Thursday.

Heines graduated from Redeemer-Seton High School in 1998, his mother said. He had a younger sister and a younger brother, the children of his mother and stepfather.

Heines had four siblings from his father, who lives in Georgia, from other marriages.

Busy Guarding Nothing:
Bring Them All Home Now

American soldiers guard an explosion site as a destroyed car is moved from the scene in the predominately Shiite city of Hillah Sunday, after bomb explosions the night before. (AP/Mohammed Uraibi)

TROOP NEWS

VETERANS FOR PEACE
2004 National Convention
July 22-25 Boston MA

Invitation from VFP National President

May 29, 2004

Dear VFP Chapter President and All Chapter Contacts:

At this time of national and international crisis, Veterans For Peace has never been in a better position to have our voice heard. With the national media in Boston for this summer's Democratic National Convention, the opportunity to speak to the world is enormous. So it's more than just advantageous that Emerson College will host our Annual Veterans For Peace Convention on July 22-25 in Boston, the Cradle of Liberty. It is history calling us to act now!

Our theme *We the People: Defeating Militarism and the Politics of Fear* underscores the extraordinary events local Massachusetts chapters have planned, ensuring that our message will be provocative and timely. But it is only through your attendance and participation that our experience and leadership can impact this historical moment. We need you to be an essential part of making this history with us.

Building on the success of the 2003 San Francisco convention, many local chapters have invigorated the political landscape, raising the value of our cultural capital such that other peace groups want to be affiliated with our activities. These activities (e.g., forums, film series, rallies, vigils and marches) have been the groundswell for this summer's convention, culminating in over thirty workshops, presented over two days, Thursday and Friday.

Sincerely,
Dave Cline, President
for The Convention Crew, Veterans For Peace Boston 2004, VFP National, the Massachusetts Chapters and all contributors.

(For the rest of the letter, including conference agenda and accommodations, check it out at: http://www.veteransforpeace.org/)

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT THE NEW 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/

Casualties Mount For U.S. Citizen Soldiers; No Letup In Sight

6/26/2004 By Robert Burns, WASHINGTON (AP)

The Iraq war is taking a growing toll on soldiers of the National Guard and Reserve, which have suffered more deaths since April 1 than in the previous seven months combined.

Part-time soldiers of the National Guard and Reserve have played a role in virtually every U.S. conflict, including the 1991 war against Iraq. But rarely have they suffered so

many casualties. Some states are reporting their first Guard combat deaths since World War II.

Throughout the conflict, deaths among National Guard and Reserve troops have represented 15 percent to 20 percent of the monthly U.S. total. In May that figure jumped to 28 percent, and it jumped even higher this month, when 18 of the first 35 Americans who died were members of the Guard or Reserve.

Army Gen. George Casey, chosen to assume command of all U.S. and coalition troops in Iraq, told Congress on Thursday that **National Guard and Reserve troops could make up as much as 50 percent of the total U.S. force in Iraq in the months ahead.**

Pentagon casualty reports show that 100 members of the National Guard and 57 members of the Reserves have died in Iraq since the war started in March 2003 either killed in action or by noncombat causes.

Of that 157 total, 57 perished in the past three months, compared with 49 over the preceding seven months. May was the deadliest month for the Guard and Reserve, with 22 killed in action.

Among states hit especially hard in recent weeks:

Oregon and New Jersey each had four Guardsmen killed this month. Oregon also had one Army Reservist killed in Afghanistan on May 29.

Arkansas lost a total of seven Guardsmen and one Reservist in Iraq in April and May. Vermont lost three in the past month.

Florida lost five on May 2 all Navy Reservists and it lost one Guardsman in Afghanistan on May 5. Florida also lost an Army Reservist on June 16, Sgt. Arthur S. Mastrapa, a 35-year-old father of two. **He was killed in a mortar attack on his unit's camp at Balad, Iraq, two days before he was to return to the United States.**

The mortar attack that took Mastrapa's life also killed Army Reserve Spc. Jeremy M. Dimaranan, 29, of Virginia Beach, Va. and one of the few field grade officers to die in Iraq, Maj. Paul R. Syverson III, 32, of Lake Zurich, Ill., who was with the Army's 5th Special Forces Group.

