

## GI SPECIAL 2#13



*Steve Liewer / S&S*

# “They Need To Come Home”

## Families Stunned, Angered By Deployment Extension Past One Year

By [Steve Liewer](#), Stars and Stripes European edition, January 17, 2004

GIEBELSTADT, Germany — Tuesday night’s e-mail spread the dreaded news quickly across the home front in Giebelstadt: one year from the date their husbands deployed to Iraq, the men of the 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment still will not be home.

“This is the worst news,” said Jessica Corey, 29, whose husband flies Black Hawk helicopters for the unit. **“Besides being absolutely stunned, we’re completely heartbroken, too.”**

**The Pentagon announced this week that 1,500 soldiers, National Guardsmen and reservists would be forced to stay in Iraq beyond their one-year rotation dates.**

“Everyone’s having a hard time with this last bit of news,” said Jennifer Groncki, 28, wife of a 3rd Battalion pilot. **“People are very upset. They feel like the end was in sight. Now it’s been taken away.”**

The Pentagon’s efforts to limit the impact to a few units comes as little consolation to people like Valerie Belgrave, 30, **who has spent only two months with her husband — Chief Warrant Officer 2 Benito Belgrave, also a 3rd Battalion Black Hawk pilot — in the past three years**, through his 18 months of flight school and now one-year-plus in Iraq.

**To their 2-year-old son, Nathaniel, Daddy is a stranger.**

“[The boy] doesn’t know my husband,” Valerie Belgrave said. “He’s like a visitor.”

Carla Aikens, 34, and her 4-year-old daughter, Taylan, had been marking off the days on a calendar until March 20, when Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kevin Aikens finally would come home. Now, she doesn’t know what to do.

“In the summer, we finally had a date,” Aikens said. “This is very hard for [Taylan] to accept.”

**Rumors of the extension had flown around Giebelstadt the past several weeks, several wives said, but they followed the advice of both their Family Readiness Group leaders and their husbands to disregard them. As recently as last week, the battalion commander had e-mailed spouses assuring them that the March 20 return date still looked solid.**

That’s what made this week’s news all the more stunning. The e-mail didn’t explain why the troops would have to stay longer nor how long, though Pentagon officials have since said the units will stay between five and 60 extra days to bridge gaps caused by the enormous transfer of troops in and out of Iraq this spring.

“We deserve to be told the truth,” Corey said. “We’re big girls. We can handle it.”

“Suck it up and drive on — if you’re an Army spouse, that’s what you’ve got to do,” said Mena Sawyer, 30, also a 3rd Battalion pilot’s wife. But, **she added, “We were promised, more than once, that it would definitely not be more than 365 days. [The Army] always promises things, and they don’t follow through.”**

Many wives can quote from memory U.S. Army Europe Commander Gen. B.B. Bell’s pledge in one command message last August: “Soldiers and their families can count on no more than a 1-year deployment to [Iraq] for the current rotations.”

**“At least my husband is safe — relatively — and, eventually, he will come home,” Corey said. “But I want to know that it won’t happen again.**

“The guys are just physically and mentally exhausted. That’s not the way you treat your best assets.

**“They need to come home.”**

Carla Aikens and her daughter, Taylan, 4, have been marking off days on the calendar until Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kevin Aikens, 31, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot with the 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment comes home from Iraq March 20. Taylan got very excited, Carla said, when the number of days dropped below 100. This week, though, family members learned the unit will have to stay in Iraq past the one-year mark. "When I found out the other day, I was crushed," Carla Aikens said. "They told us no more than one year."

**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 RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

### **Blast Plunges Kirkuk Into Darkness**

17 January 2004 Aljazeera.Net

**The northern Iraqi oil city of Kirkuk has largely plunged into darkness after its high voltage power line was blown up.**

"A bomb destroyed a high tension pylon on the grid which connects Baiji and Kirkuk and because of this attack, 80% of the city is without electricity," the head of the city's power department Yalcine Muhammad said.



Friday's blast served yet another reminder as to how insecure the occupied country remains.

It was the eighteenth attack on the city's power supply infrastructure since US President George Bush declared major combat in Iraq over on 1 May.

In the town of Taza, 25 km away to the south, police shot dead an assailant who had attacked officers manning a checkpoint, Kirkuk police chief General Turhan Yusef said. "Jamal Hamed Abbad was wounded in the chest and legs and taken to hospital in a critical condition," he said.

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## **Clerics Urge Shiites To Protest: Bush "Colonial Schemes" Denounced; "The People Should Wake Up"**

By Daniel Williams, Washington Post Foreign Service, January 17, 2004

KARBALA, Iraq, Jan. 16 -- Preachers in Shiite Muslim mosques appealed to their followers Friday to prepare for demonstrations, strikes **and possible confrontations with occupation troops** to back up demands for elections in advance of a transfer of authority from a U.S.-led administration to Iraqis.

The calls increased pressure on the Bush administration and its handpicked Iraqi Governing Council to satisfy demands by Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the country's most influential cleric, for elections.

"We should think seriously about the future and for the coming generation, and fashion it to keep our dignity," said Abdel-Madhi Salami, the chief cleric in Karbala, one of two Shiite holy cities in Iraq. **"This will happen through serious participation in a peaceful protest, strikes and, as a last resort, possible confrontation with the occupying forces, because they plan to draw up colonial schemes."**

**The relative calm that has prevailed among Iraq's Shiite majority since the overthrow of President Saddam Hussein last spring now hangs in the balance.**

When Sistani first called for a U.N. visit, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan sent a letter to the Governing Council saying elections could not be arranged properly before July 1.

