

GI SPECIAL 2#14



NO FRIENDS; UNWANTED; TOTALLY HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.

US soldiers, 4th ID 1st Battalion, 22nd Regiment walk in Tikirt (AFP/File/Jewel Samad)

BRING THE ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE!

Victory For The Southern Oil Company Workers!

From: Ewa Jasiewicz <http://www.occupationwatch.org/> January 22, 2004 4:37 PM

I'm overjoyed to say that Southern Oil Company workers have won their fight for fairer wages, reconfiguring the occupation ordered wagetable dictated by Bremer in September and from this month onwards will, be paid higher wages.

The successful challenge to the CPA table affects not just SOC workers but every public sector worker in Iraq. Iraqi workers themselves and not US Government lackeys have set their own wages, the wages for Public sector workers in Iraq. It's hard to emphasize just how much of a victory this is for Iraqi workers and their families and the general struggle against the dictates of the occupation here and Capital the world over.

The lowest minimum wage for a Public sector worker in Iraq is now set to be 102,000 ID (instead of 69,000 ID) and the bottom two wage levels have been totally cancelled. Oil sector workers will be the first to receive the new SOC union wages with Electricity, gas, dock, and transportation workers expecting to follow within the next two months.

I only found this out today so I'll write a report containing full details of the new table and send it out ASAP

Victory!!!
Ewa

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Two American Soldiers Killed In Mortar Attack On Baquba Base

January 22, 2004, By Vijay Joshi, Associated Press



US soldiers stand guard near the crater in the ground after an explosion in Baquba. Three US soldiers were killed. (AFP/File/Karim Sahib)

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A barrage of mortar fire struck a U.S. military encampment in central Iraq, killing two American soldiers and critically wounding a third, the military said Thursday.

Maj. Josslyn Aberle, spokeswoman for the 4th Infantry Division, said insurgents fired mortars and rockets at a U.S. military encampment outside the town of Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, on Wednesday evening, killing the two soldiers and critically wounding another.

The three soldiers were standing outside the tactical operations center when the barrage hit, she said. The attack also damaged vehicles.

The wounded soldier was evacuated to 21st Combat Support Hospital. The soldier is in critical but stable condition.

U.S. forces launched a counterattack but there was no indication the insurgents sustained casualties, she said. American troops returned fire, damaging a house, witnesses said.

U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Explosive In Mosul

(AFX-Focus) 2004-01-21

MOSUL, Iraq (AFX) - Six Iraqi soldiers were killed and three US troops injured Wednesday when their patrol was struck by a large explosion on a road in the northern city of Mosul, police officer Fathi Ahmad Abdel Jabbar said.

The explosion occurred as three American vehicles were passing, but the force of the blast hit two civilian cars behind, said a witness.

Spanish Troops Security Chief Shot In The Head

By Adrian Croft, additional reporting by Marta Ruiz-Castillo

MADRID, Jan 22 (Reuters) - Gunmen shot a Spanish Civil Guard police commander in the forehead during an "anti-terrorist" operation in Iraq on Thursday, Spain's Defence Ministry said.

Gonzalo Perez Garcia, head of security for a Spanish military brigade in Iraq, was fired at from a car during an operation near Diwaniya, 180 km (112 miles) south of Baghdad, early on Thursday morning.

"The outlook is very grave," Defence Minister Federico Trillo told reporters, saying the bullet reached his brain.

An Iraqi police officer was also wounded, the Defence Ministry said in a statement, but gave no details.

Perez Garcia, 42, was flown by helicopter to a U.S. hospital in Baghdad where he was operated on by a team of neuro-surgeons.

Perez Garcia was hit during a joint operation with Iraqi police against "members of a terrorist group" in Hamsa, 40 kms (25 miles) south of Diwaniya, the Defence Ministry said.

Spanish forces had searched a house and left, leaving Perez Garcia and two Iraqi policemen to complete the search.

A car drew up but sped off when its driver saw the house was occupied. Perez Garcia and the Iraqi policemen gave chase. The occupants of the vehicle then opened fire on their pursuers.

Perez Garcia is one of two Spanish police officers who advise and provide security to the commander of the Spanish brigade.



UNWANTED. OUTNUMBERED.
AFP/File/Ahmad Al-Rubaye)
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!

British Soldier Killed In Road Accident In Al-Amarah

AL-AMARAH, Iraq (AFP) Jan. 22. 2004

A British soldier was killed in an automobile accident on Wednesday in the southern Iraqi city of al-Amarah, a coalition military spokesman told AFP.

Witnesses said the accident happened at 3:00 pm (1200 GMT) and left one other soldier injured.

Adad Sadun Hasuni, 25, said the two soldiers had been standing up in the back of their vehicle when it crossed the town's main bridge and they smacked into an iron bar.

Resistance Takes Out 7 Iraqi Police Near Baghdad; Iraqi & US Military Cops Also Attacked In Kirkuk

January 22, 2004 FALLUJA, Iraq (Reuters) & Associated Press

Guerrillas in a passing car fired AK-47 assault rifles and tossed a grenade at a police checkpoint near the Iraqi town of Falluja Thursday, killing two policemen and wounding five, police at the scene said.