There currently are three National Guard combat brigades in Iraq, from North Carolina, Arkansas and Washington state. In the next several months they will be replaced by brigades from Louisiana, Tennessee and Idaho, and possibly a fourth from Mississippi. Also, the 42nd Infantry Division headquarters from the New York National Guard has been mobilized for Iraq duty.

In addition, the 3,000 soldiers of the 56th Brigade of the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division were alerted in May for possible deployment to Iraq. Lt. Col. John Stanford, spokesman for the Texas National Guard, said the 36th Division has not seen combat since World War II.

Wounded Soldiers' Mother Gets Lies And Deceit From The Army; "The Military Pulled The Rug Out From Under Me"

June 27, 2004 By NATALIE CHAMBERS, The Mississippi Press

MOSS POINT -- Ginger Griffin of Moss Point has been a mother on a mission.

She learned Saturday that the government will fly her to Washington, D.C. on Tuesday to see her son, Army Spec. Julius Griffin, 23, who was injured June 17 while serving in Iraq.

Julius Griffin is now at Walter Reed Army Hospital where he will soon undergo additional surgeries for injuries suffered.

Griffin has lived life on an emotional roller coaster these past days.

When her son was first injured, military officials told her they would fly her to Germany, where her son was taken after being brought out of Iraq. Griffin said they then told her to wait and the government would fly her to Washington, D.C., where her son was to be taken next.

A few days later, Griffin said she was informed that his condition had been upgraded from serious injury to non-serious injury and the government would not be flying her at all, to be at his bedside.

"The military pulled the rug out from under me," she said.

Griffin said the government's indecision delayed any plans she could have been making on her own.

"When I spoke to Julius Tuesday night, he said mother, I don't understand how they can downgrade my situation to NSI (non-serious injury) when they haven't done anything to me,'" she said.

"It's frustrating. It's going to be kind of expensive. At this late point, it is a financial strain for me to get there. I would have to have motel fees while he would be there. I don't know how long he would be there. He has not had surgery," Griffin said.

Griffin said her son was enroute to get supplies when another vehicle backed into him, "pinning him against something and ran over him. He was pinned up against a wall for two or three minutes. (Apparently) whoever was driving the vehicle had trouble moving it forward. The man thought he was going forward and in the process was going backward and run over him."

Julius Griffin was immediately transported to a hospital in Iraq where doctors there removed a portion of his small intestine. He was transferred to a hospital in Germany for additional treatment.

The official call Ginger Griffin received was that her son had been seriously injured. He had sustained a crushed pelvic bone and breaks to a leg, a hip, and a bone joint in his shoulder. He also had a bruised chest cavity.

"I received a call early Friday morning our time, late Thursday their time. The commander called me and indicated my son was injured. He said the top priority was to get him out of Iraq hospital to a Germany hospital. They proceeded in doing that.. He said (Julius) had had surgery and they were enroute to taking him to Germany. **The commander said they were making preparations for me to come see him," she said.**

Griffin said when her son arrived in Germany, she received a call saying her son had arrived and she should plan to see her son when he was flown to Walter Reed Army Hospital on June 20. Her son was not on the planned flight for some reason, she said.

"He was still in Germany on Sunday. I was asking about transportation and could I come. I talked to a (military official) but was told Julius wasn't able to catch a military aircraft. He told me to wait until this past Wednesday to come see him," she said.

After the initial contact, Griffin said the telephone calls stopped coming. She bought phone cards to make calls to Germany and then the United States, she said, seeking information.

"I had to initiate the calls," she said. "They assured me different ones were supposed to call me and keep me abreast. Each time I talked to a military person, I said I was the one initiating all the calls," she said.

Griffin said it was Tuesday when a military liaison told her he had some good news and bad news for her -- the good news being Julius would be moved to Washington. The bad news, that the government would not furnish her trip because her son's condition had been upgraded.

Julius Griffin, speaking from his hospital bed Friday evening, said he's in pain and wants his mother there.

"They have performed one surgery and I am waiting on the other. They have to repair my hip and pelvis. They did a partial removal of my small intestine. They did that in Iraq," he said.

Julius Griffin had been stationed in Iraq for five and a half months. He is with Service Battery 1, 6th Field Artillery. A 2000 graduate of Moss Point High School, he has completed a four-year term in the U.S. Army and re-enlisted in May for two additional years.

"I am very excited, so excited that if I could take wings I would fly right now by myself or be like Jeannie and blink. Thank God, it has really been a blessing," Griffin said.