**"It was not correct for Kofi Annan to sit in New York and say it," Salami said. "We feel this was all a maneuver. If the commission came, investigated and said there is no way, then an alternative would have to be found."**

**He was evasive about whether Sistani would accept a U.N. judgment. "There is a lack of trust," he said.**

**Salami spoke dismissively of Bremer, with whom Sistani has refused to meet. "It's a feeling we will not get anything from Bremer. My evaluation is, there is no profit in a meeting with him," he said.**

Shiites in Karbala seemed to agree with his words. "There have been too many promises not kept," said **Hameed Abu Sajjad, a hotel owner in Karbala.** **"The United States has lots of experience in organizing elections. Let them organize one for us."**

"I do not think our religious leaders want to cause problems. **We just want our rights, which is the reason the Americans said they came here,"** said **Amir Abbas, a retired laborer** who was rummaging through a pile of sandals and shoes worshipers had shed before prayers, according to Islamic custom.

**Salami explained that Shiite leaders see the current situation through the prism of an Arab uprising in 1920 against British colonial rule.** Then, Shiite clerics supported the revolt and later rejected a peace solution that involved installation by the British of an Arab monarch in Iraq. Effectively, the Shiites ceded control of Iraq to the minority Sunni population.

This time, the clerics want to ensure they have a deciding say in the creation of an Iraqi government, Salami said. **"The people should benefit from the experience of the 1920 revolution. At that time, they lost their rights,"** he told worshipers at Imam Hussein mosque. **"This time, the *marja* of Najaf is taking care about the transfer of authority from the occupiers. The people should wake up."**



**NOT TO BE FUCKED WITH**

Shiia unemployed in Samawa line up at job placement office: problem: no jobs. (Reuters: Kimimasa Mayama 1.17.03)

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# Fiery Shiia Preachers Threaten "Massive" Protests

BBC Monitoring Middle East. London: Jan 16, 2004, Text of video report by Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV

**Iraqi mosque preachers have threatened to stage massive popular clashes with the occupation troops in the next few months unless powers are transferred to the Iraqis on the set dates.**

[Al-Jazeera Correspondent Mohamed Bab Ould-Ishfag - recording] **As expected, discussion of the elections dominated the political part of the Friday sermons all over Iraq.** The majority of preachers denounced the attempt to postpone the elections for procedural reasons and to prolong the occupation.

[Ould-Ishfag] **The Sunni and Shi'i preachers alike threatened to stage sweeping popular protests that may lead to clashes with the occupation troops in the next few months if powers are not transferred to Iraqis.**

[Ahmad Abd-al-Ghafur al-Samarra'i, preacher and prayers leader of the Sunni Umm al-Qura Mosque] **We want these elections to end the occupation.** We want these elections to include all Iraqis. We want them to be fair elections.

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## Tribes Back Shi'ia Leader's Election Demand

BBC Monitoring Middle East. London: Jan 16, 2004.

From text of statement dated 9 January issued by the First Islamic Conference of the Tribes of Iraq, published by Iraqi Islamic Da'wah Party newspaper Al-Da'wah on 14 January

The conferees stressed the following:

- 1. To stand behind the religious authority in its insistence on the elections as the only mechanism that expresses the will of the Iraqi people in electing their representatives to run their affairs of state and to draft their constitution that is in harmony with their values and principles and that enjoys full sovereignty.**

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## Basra Oil Workers Join Electricity Workers In Threat To 'Shut Down Iraq'

By Ewa Jasiewicz, <http://www.occupationwatch.org/>

Samir Hanoon, Vice President of the Basra Federation of Trade Unions explained: Negotiations with the GC and CPA are ongoing. “

“We don't want to be in any hurry to take actions until the last result. In general, for the lives of people living in Basra, electricity is more important than food and water. After our discussions with unions in the oil section, we know we are capable of a total shut-down. **Our problem is not with the General Directors and managers - it's with Bremer and the occupation.** But for us to go on total strike we must study the process well. The effect will be on Iraqi families.”

“We also know that ex-regime people are still active and we know they'll use the strike to serve their own ends. They may sabotage it and the benefit will be to the Occupation Forces. We have to be careful in studying what will affect the existence of the occupation forces, not the things that will affect or harm the Iraqi people.” **With the GC having already had a month to study the Southern Oil Company's home-made wage table plus the weakening Dollar, it looks like further pressure tactics from workers could be on the cards.**

**Approximately one month ago, Oil workers throughout Iraq's Oil jugular vein governorate of Basra announced the formation of their own wage table - challenging the CPA's Order 30 which set a 130 position, 10 step and 13 level wage table.** The table sets the minimum wage for an Iraqi public sector worker at 69,000 ID - at the time of negotiations amounting to \$40 - and less than half the monthly recommended wage for a sweatshop worker in a free trade zone in neighbouring Iran or Jordan, or a meal for six at Basra's corporate chow down HQ, the Cassa Sultan.

Either way, workers have refused the table, calling it unfair and exploitative. When SOC workers crafted their own wage table which set the minimum salary at approximately 155,000 ID per month - cutting out at least three pittance-wage levels, the wage table was also backed up with the threat of an all-out strike if not accepted and worked upon jointly.

**That strike threat was re-enforced with a threat of workers joining the armed resistance if Occupation troops were called in to take over the pumps.** SOC's wage table – accepted by the company's management, administration and General Director – and **it's 'take it or fight us' conditions prompted the Minister of Oil Himself to come down and engage with the Union. A return to the emergency CPA salary table - meaning \$60, \$120, \$180, \$220 monthly for most workers - was agreed until a new table could be forged.**

**Since then, two things have happened. The first: Electricity sector unions at Najibeeya, Haartha and Az Zubeir locations who supported the oil sector workers demands tacitly last month, took a wildcat strike last week, stormed their workplace administration buildings, declared the CPA wage table dismissed and vowed to go on 'total shut-down' if wages were not raised as soon as possible.** A delegation met with the Minister of Energy to discuss the adoption of a new table and a return to the old emergency wage scale was agreed as an interim solution.

The second: The value of the US Dollar against the Iraqi Dinar has been yo-yo-ing, plunging from 2100 ID in August to 1114 last week and 1650 to 1113 to 1250 and now

1420 in the past five days. Much has been written in the Iraqi press about this. Commentators compare the fall with the rumour driven orchestrated devaluations of the Baath manipulating the Central Bank of Iraq during the 90s.