It's Official; Nearly Half Troops Mail From Home "Lost"

6.16.04 Wall St. Journal

This Spring the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, concluded that the Pentagon's postal system is so flawed that the timeliness of mail delivery to troops serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom cannot be accurately assessed."

It's not just slow. In many cases, the GAO could not verify that letters had been delivered at all.

As part of the GAO study, more than 1,700 "test letters" were sent through the military system to individuals in Kuwait, Bahrain and Iraq, but the agency could confirm that only 59% were actually received.

Moreover, the GAO found wide dissatisfaction with mail service in interviews with more than 125 soldiers and Marines. In some cases, soldiers complained that packages arrived in the Iraqi theater only after being routed through U.S. installations.

Reward For Serving In Iraq: The Shaft From Bosses

6.18.04 USA Today

Some returning Guard members and reservists are hiring lawyers and filing lawsuits in an effort to secure jobs or draw attention to the issues facing returning veterans.

They're soldiers such as Ron Vander Wal, of Pollock, S.D., who in March returned from active duty in Iraq. He sought to return to his telephone customer-service job at a Bismarck, N.D. facility of Sykes Enterprises, but was told "there were no positions available to him," according to a lawsuit The lawsuit also says Sykes sought to replace veterans with lower-paid workers.

Some have no recourse.

In March 2003, National Guardsman Michael Dickenson, 24, was called to active duty in Iraq. He had just bought a house in Superior, Wis., and his son, Nicholas, was almost 1. He left before moving into the new place or witnessing Nicholas' birthday.

He left his home for the desert of Nasiriyah. There, he worked as an administrative specialist helping to rebuild schools and irrigation work. He was comforted knowing that his full-time union job in the warehouse of Fleming Foods was secure. Then his wife got a letter. His employer had gone bankrupt and was closing. His job was gone.

"It was a concern for me. It was a good job, with health benefits, and it paid $18 an hour," Dickenson says.

He returned home in April and decided to focus full time on college; he hopes to graduate next year with a degree in chemical engineering. His wife, Jaimi, is also a full-time college student and Guard member. A state program for displaced workers is paying his schooling, and he collects unemployment, but that's $329 a week, less than half what he made before.

And he worries that being in the Guard might hurt him when it comes time to find work again.

"Being a Guardsman may hinder employability An employer can't legally hold it against us, but it's got to be in the back of their minds, that you could have a year deployment and be away," he says. "I'm concerned."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraq Insurgency Showing Signs of Momentum
Analysts And Some U.S. Commanders Say It Could Be Too Late

(This article is important because the writer is an open cheerleader for the U.S. occupation. Sections cut echo every racist slander of the resistance and Iraqis that Bush and Cheney have ever produced.

The whole piece lies by omission. For this twit there is no Shia armed resistance, it's all the doing of evil "primitive" barbaric Sunnis who miss Saddam Hussein. Despite the idiocies, the truth leaks through. The war is lost.

If your stomach is strong enough, you can check out the whole piece at: http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/iraq/la-fg-insurgency26jun26,1,2053930,print.story?coll=la-home-headlines)

June 26, 2004 By Patrick J. McDonnell, L.A. Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD — **As this week's coordinated violence demonstrates, Iraq's insurgent movement is increasingly potent, riding a wave of anti-U.S. nationalism and religious extremism. Just days before an Iraqi government takes control of the country, experts and some commanders fear it may be too late to turn back the militant tide.**

Long gone are the days when the insurgents were dismissed as a finite force ticketed for high-tech annihilation by superior U.S. firepower.

The dominant guerrilla movement — an unlikely Sunni alliance of hard-liners from the former regime, Islamic militants and anti-U.S. nationalists — has taken over towns, blocked highways, bombed police stations, assassinated lawmakers and other "collaborators," and abducted civilians.

The fighters, commanders say, are overwhelmingly Iraqis, with a small but important contingent of foreign fighters who specialize in carrying out suicide bombings and other spectacular attacks, possibly including this week's coordinated strikes that killed more than 100 people.

"They are effective," said Army Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz, operational commander of U.S. troops here.

The insurgent force has picked up legions of part-time nationalist recruits enraged by the lengthy occupation and the mounting toll on civilians. Whether the result of U.S. or insurgent fire, the casualties are blamed on Americans.