**Any pay rises in dollars will also be meaningless.** Private Sector workers, who are the most likely to be paid in dollars look set to be hit hard. Such as the 14,000 security guards employed to guard oil installations and new foreign corporate bounty hunters' offices in Basra by South African Security company Erinys. Either way you look at it, it's a crafty shakedown on the part of the Occupation Administration.

Iraq, economically, has been leveled into a destroyed, depressed 'capitalists dream' state through Dictatorship debasement, three wars and 13 years of free market-priming sanctions. As a result, it has a stagnant, capital-weak economy and has to import almost everything. These imports are of course in dollars. Everything from oil to jeans is traded on the world market in dollars. This means that imports into Iraq are more expensive, and so prices of goods in shops go up as shopkeepers are forced to raise prices to make up on the extra they have to pay to get goods in, plus the fact that less people will be buying.

It also means that new Iraqi businesses will have a harder time starting up and trading, with overheads - rents for buildings, telecommunications, equipment - rising, as well as the cost of importing goods and services, hampering their chances of winning a lane in the Great Reconstruction Contract Race.

**Most Iraqi companies which do have enough capital to compete with the big boys and deal with players such as KBR and Bechtel, are notorious for their Neo-Baathist tactics of delayed and shoddy goods provision, looting and trashing of freshly built facilities such as schools and generally fulfilling already racism-fuelled ideas about Iraqi incompetence and Ali Babaa'ism.**

Why do they do it? To profit from and further the chaos of the occupation as it grapples for control - economic and social. The forgotten truth of the intensifying economic 'Great Game' - the pathological bomb and build industry which levels national landscapes - physically, economically and socially - is that working people do all the reconstruction work, they know what to do, know their workplaces and know the super-exploitation they are struggling under. The glossy brochure schmoozed exhibitions and trade fairs for international companies held in Kuwait and Jordan are the bomb and build industry congratulating itself, inflating itself and re-producing itself. Down on the ground, nothing but the skyline changes.

Iraqi workers do need new equipment, new chances and new skills, and Iraqi business do need to break out of the dictatorial bribes and intimidation cycle, but what Iraq and Iraqi people need right now is the means and no-strings-attached support to do it all themselves. 70% unemployment, and it's the land of engineers. I've never met so many engineers and well-educated people in my life. And Where are they? Selling peanuts on Kharrada Dakhil or doing the housework. Iraq needs serious social reconstruction, a civil society, as well as a rise in wages, living standards and hopes for the future.

Renewal, the mythologized meaning of 'Baath' which kept millions hypnotized into dictatorship acceptance, needs to be rooted in mutual aid, empowerment, confidence building and skills sharing, and ironically persistently cultivated free-association and co-



operation, and just Giving - all the realities of social life existent in working class and struggling communities all over the world, and all the words that get scoffed at by the corporate chiefs I speak to who roll their eyes and declare to me, with the best of intentions but totally skewed convictions - 'I will rebuild this country'.

The corporate chief uttering this particular company pep-talk will remain un-named but his declarations of 'putting Iraqis back to work' (One of his companies - a labor recruitment company - is in Capitalist accuracy slang referred to as 'a body shop'. He speaks determinedly about 'Getting the lights back on' and re-iterates and re-iterates 'I have a country to rebuild', missing the glaringly obvious point. He's not doing it. His two hands aren't doing it.

He may be administering it, supervising it, controlling it, profiting from it, and taking credit for it but its all done by Iraqi hands - just as the innovative SOC Workers proved when they kicked out KBR, took the materials they offered combined with spare parts from the local market and part rebuilt their own industry. From complete crude oil pumping stations, water pumps and pipelines, to combustion burners - all were autonomously reconstructed by SOC workers themselves following the Fall of the regime. Major business owners, bosses, never 'give work' they take it, order it around, profit from it, and maintain their place in the economic pecking-order by reproducing their own self-topped hierarchies.

I get a deadpan gaze when I talk about nurturing and skills-exchange and wage justice as being the real tools of reconstruction in this country. Because that's not what reconstruction or 'helping Iraq people' really means.

Ordinary people are struggling now even more than before - 70% unemployment and with almost everything of any value - gold wedding jewelry, clothes, car parts, TVs - sold during the sanctions grind, ordinary Iraqi people are still struggling to make ends meet. The current dollar-play escalates the pressure on these people and expresses a strategy by the US-Iraqi GC acquiesced Occupation administration akin to the Soviet population control techniques of manipulating inflation and poverty levels to make sure people kept down, stayed down. Welcome to the next phase of socio-economic experimentation on Iraq.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# **The World's Most Blind, Stupid Imperialists;**

# **Bush Regime Was Warned Their Hope To Pay For Invasion From Oil A Delusion; U.S. Soldiers, Iraqis Dying For An Bottomless Money Pit**

by Guy Dinmore, 16, 2004 by the [Financial Times/UK](#)

**Nine months after the fall of Baghdad, as insurgents target oil installations and Iraqis queue for fuel, the Bush administration has abandoned its pre-war assertions that Iraq's natural resources would largely fund reconstruction.**

Before the war, US officials engaged in a delicate balancing act. They sought to counter the pervasive belief in the Middle East and Europe that the war was all about oil, while vaguely telling the US taxpayer not to worry about the cost.

**Behind the scenes, however, senior figures in the administration - including Donald Rumsfeld, defense secretary, Douglas Feith, in charge of Pentagon postwar planning, Vice-President Richard Cheney, as well as the CIA's George Tenet - were being advised by former officials, experts *and corporate bosses* that the badly dilapidated Iraqi oil industry in no way represented a financial lifeline.**

**"With all the information available, it seems that those in charge chose not to know,"** commented James Placke, a senior associate at Cambridge Energy Research Associates who took part in "Iraq: The Day After", a report produced by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a prestigious think-tank, shortly before the war. **"Like other aspects of Iraq, those making policy believed what they wanted to believe about oil, without reference to the facts,"** Mr Placke told the Financial Times.

Mr Placke did not personally brief administration officials, but James Schlesinger, former secretary of defense and energy, was one who did.