The anti-U.S. momentum is evident in both the nation's urban centers and the palm-shrouded Sunni rural heartland, where resentment over military sweeps and the torturous pace of reconstruction is pervasive. Support for the insurgency ranges from quiet assent to participation in the fighting.

"We're talking about people who are the equivalent of the Minutemen," said Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert who served as an advisor for the U.S.-led occupation here. "They pick up their weapons and join the fight and then go back to their homes and farms. It makes it so fluid. And the media functions as the town crier, like the calls from the minaret."

(Who would have believed that a Hoffman could understand so well what the war is about and then actually say it to a reporter? If the resistance fighters are the "equivalent of the Minutemen," that makes the U.S. invasion force the equivalent of the Redcoats. Having let that damning admission pop out of his mouth, one wonders whether Hoffman will ever get a job as a "terrorism expert" again?)

The nimble enemy has kept just far enough ahead of coalition forces to raise the question in Iraqi minds: **Who will be here in the long run, the U.S. and its allies or the insurgents? (Good God, what a hard question to answer. This reporter is dumber than a box of rocks.)**

U.S. authorities have jailed dozens of cell chiefs but watched in frustration as the groups have regenerated and fought anew.

Defeating a force this entrenched and energized is difficult, commanders say. (No shit? Part of the job description for "commanders" appears to be figuring out the overwhelmingly obvious everybody else understood a year ago and managing to put in into words.)

Trying to defeat such a foe militarily can drag opposing forces into a withering cycle of violence, especially in a culture where families feel obliged to avenge the death of loved ones. **(Another absolutely stunning revelation.)**

"The nature of this culture is you can't win a war of attrition with them," said Col. Robert B. Abrams of the Army's 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad, "because it's a circle of violence — there will always be someone in the family who will pick up arms. Unless you want to kill too many people. Which of course we never want to do." **(Of course.)**

The insurgents have time on their side: U.S. forces are already under pressure to leave.

And the Sunni fighters are armed with another major advantage: They have no need to win, only to sow instability.

At the time, U.S. officials — notably L. Paul Bremer III, the chief American administrator here — dismissed the embryonic opposition as "dead-enders" who owed their allegiance to Hussein. Their initial attacks were amateurish, often involving kamikaze assaults on U.S. armored vehicles or crude roadside bombs jerry-built from stray munitions, wires and makeshift triggers.

Amid the triumphant declarations, it is now widely agreed, the U.S. leadership was disastrously slow to anticipate that **this primitive enemy (!)** could grow into a formidable foe. **(After defeating George Washington at the Battle of New York, the British leadership was disastrously slow to anticipate that this primitive enemy could grow into a formidable foe. Imperial stupidity and arrogance endure.)**

Perceived U.S. heavy-handedness in Sunni enclaves such as Fallouja, west of the capital, provided fuel for the movement, as did the mass roundups and sweeps of thousands of young Sunni men suspected of anti-coalition activity. The U.S. decisions to disband Iraq's armed forces and bar many former Baathists from government jobs fed the growing resentment — and recruitment.

As disillusionment with the occupation grew, the armed resistance spread throughout the Sunni heartland, from greater Baghdad to the vast expanses to the west and north. Many young men flocked to the cause, whether out of principle or to earn some cash.

All say the new Iraqi forces are ill-equipped to control the insurgents, and in some cases disinclined to take on their neighbors and tribal brethren. (No! Really? Imagine that!)

"Since the fall of the regime, not a single penny was allocated to this town," said Awf Abdul Rida Ahmad, the mayor of Buhriz, an agricultural suburb and insurgent stronghold of 40,000 southeast of Baqubah.

As in Fallouja, U.S. forces withdrew after days of gun battles. An uneasy peace prevails today. Many celebrate the mujahedin, and graffiti praises Hussein and denounces the Americans and those who collaborate.

"The people here are very peaceful, and all they want is stability and peace of mind," said the mayor, who denied the presence of insurgents in Buhriz and said calm would prevail if the Americans just stayed away. "This is not a town of criminals or thugs."

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

One Pipeline Fixed, Another Blown Up

June 27, 2004 By FISNIK ABRASHI, The Associated Press & Tarek El-Tablawy, 6/26/2004 AP

Repair crews patched up the larger of two southern crude oil pipelines damaged by saboteurs and resumed pumping to offshore terminals, an official with the South Oil Company said Saturday.