**"There was a great deal of optimism about likely expenditures. I don't know if they didn't want to face up to realities, or come clean with their gloomier forecasts,"** he told the FT, referring to the administration's own internal studies. He said his advice followed that of the CFR report: that after production costs, the oil industry would provide at most an annual \$10bn (€8bn, £5.5bn) to \$12bn (€9.5bn, £6.6bn), if captured intact with no further deterioration.

**An industry expert who briefed Mr Feith said big oil companies had delivered a clear message that the US could not expect them to plough money into Iraq until the occupying forces had resolved the issues of sovereignty and ownership rights.**

**Nonetheless US officials acted as if companies would be hammering at the door,** that it would be more of a question of keeping out the French and Russians, who had signed provisional oil deals with Saddam Hussein's regime.

**Analysts also pointed out that there had been no shortage of information on the state of the Iraqi oil industry.** Regular updates came from the United Nations, which implemented the oil-for-food program.

"Lamentable" was how Kofi Annan, UN secretary-general, described the Iraqi oil industry in December 1998, citing a study completed for the UN by Saybolt, a Dutch company. Production was then estimated at 2.5m barrels per day (bpd), with about 1.8m available for export. At today's prices that would be worth about \$20bn annually.

**Nonetheless, in the build-up to hostilities, Americans were given a different picture. "Iraq, unlike Afghanistan, is a rather wealthy country," Ari Fleischer, then White House spokesman, said on February 18 last year.** "Iraq has tremendous resources that belong to the Iraqi people . . . Iraq has to be able to shoulder much of the burden for their own reconstruction."

**Paul Wolfowitz, deputy defense secretary, was even more upbeat before a hearing of the House of Representatives appropriations committee on March 27.** "There's a lot of money to pay for this that doesn't have to be US taxpayer money, and it starts with the assets of the Iraqi people," he said. "On a rough recollection, the oil revenues of that country could bring between \$50bn and \$100bn over the course of the next two or three years."

**Mr Placke described the figures projected by Mr Wolfowitz as "total fabrication . . . a colossal misrepresentation".**

Another oil analyst, who asked not to be named, said his company's presentation to the Future of Iraq project, led by the State Department, warned that oil output would be stuck at around 2.5m bpd for two years. Under the most optimistic scenarios, through developing eight major fields with huge foreign investment, output could rise to 6m bpd by 2011. It warned that oil revenues would not be enough to run the government and cover reconstruction costs.

**The reports submitted to Future of Iraq did not assume large-scale damage through sabotage or looting, but focused on the decrepit state of the industry.**

"The same message was given to the CIA," he said. "At the time we were accused by the administration of being too negative . . . They thought they could get to 6m barrels much earlier. That was the basis of Wolfowitz's remarks."

He recalled a meeting with Mr Cheney, a driving force behind the war. "What shocks me most was that these guys don't want to deal with reality."

**On April 9, the day the statue of the Iraqi dictator came tumbling down in Baghdad, Mr Cheney delivered another upbeat assessment of Iraq's oil prospects.** Output could reach 2.5m to 3.0m barrels a day by end-2003, generating an annual income of \$20bn, he said. "That revenue will then flow to the Iraqi government and give

them a resource base to start to do those things they need to do," Mr Cheney told the American Society of Newspaper Editors in New Orleans.

Production has just recently climbed back to around 2.2m bpd, the average output rate in 2002. The president's Office of Management and Budget told Congress last week that oil revenues in 2003 were \$3.9bn and were projected to reach \$13bn this year, not enough even to cover the government's operating costs for 2004, which it forecast to reach \$15.6bn. **Export revenues are uncertain because sabotage has prevented significant amounts of oil from being exported through the northern pipeline to Turkey.**

**Iraq's oil ministry aims to increase the country's oil production to more than 2.8m b/d by the end of March, bringing exports to more than 2m b/d. Its ability to do this hinges on whether or not it can get the pipeline to Ceyhan working again. Keeping it out of trouble, and the northern transit route open, will be even more difficult and just as important. Like US officials, Iraqi oil authorities have been over-optimistic before.**

**MORE:**

## **Sabotage Cripples Oil Pipelines**

Jackie Spinner, Washington Post Staff Writer, January 17,

In the northern fields, where sabotage has been the worst, production levels are less than 500,000 barrels a day, trailing expectations .

"There's plenty of crude," Col. Lem DuBose, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' mission to repair the oil infrastructure, said in a recent interview here. **"Crude is not the issue. The issue is getting crude from the field to the refinery. Every time the pipeline gets interrupted by sabotage, the enemy knows it. The enemy wants to destroy our credibility. The crude pipelines have been targeted over and over again."**

The Daura refinery, just south of Baghdad was still operating at less than half its capacity last week because of attacks on the pipelines feeding into it.

### **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/>

# The World's Most Blind, Stupid Imperialists Con't; The Trap Closes

Paul Craig Roberts Saturday, Jan. 17, 2004 NewsMax.com

**Fear must be coursing through President Bush's veins as he realizes the Iraqi trap into which the neocons have placed him. Bush is caught between an Iraqi civil war and a wider insurgency.**

**Desperate to extricate himself from the weekly carnage well before the November election, Bush can neither deliver on his promise of democracy via direct elections nor impose his plan for an Iraqi assembly elected indirectly by caucuses.**

**If Bush delivers on his democracy promise, the Shi'ites with 60 percent of the population will be elected, and the country will break out in civil war. If he tries to water down Shi'ite representation with his plan for an assembly elected indirectly by caucuses, the so-far-peaceful Shi'ites are likely to join the violence.**

**If the Shi'ites become violent, the insurgency would be too large to be contained by our present occupying force.**

**If you think more U.S. troops are needed now in Iraq, imagine how many more would be required to deal with a wider conflagration.** Where would they come from? The U.S. military is already so thinly stretched that soon 40 percent of the occupying troops will be drawn from the National Guard and reservists, resulting in tremendous disruption in the affairs of tens of thousands of families.