Hours after the pumping resumed, attackers blasted another small crude oil pipeline that feeds into domestic storage tanks, near the town of Latifiyah, about 30 miles south of Baghdad, said 1st Lt. Alaa Hussein.

Another smaller line linking the northern oil fields of Kirkuk with the Turkish port of Ceyhan, was repaired earlier this week after being knocked out of service by attacks last month.

That line, which carries about 200,000 barrels a day, has been repeatedly attacked and has operated only sporadically over the past few months.

Collaborator Party HQ Hit In Mosul

6.27.04 TAREK EL-TABLAWY, BAGHDAD (AP)

In northern Iraq on Sunday, attackers launched three mortar shells exploded at the Mosul office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, a pro-U.S. political party. One party member was killed and nine others were injured, including two civilians.

Also in Mosul, gunmen killed a policeman in a drive-by shooting, police said. In a separate attack, gunmen struck an Iraqi army recruiting centre with rifle-fire in another drive-by, injuring one guard.

An Iraqi man looks at the former Ramadi police station after a resistance attack. (AP/Imad Mulla 6.26.04)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Withering Of The Anti-War Movement;
The 15th of February 2003: A Eulogy and Prelude

June 26 / 27, 2004 By KEITH ROSENTHAL, Counterpunch

It's high time that the anti-war movement addresses the 500-pound gorilla standing in the middle of the room. That's right – I'm talking about the mass movement that collapsed roughly around the 20th of March 2003, in the wake of Bush's decision to go ahead with the invasion of Iraq.

We all remember the feeling of euphoria on February 15th of that year, when 10 million people worldwide marched against the war on Iraq. Millions took to the streets across America, chanting, blocking traffic, and speaking out. Although we all knew that Bush was determined to have his war, somewhere, in the recesses of our minds, we also held a flicker of hope that maybe—just maybe—we would force him to stand down.

Within two months' time, the million beams of hope had receded back into the dark alleys of the general feeling of powerlessness we know as "the American political system."

First, we were barraged with the hypocritical demand: "Support the Troops!" The media, Democratic and Republican politicians alike, and "common-sense," all chimed in to order anti-war activists to immediately cease and desist, for the very lives of American soldiers were at stake!

Next, as soon as the invasion had turned into occupation, we were told by the same foregoing echo chambers that we again had to cease and desist all anti-war activity, but this time for the sake of the Iraqis themselves. For if the US were to just pull out of Iraq, the argument went, we would most certainly leave Iraq a much worse place than when we found it. This turned into a variation of the 'you break it, you own it' mantra.

Finally, we were told that the US must stay in Iraq for the next 5 to 10 years to continue fighting "foreign terrorists," "insurgents," and "former Ba'athist loyalists." All pretenses of ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction or of securing revenge for the attacks of September 11th went out the window.

In the end, the sole reason offered by the Bush administration for why the US had to stay in Iraq was (drum roll please) . . . because we were already there (dah-dah)!

The saddest part of this whole charade was not the base superficiality of the Bush administration's rationalizations, but the fact that the vast majority of anti-war activists bought it, or, at least, sunk into a deep demoralization out of despair that we were unable to stop the war.

The past year has been characterized by an intense hangover for the anti-war movement. This hangover has been made worse by the fact that people have grasped to the Democrat, John Kerry, as the alternative—an alternative, not to Bush, but to our inability to influence policy through mass demonstrations.

The "Anybody But Bush" phenomenon is less a referendum on George Bush, and more so on the confidence of the American Left in its ability to affect change through independent, mass action.

This is the reason why there was barely a ripple of protest when the pictures of Iraqis being tortured in Abu Ghraib prison by American soldiers spread across the front-pages of newspapers like wildfire.

This is the reason why the anti-occupation movement remains so peripheral in the American public eye despite a recent Gallup poll revealing that 44% of Americans are for an immediate US withdrawal from Iraq.

The fact of the matter is that the anti-war movement has to face up to some tough political realities.

First and foremost, we have to come to understand why the anti-war protests failed to stop Bush's war, lest we draw the hopeless conclusion that mass protests simply don't work. In the context of the Election 2004, this amounts to the idea that the only way we can have our voices heard is by changing our tune (i.e., voting for a candidate who is for everything that we're against).