A Shi'ite insurgency that brought back the draft would deprive Bush of re-election. A civil war with the prospect of a Kurdish state would bring in the Turks. On Jan. 14 Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan said that Turkey will intervene in the event of Iraq's disintegration.

**The Shi'ites and the Turks are forming an alliance as both have the same interest in maintaining the geographical integrity of the Iraqi state.** The U.S. could come dangerously close to military conflict with a NATO ally.

**All of this was perfectly clear well in advance of the ill-considered invasion. If Bush wasn't smart enough to see it, why didn't his national security adviser or his secretary of state see it?**

**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.

# **The Army's Best At Counterinsurgency, An Arrogant, Ignorant Racist Asshole; Says Enraged Iraqis Threatening To Mob His Troops Are Celebrating Saddam Arrest**

## **Part Two: Conclusion**

**(Note: Much garbage has been cut, such as assertions by the reporter the resistance is made up of foreign terrorists and Saddam Hussein remnants, how wonderful the invasion is for the Iraqis, etc. Despite the silly propaganda, the truth about a military and political disaster keeps leaking through.**

**In this section we read how the U.S. troops with Nagl, the counterinsurgency expert, have to get through crowds of enraged Iraqis. *Then Nagl agrees with the army brass that these are really happy Iraqis celebrating the arrest of Saddam Hussein!* Thru the whole article, Nagl is presented as the best counterinsurgency commander the Army has.**

By Peter Maass, NY Times 1.11.04

A soldier in Nagl's battalion, Sgt. Jarrod Black, was in a convoy that was attacked by an improvised explosive device, or I.E.D., in Ramadi, a Sunni city 10 miles from Khaldiya.

Three days later, a memorial service for Black was held at an American base in Ramadi, and Nagl attended. Nagl had warned me that the final stretch of our trip to the base, about a mile's drive through the busy center of Ramadi, might be dangerous because American convoys often got stuck in traffic, where they turned into easy targets. But the drive there was uneventful.

After the service, Nagl returned to his Humvee – there were five vehicles in the convoy, including two, in the front and back, that had .50-caliber machine-gun turrets. The convoy left the base and headed back into Ramadi. The main street has four lanes divided by a large median; two lanes go east, two lanes west. The eastern lanes were blocked by a crane placing cement blast barriers in front of the municipal building. All eastbound vehicles were being diverted into one of the westbound lanes. After a few hundred yards, traffic snarled.

From the eastern end of the street, near a mosque that was about 500 yards away, a crowd was marching toward the convoy. At the same time, pops of gunfire were heard;

they quickly became a fusillade, like Chinese New Year with bullets, though the firing was vertical -- the gunmen were shooting into the air. In a sign that violence beckoned, shopkeepers began pulling down the shutters of their stores and women and children along the street began to run.

Because the convoy was stuck, bumper to bumper, Colonel Swisher, in the Humvee ahead of Nagl's, ordered his men to drive their vehicles over the median to the unfilled lanes on the other side and get out of town immediately. The median was high, about two feet. Nagl's driver, Specialist James Register, who goes by the nickname Reggie, backed up a few inches -- that was all the space he had -- and revved the engine, throwing it into first and jumping the median in a lurching heave that rocked Nagl back and forth in the cabin. The other Humvees did the same, but Colonel Swisher's got stuck on the median, its front wheels in the air.

The soldiers left their vehicles and set up a perimeter, keeping their eyes on the crowd and rooftops, their weapons pointed at the protesters, who by now had encircled the Americans. The Iraqis were gripped with anger, jeering and shouting slogans in favor of the recently captured Saddam Hussein. They thrust their fists toward the Americans, they waved the soles of their shoes -- a particularly low insult in the Arab world -- and some of them spat toward the G.I.'s. Gunfire was everywhere.

Nagl tried to get brigade headquarters on the radio but couldn't get through. He was talking with Colonel Swisher about alerting the base's Quick Reaction Force to rescue the trapped convoy. Although the convoy had two .50-caliber machine guns, whose carrot-size bullets can cut through several rows of massed people, there were fewer than 20 American soldiers on hand, and one of them was a chaplain. A gun battle would leave many dead on both sides; and the crowd, about a thousand strong, controlled the rooftops.

Nagl recognized that although the protesters were furious, most of them were not insurgents. In typical insurgencies, fighters make up just a small part of the population, which is why winning the loyalty of the population is just as important as killing insurgents. **The crowd's mood might have revealed that their hearts and minds, on that day at least, were beyond the grasp of the Americans.** But no one was shooting at Nagl's men -- at least not yet.

The moment was perilous. If the G.I.'s were fired on and returned fire, or if they fired first, the inevitable results -- dead civilians with American bullets in their bodies -- would be broadcast throughout Iraq and the Arab world, delivering a useful propaganda victory to the insurgents. The insurgency has so far favored the tactics of detonate-and-run, but any quick-thinking fighter in the crowd might realize that he could instigate a bloodbath by firing a round at the sitting ducks by their Humvees.

Nagl tried to ease the tension with a wisecrack. "Ever see 'Black Hawk Down'?" he asked me.

After five minutes that seemed much longer, the colonel's Humvee was freed from its marooned perch. The soldiers jumped into their vehicles and began moving out. All along the street, men jeered and threw rocks. Then heavy gunfire -- boom-boom-boom -- erupted. It was only later that Nagl learned the fire came from one of his Humvees; its

gunner saw someone with an AK-47 shooting -- or preparing to shoot -- at the convoy and responded with a burst of .50-caliber fire.

As the convoy raced toward home, young men along the highway jeered the passing Americans. As our Humvee reached the outskirts of Khaldiya, Nagl could see, not far from the bombed police station, a crowd on the road, waving flags and chanting slogans that included "Saddam is in our blood and soul." A smoke bomb, detonated by the protesters, covered the road with an orange haze.

Children in the crowd threw rocks and stepped into the road to stop or slow down the Humvees; the kids jumped out of the way when Reggie gunned the engine. In such situations, with projectiles striking Humvees and the soldiers inside them, the rules of engagement allow soldiers to fire, because it is hard to determine whether an object that is thrown at them is a rock or a grenade. Nagl was worried that Reggie, who was steering the Humvee with his left hand and aiming his M-16 out the window with his right, might put a bullet between the eyes of one of the rock-throwing youths.

"Don't shoot them!" he shouted. "Don't shoot kids!"

"No, sir, I'm on safe, I'm on safe," Reggie replied.

**That evening, back in his office, Nagl told me that military intelligence had informed him that the demonstration we encountered was in fact against Saddam Hussein and in favor of his capture. It seemed hard to believe that the crowd, in the Sunni heartland, was happy about Hussein's capture, especially given the chants I heard supporting Hussein. But when I said so to Nagl, he insisted the people were happy about Hussein; their anger, he said, revolved only around the fact of occupation.**

I later learned that similar anticapture protests had occurred in Tikrit and Samarra, also Sunni strongholds.

**And Nagl told me that there had been more bloodshed in Ramadi after our convoy escaped the city. In our wake, American reinforcements showed up at the municipal center, which was besieged by the crowd. According to a press release from the United States military, members of the crowd fired on the G.I.'s, wounding one of them. The soldiers shot back, killing two Iraqis and wounding one. Another American convoy was attacked by several dozen Iraqis; the Americans returned fire and killed one Iraqi, according to the press release.**

**The best explanation for the fact that insurgents in the crowd didn't open fire on Nagl's convoy was simple self-defense: they knew that although they could kill some of the trapped G.I.'s, they would be killed, too.**

**(Read the last two paragraphs over a couple times. Turning ourselves into complete fools, let's follow the "logic." Nagl's convoy wasn't attack because "they [the attackers] would be killed too." The next two U.S. formations that follow are attacked, because----?)**



John Paul Vann assumed there was a calibration of lethal power that would work in Vietnam or in any counterinsurgency effort -- the right amount of force, the right number of friendly waves. I began to wonder whether such perfection is attainable. **Nagl, sounding a bit more hard-line than before the events in Ramadi and the car bomb in Khaldiya, said he thought a balance was being struck.**

**"I'm not really all that concerned about their hearts right now," he said that evening.** "We're into the behavior-modification phase. I want their minds right now.

"Maybe we'll get their hearts later, as we spend \$100,000 on their schools and health clinics this week and another \$100,000 on their schools and health clinics next week and \$100,000 on their schools and health clinics the week after that. Over time I'll start winning some hearts. **Right now I just want them to stop shooting at us, stop planting I.E.D.'s. If they're not involved in these activities, they should start turning in the people who are. Whatever techniques that are legal and moral that I have to use to accomplish that, I will. Counterinsurgency is not always a pretty thing.**"

In what I had planned as my last day with Nagl's unit, I walked to the tactical operations center at 9:30 in the morning. As I neared Nagl's Humvee he opened the back door and said: "Get in. We took a hit."

As the convoy raced out the front gate Nagl explained that an attack on a checkpoint from a rocket-propelled grenade had just wounded and perhaps killed two of his soldiers. We soon arrived at the scene: an armored personnel carrier that had been parked next to an unfinished cinder-block hut was surrounded by blast debris and bloody bandages; the wounded soldiers had already been taken away for treatment. Soldiers immediately set up checkpoints on the road -- a tank, with the words "Assault & Battery" on the barrel of its gun, stood on the median -- and began questioning the residents of nearby houses.

**Nagl strode to the nearest house. In its courtyard, a man held a glass of tea in his hand. His family members -- several adult women and about a half dozen children -- had gathered a few feet away, next to a wall, with terror in their eyes.**

**"Did someone say they saw the guys?" Nagl asked a soldier who had sequestered the family.**

**"No one says they saw the guys," the soldier replied.**

**Nagl stared at the man with the glass of tea.**

**"This guy is coming with us now," he said, sharply.**

Nagl walked to a yard in front of the house and found footprints that he suspected belonged to the insurgent who had fired the grenade. The Army had never trained Nagl to be a crime-scene investigator, but that's one of the things he has become. He walked briskly across the street, back to the cinder-block hut. There was a small crater next to the damaged armored personnel carrier, the inside of which was stained with blood. Nagl began digging in the rubble and soon found fist-size chunks of shrapnel, too large for a rocket-propelled grenade.

"It was an I.E.D.," he shouted -- an improvised explosive device.

Nagl continued digging, unearthing the burned remains of a motorcycle battery. There are two types of detonation devices for I.E.D.'s in Iraq: either a wire is attached to a detonator held by the insurgent, who might be 50 to 100 yards away, or an electrical detonator, attached to a small battery, is triggered by a remote control, like a repurposed garage-door opener. Nagl had found the remnants of the electrical detonator.

A few feet from Nagl, in a corner of the cinder-block hut, his soldiers had flexicuffed a middle-aged, overweight man and pulled his kaffiyeh over his eyes. The Iraqi said he didn't know who set off the I.E.D. He was trembling and said he was sick and wanted to sit down. He was told to remain standing. On the street, soldiers were stopping cars and searching them; there was no friendliness in any soldier's demeanor this day.

Nagl had figured out what happened. The insurgents had buried the I.E.D. -- two artillery shells wired together -- and waited for a patrol to pull up to the hut. When that happened, an insurgent who was across the street, in the front yard of the house, pushed the remote control. Nagl knew that the Americans could have avoided the attack. They had provided an easy target because they had used the hut before as a resting spot for patrols and checkpoints. The insurgents, conducting "pattern analysis," had noticed this.

An order went out immediately to the battalion: do not stop at the same place for patrols or checkpoints. The only good news of the day was that this lesson had not been learned at a fatal cost. The wounded soldiers would survive.

The insurgency's weaknesses are, in a looking-glass fashion, also its strengths. A senior adviser to Gen. John Abizaid, the head of Central Command, advised me to read an article in the winter issue of *The Washington Quarterly* by Steven Metz, the director of research at the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute.