During the Vietnam War era, millions of people all across the country spent years organizing and protesting to stop the slaughter. One Democrat after another betrayed the anti-war movement by escalating the conflict. The anti-war movement was left with but one recourse: up the stakes.

This meant coming to organize on the basis of a political analysis that went deeper than simple opposition to a "mistaken" military venture. It meant coming to see that wars fought by powerful nations against weaker ones was nothing more than imperialism, pure and simple. Imperialism—the logical extension of the "survival-of-the-fittest" capitalist system onto the global market—was no mere policy adopted by this or that administration. Imperialism is something rooted in the economic system under which we live.

The movement had to begin to develop ideas to explain the stubbornness of the government in the face of mass protests. It had to deepen its connections with the armed resistance of the Vietnamese against the US invasion. **It had to forge more solid links with the US soldiers becoming increasingly radicalized by the experience of fighting a war to liberate a people who sought liberation from the US.**

It was only at this juncture that the American public eye began to turn wearily towards the anti-war movement, seeing it not as a blight but as a haggard sage. It was only at this juncture, when the movement began to pass beyond the bounds within which it had

previously defined itself—that is, when it passed from an anti-war to a potentially revolutionary movement—that the rulers began to listen . . . and take heed.

We are currently at the very beginning of this process. The movement that failed to stop Bush's war was politically unequipped to deal with the question of occupation; the question of the Iraqi resistance; the question of democracy under capitalism. It may not come to develop an understanding of these central issues for some time.

Meanwhile, the dynamic of the occupation and the indemnity it is incurring domestically, are playing out in an interesting manner. New forces are beginning to emerge in active opposition to the occupation—forces a thousand times stronger and more resolute than those comprising the February 15th demonstration. The February 15th movement was planning all along to disappear within a year—either as a result of stopping the war, or as a result of not stopping the war.

The new movement, however, is being spear-headed by military families opposed to the occupation; by soldiers themselves returning from Iraq; by Palestinians connecting the occupation of their land with that of the Iraqis'; and by the remnants of the anti-war movement of yester-year who have drawn the conclusion that the only weakness of the February 15th protests was that they didn't go far enough—politically or organizationally.

Such forces will not easily be diverted from their course. In fact, their cause can only grow in active support as the Iraqi resistance develops apace, as the US continues to lose more soldiers in the years to come, and as the occupation waxes more and more brutal as the US attempts to "pacify" a population refusing in larger and larger numbers to be accomplices in their own oppression.

Moreover, whatever the outcome of the election in November, it can be nothing more than a school in the futility of advancing social causes through a "changing of the guard." If Bush wins, people will once again be forced to look for alternatives to the electoral arena in which to make their voices heard. **If Kerry wins, he will add 40,000 more troops to the occupation, and people will in due course have to once again discover the importance of independent, mass organizing as the only vehicle for social change.**

None of this is to preach inevitability. The dynamics playing out in Iraq—and their domestic consequences—can merely render the conditions around us ripe for the re-emergence of mass struggle. Moreover, this struggle has the potential to emerge on a much more solid political footing than it had before it last disappeared.

The key link in this chain of events is the extent to which all of the above lessons are learned, transmitted, and integrated into the very consciousness of any future mass movement. This will primarily be done by developing organizational links between the various forces emerging around us in opposition to the occupation, but more importantly, in carrying out a series of political discussions with these forces and all others around us who are not yet active.

We have to develop a lesser or greater degree of political continuity between the coming movement and the last. We have to ensure that, although we may go through the same motions in rebuilding a protest movement, we are actually not reinventing the wheel. We

must ensure that we come to the tool-bench this time with a more refined dexterity and a clearer blueprint. Finally, we must make sure that our toolkit is stocked with the best equipment: anti-imperialism, a history of social struggle, and a sober assessment of our own strengths and weaknesses. These crucial tools must be forged through the process of political debate, discussion, and argumentation.

This is the single-most important task that we will face over the next year.

Keith Rosenthal is active with the International Socialist Organization in Burlington, VT.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

GO AWAY, ASSHOLE

40,000 demonstrators June 27 protest the arrival of the Bush in Istanbul, Turkey, chanting 'USA get out of the Middle East!' (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

Mr. Bush No Longer Resides Here

"One sunny day in 2005 an old man approached the White House from across Pennsylvania Avenue, where he'd been sitting on a park bench. He spoke to the U. S. Marine standing guard and said, "I would like to go in and meet with President Bush."