In his article, Metz wrote that disunity among the Iraqi insurgents is not as much of a disadvantage as it might seem: "Unifying the various strands of the Iraqi insurgency behind any one strategy or objective, at least in the short term, will certainly be difficult if not impossible. **Yet, this same complexity means that quashing the insurgency will be just as difficult or impossible.**"

In Iraq today, it would not be unreasonable to consider the American counterinsurgents - - though they are equipped with enough firepower to destroy every building in Iraq and enough technology to listen to any whispered conversation -- the underdogs.

Even if the insurgency is kept at a low boil, what will happen when an interim government takes control of Iraq in July? Will the government have enough legitimacy? Will the security forces be strong enough to keep order?

These are **risks that Nagl, at least, is willing to run.** When I asked, one morning, whether the war was worth its human and financial costs, he described the goal of the occupation as freedom for blighted Iraq. He concluded by enthusiastically using a four-letter word that soldiers utter more frequently than "the" or "and," followed by, "yeah, it's worth it."

Nagl is a gifted officer with the common sense not to confuse hopes with facts. He says he believes he is winning his war, and his grasp of the present, as well as of the past and the future, is as sharp as anyone's. Yet if predicting the future is a hopeless endeavor, learning from the past is not. The counterinsurgency books that Nagl studied do impart an important lesson.

**The goal the United States hopes to reach in Iraq -- a successful counterinsurgency that does not drag on for years and does not involve a large amount of killing -- has never been achieved by any army.**

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

## OCCUPATION REPORT

### **The Bremer Follies Roll On; Coalition Using 1918 British Report To Work On Tribal Leaders**

By David Osborne in New York and Glen Rangwala  
18 January 2004. The Independent UK

As the United States scrambles to end a dispute with Shia leaders over plans to elect an interim government in Iraq before July, **it has emerged that American commanders are seeking to reach out to tribal leaders by relying on a report devised in 1918 by Britain, the country's then ruler.**

Lieutenant-Colonel Alan King, head of the Tribal Affairs Bureau set up by the US-led coalition last month, admitted last week that he had been referring to the pages of the British report to fathom Iraq's network of tribal sheikhs - regardless of the fact that it dates back to the First World War.

**The revelation is not likely to improve confidence in the ability of the US to sort out the deepening muddle over how it means to relinquish political power to the Iraqi people by this summer.**

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

### **Bush Buddies Scoop Up More Iraq Billions**

January 17 yahoo.com

**The US military awarded two contracts Friday to restore Iraq's oil infrastructure to pre-war levels, the largest one worth up to 1.2 billion dollars going to Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root.**

The contracts were awarded by the US Army Corps of Engineers even as the Pentagon's inspector general was considering whether to launch an investigation into an earlier Iraq oil contract awarded to Kellogg, Brown and Root.

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## **Private Capitalists Meeting Horrified At Idea Of "Investing" In Iraq Until Bush Promises U.S. Taxpayers Will Cover All Their Losses: Bowing Down Before The Halliburton Man**

By Naomi Klein

It's 8.40am, and the Sheraton Hotel ballroom thunders with the sound of plastic explosives pounding against metal. No, this is not the Sheraton in Baghdad, it's the one in Arlington, Virginia. And it's not a real terrorist attack, it's a hypothetical one. The screen at the front of the room is playing an advertisement for "bomb-resistant waste receptacles" - this trash can is so strong, we're told, it can contain a C4 blast. And its manufacturer is convinced that, given half a chance, these babies would sell like hot cakes in Baghdad - at bus stations, army barracks and, yes, upscale hotels. Available in Hunter Green, Fortuneberry Purple and Windswept Copper.

This is ReBuilding Iraq 2, a gathering of 400 businesspeople itching to get a piece of the Iraqi reconstruction action. They're here to meet those doling out the cash, in particular the \$18.6bn in contracts to be awarded in the next two months to companies from "coalition partner" countries. The people to meet are from the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), its new programme management office, the Army Corps of Engineers, the US Agency for International Development, Halliburton, Bechtel and members of Iraq's interim governing council. All these players are on the conference programme, and delegates have been promised that they'll get a chance to corner them at regular "networking breaks".

There have been dozens of similar trade shows on the business opportunities created by Iraq's decimation, in hotels from London to Amman. **By all accounts, the early conferences throbbed with the sort of cash-drunk euphoria not seen since the heady days before the dotcoms crashed. But it soon becomes apparent that something is not right at ReBuilding Iraq 2.**

For the undercaffeinated crowd staring uneasily at exploding garbage cans, the mood is less gold rush than grim determination. **Giddy talk of "greenfield" market**

**opportunities has been supplanted by sober discussion of sudden-death insurance; excitement about easy government money has given way to controversy about foreign firms being shut out of the bidding process; exuberance about CPA chief Paul Bremer's ultraliberal investment laws has been tempered by fears that those laws could be overturned by a directly elected Iraqi government.**

**At ReBuilding Iraq 2, held last December, it seems finally to have dawned on the investment community that Iraq is not only an "exciting emerging market", it's also a country on the verge of civil war. As Iraqis protest about layoffs at state agencies and make increasingly vocal demands for general elections, it's becoming clear that the White House's prewar conviction that Iraqis would welcome the transformation of their country into a free-market dream state may have been just as off-target as its prediction that US soldiers would be greeted with flowers. I mention to one delegate that fear seems to be dampening the capitalist spirit. "The best time to invest is when there is still blood on the ground," he assures me.**

**"Will you be going to Iraq?" I ask.**

**"Me? No, I couldn't do that to my family."**

The speakers on a panel about managing risks have a very different message, however: feel afraid about rebuilding Iraq, very afraid. Unlike previous presenters, their concern is not the obvious physical risks, but the potential economic ones. These are the insurance brokers, the grim reapers of Iraq's gold rush.

**It turns out that there is a rather significant hitch in Bremer's bold plan to auction off Iraq while it is still under occupation: the insurance companies aren't going for it.**

**Many of the speakers admit that the economic risks of going into Iraq without coverage are huge: privatised firms could be renationalised, foreign ownership rules could be reinstated and contracts signed with the CPA could be torn up.**

Normally, multi-nationals protect themselves against this sort of thing by buying "political risk" insurance.

**Before he got the top job in Iraq, this was Bremer's business - selling political risk, expropriation and terrorism insurance at Marsh & McLennan Companies, the largest insurance brokerage firm in the world.**

<p><b>Yet, in Iraq, he has overseen the creation of a business climate so volatile that private insurers, including his old colleagues at Marsh &amp; McLennan, are simply unwilling to take the risk. Bremer's Iraq is, by all accounts, uninsurable.</b></p>
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**Just when the mood at ReBuilding Iraq 2 couldn't sink any lower, up to the podium strides Michael Lempres, vice-president of insurance at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (Opic). With a cool confidence absent from the shellshocked proceedings so far, he announces that investors can relax: Uncle Sam will protect them. A US government agency, Opic provides loans and**

**insurance to US companies investing abroad.** And while Lempres agrees with earlier speakers that the risks in Iraq are "extraordinary and unusual", **he also says that "Opic is different. We do not exist primarily to generate profit." Instead, Opic exists to "support US foreign policy".** And since turning Iraq into a free-trade zone is a top Bush policy goal, Opic will be there to help out.

**Earlier that same day, Bush signed legislation providing "the agency with enhancements to its political risk-insurance programme", according to an Opic press release.**

"We're ready," Lempres replies. "If there's an expro[priation] on January 3, we're ready. I don't know what we're going to do if someone sinks \$1bn into a pipeline and there's an expro." Lempres doesn't seem too concerned about these possible "expros", but it's a serious question. According to its official mandate, Opic works "on a self-sustaining basis at no net cost to taxpayers". But Lempres admits that the political risks in Iraq are "extraordinary". **If a new government expropriates and re-regulates across the board, Opic might have to compensate dozens of US firms for billions of dollars in lost investments and revenues, possibly tens of billions. What happens then?**

At the Microsoft-sponsored cocktail reception in the Galaxy Ballroom that evening, Dees urges us "to network on behalf of the people of Iraq". **I follow orders and ask Lempres what happens if "the people of Iraq" decide to seize back their economy from the US firms he has so generously insured. Who bails out Opic? "In theory," he says, "the US treasury stands behind us." That means the US taxpayer.**

**Yes, them again: the same people who have already paid Halliburton, Bechtel et al to make a killing on Iraq's reconstruction would have to pay them again, this time in compensation for their losses. While the vast profits being made in Iraq are strictly private, it turns out that the entire risk is being shouldered by the public.**

**The reconstruction of Iraq has emerged as a vast protectionist racket, a neo-con New Deal that transfers limitless public funds - in contracts, loans and insurance - to private firms, and even gets rid of the foreign competition to boot, under the guise of "national security".**

**Ironically, these firms are being handed this corporate welfare so they can take full advantage of CPA-imposed laws that systematically strip Iraqi industry of all its protections, from import tariffs to limits on foreign ownership.**

**Michael Fleisher, head of private-sector development for the CPA, recently explained to a group of Iraqi businesspeople why these protections had to be removed. "Protected businesses never, never become competitive," he said. Quick, somebody tell Opic and US deputy secretary of defence Paul Wolfowitz.**

The issue of US double standards comes up again at the conference when a CPA representative takes the podium. A legal adviser to Bremer, Carole Basri has a simple message: reconstruction is being sabotaged by Iraqi corruption. "My fear is that corruption will be the downfall," she says ominously, blaming the problem on "a 35-year gap in knowledge" in Iraq that has made Iraqis "not aware of current accounting standards and ideas on anti-corruption". Foreign investors, she adds, must engage in

"education, bring people up to world-class standards". It's hard to imagine what world-class standards she's referring to, or who, exactly, will be doing this educating. Halliburton, with its accounting scandals back home and its outrageous overbilling for gasoline in Iraq? The CPA, with its two officers under investigation for bribe-taking and nonexistent fiscal oversight?

For the Iraqi expats in the audience, Basri's is a tough lecture to sit through. **"To be honest," says Ed Kubba, a consultant and board member of the American Iraqi Chamber of Commerce, "I don't know where the line is between business and corruption." He points to US companies subcontracting huge taxpayer-funded reconstruction jobs for a fraction of what they are getting paid, then pocketing the difference. "If you take \$10m from the US government and sub the job out to Iraqi businesses for a quarter-million, is that business, or is that corruption?"**

**These were the sorts of uncomfortable questions faced by George Sigalos, director of government relations for Halliburton KBR. In the hierarchy of Iraqi reconstruction, Halliburton is king, and Sigalos sits on stage, heavy with jewelled ring and gold cufflinks, playing the part. But the serfs are getting restless, and the room quickly turns into a support group for jilted would-be subcontractors: "Mr Sigalos, what are we going to have to do to get some subcontracts?"**

"Mr Sigalos, when are you going to hire some Iraqis in management and leadership?"  
"I have a question for Mr Sigalos. I'd like to ask what you would suggest when the army says, 'Go to Halliburton', and there's no response from Halliburton?"

Sigalos patiently tells them all to register their firms on Halliburton's website. When they respond that they have already done so and haven't heard back, he invites them to "approach me afterward".

**The scene afterwards is part celebrity autograph session, part riot. Sigalos is swarmed by at least 50 men who elbow each other out of the way to shower the Halliburton VP with CD-roms, business plans and résumés. When Sigalos spots a badge from Volvo, he looks relieved. "Volvo! I know Volvo. Send me something about what you can achieve in the region." But the small, no-name players who have paid their \$985 entrance fees, here to hawk portable generators and electrical control panelling, are once again told to "register with our procurement office". There are fortunes being made in Iraq, but it seems they are out of reach for all but the chosen few.**

**The next session is starting and Sigalos has to run. The serfs wander off through the displays of shatterproof glass and bomb-resistant trash cans, caressing Sigalos's business card and looking worried**

@ Naomi Klein, 2004. A version of this article first appeared in the Nation.

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