The Marine looked at the man and said, "Sir, Mr. Bush is no longer president and no longer resides here."

The old man said, "Okay" and walked away.

The following day, the same man approached the White House and said to the same Marine, "I would like to go in and meet with President Bush."

The Marine again told the man, "Sir, as I said yesterday, Mr. Bush is no longer president and no longer resides here." The man thanked him and, again, just walked away.

The third day, the same man approached the White House and spoke to the very same U. S. Marine, saying "I would like to go in and meet with President Bush."

The Marine, understandably agitated at this point, looked at the man and said, "Sir, this is the third day in a row you have been here asking to speak to Mr. Bush. I've told you already that Mr. Bush is no longer the president and no longer resides here. Don't you understand?"

The old man looked at the Marine and said, "Oh, I understand. I just love hearing it."

The Marine snapped to attention, saluted, and said, "See you tomorrow."

MAJORITY OF KERRY VOTERS BELIEVE HE IS NOT BUSH
Not-Bushness Key to Dem's Appeal, Poll Suggests

June 24, 2004 The Borowitz Report

In a new Time/CNN poll released today, a majority of voters supporting Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass) for president agreed with the statement, "He is not George Bush."

The poll results seem to indicate that Mr. Kerry's status as someone who is not President Bush is pivotal to his appeal among those who support him.

Of those surveyed, 98% said they believed that John Kerry was not George Bush, with a scant 2% answering "Don't know."

Asked to name the issue that concerned them most, 9% of Kerry voters named "improving the economy," 12% named "fighting terrorism," and a whopping 79% named "electing someone who is not George Bush."

"With weeks to go until our convention, it's significant that so many voters already believe that John Kerry is not George Bush," said Kerry strategist Bob Shrum. "Once

our ad buys get underway, we expect the number of people believing John Kerry is not George Bush will only increase."

Perhaps in response to the poll results, the Bush campaign today responded with a series of ads intended to plant seeds of doubt in the voters' minds about whether or not John Kerry is, in fact, not George Bush.

Emphasizing that both men went to Yale and were members of the secret society Skull and Bones, the new ads end with an announcer saying, "John Kerry: maybe he is George Bush."

Libby McCleod, a Kerry supporter in the battleground state of Ohio, said she was "troubled" by the ad and was now considering voting for Ralph Nader: "He's still not Bush, right?"

Rumsfeld Shows Torture Can Be Fun

Denying he ordered any painful torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, Donald Rumsfeld sticks his fingers in his eyes during a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Istanbul, Turkey June 27 to prove to reporters that it can be fun.

Shortly after this photo was taken a Rumsfeld aide, seen here behind his left shoulder, stripped the Defense Sectary, attached a dog leash to his neck, and paraded him naked through the reception hall. "He's always liked it," the unidentified neo-con aide said. "He thought he was giving the prisoners a special treat, not torturing them. You ought to see what he can do with studded cock-rings." (AP Photo/Virginia Mayo)

CLASS WAR NEWS

French Workers Show How To Whip The A Government Down

Wall St. Journal 6.16.04

PARIS—After a severe setback in last weekends European elections, the French government is trying to rescue its unpopular program aimed at rolling back the country's sprawling public sector, **by offering concessions to angry employees at the nation's state- owned gas and electricity companies.**

Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy told Parliament yesterday that the government would push ahead with plans to convert energy utilities Electricité de France SA and Gaz de France SA from state agencies to ordinary companies. **But he backpedaled on plans to privatize the two by selling minority stakes to financial investors, promising that nothing would happen before mid-2005.**

Angry electricity workers, afraid privatization would erode the job security their civil-servant status ensures, have been ratcheting up their campaign in recent days to get the government to back off all change. They have been marching in the streets and cutting off electricity supplies to towns.

President Jacques Chirac's government took a beating in Sunday's elections to the European Parliament, underlining the unpopularity of its attempts at making long-delayed cuts in France's pension and health-care benefits.

The latest concessions call that resolve into question.

A similar move in 1995 to change the retirement benefits of railway workers sparked massive protests and strikes, crippling the country and eventually bringing down the conservative government.

In recent days, the government has tried to buy peace with a long list of concessions to workers, including the guarantee of staff benefits, extra pay, new hiring and a progressive rolling back of plans to sell shares in the company.

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