They said a motorist driving a black Mercedes was also killed in the attack. Police initially said three of their colleagues were killed but later clarified the death toll, saying there had been confusion over the identities of the victims.

"We were standing at our checkpoint and saw some cars come by. From one of them, a grenade was thrown and Kalashnikovs were fired at us," policeman Maher Mohammad said at the site of the attack on a highway between Falluja and the town of Ramadi. A pool of blood lay on the side of the highway, along with a police patrol vehicle pockmarked by gunfire and the black Mercedes, its windows blown out.

Mohammad said the attackers wore checkered headdresses around their faces.

On Wednesday night, unidentified assailants attacked an Iraqi police patrol in the northern city of Kirkuk, triggering a gunfight in which one policeman and one attacker were wounded, police said.

Police later arrested six attackers, police Gen. Turhan Youssef said.

Also Wednesday, a rocket hit a building used by U.S. military police in Kirkuk but no there were no casualties, Youssef said.

Military Employees Ambushed, Four Dead

January 22, 2004, By Vijay Joshi, Associated Press

Gunmen ambushed a vehicle carrying Iraqi women who worked in the laundry at a U.S. military base, killing four and wounded six other people in a convoy headed for the U.S. military base at Habaniyah, 50 miles west of the capital.

The Iraqi women were attacked while riding in a minivan in Fallujah, a city 40 miles west of Baghdad that has been a stronghold of anti-coalition resistance. The minivan's driver, Khajiq Serkis, who also worked for the coalition, was wounded, said his brother, Shan Serkis.

Askhik Varojan, who worked in the laundry at the U.S. base, had boarded a minibus Wednesday determined to hand in her resignation rather than live in fear from the insurgents targeting those helping the coalition forces.

"She went yesterday to tell them that she wouldn't go to work any more and to claim her salary," Varojan's sister, Eida Varojan, sobbed. "I won't continue this work. I am afraid. They wanted to kill us all," said Vera Ibrahim, 39, who survived when the masked gunmen raked their vehicle with automatic fire.

The employees were targeted as part of a campaign to discourage Iraqis from cooperating with the occupation forces. On Sunday in Baghdad, a bomb exploded at a gate to coalition headquarters used by Iraqi workers, killing 31 people and wounding about 120 — most of them Iraqis.

The attacks in the Fallujah area followed a period of relative calm there since the arrest Jan. 11 of Khamis Sirhan al-Muhammad, a former Baath party official described as the key leader of the resistance in Anbar province. **(Wow! Ten whole days of "relative calm!")**

Missile Hits U.S. Hq Compound

January 20, 2004, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A missile landed in the sprawling U.S. compound in central Baghdad late Tuesday, causing little damage, a U.S. spokesman said. Officials were investigating a report that one person was wounded.

The projectile, believed to be a rocket, hit near the Al-Rasheed Hotel, said the spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The missile caused a loud explosion heard as far as 2 miles away at about 9.30 p.m., and immediately sirens were activated in the compound, known as "green zone."

TROOP NEWS

Odious Odierno Discovers New Enemy: “Those That Just Want Iraqis To Run Their Own Country;” Worlds’ Silliest General Says U.S. Has Brought Resistance “To Their Knees”



ODIOUS ODIERNO ATTEMPTING TO ENGAGE IN THOUGHT
(AFP/File/Mauricio Lima)

January 22, 2004, By Robert Burns, Associated Press

A senior American commander said U.S. forces have brought insurgents "to their knees" since Saddam's arrest Dec. 13 near Tikrit. Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of the 4th Infantry Division based in Tikrit, said Saddam's arrest "was a major operational and psychological defeat for the enemy."

Odierno, whose troops are preparing to leave Iraq in several weeks, said that although former Baath loyalists are no longer a major threat, the nature of the anti-American violence could shift, fueled by what he called a nationalistic motive to get U.S. troops to leave.

He defined the threat as being posed by "those that really just want Iraqis to run their own country," and "elements that are going to try to use Iraqi nationalism to say we need to get the Americans and the coalition forces out of Iraq, and they will continue to attack us."

Coalition officials hope such hostility will diminish after the United States and its allies transfer sovereignty to a new Iraqi leadership by July 1. Coalition officials will gradually shift security responsibility to the Iraqis.

Odierno's comments came as insurgents killed two U.S. troops and critically wounded a third in a barrage of mortar fire at an American military encampment in central Iraq. And, in separate incidents, gunmen killed several other Iraqis working for the U.S.-led coalition.

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/>

Helicopter Defense Breaks Down In Desert, Army Says

(Baltimore Sun, January 18, 2003)

Army helicopters in Iraq are experiencing crucial maintenance problems with a defense system designed to electronically jam incoming heat-seeking missiles, according to senior military officials. **The devices, which are carried on Army Black Hawk, Apache and Kiowa helicopters, routinely break down in the desert conditions and require extensive maintenance, the officials said.**

Pentagon Won't List Two Suicides By Wounded Soldiers As Iraq Combat Fatalities

By Mark Benjamin, United Press International, 1/20/2004

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20 (UPI) -- A soldier who served in Iraq apparently hung himself with a bedsheet last week at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, but the Pentagon did not count that death two days later when it announced "a very small increase" in the suicide rate from Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It also did not count an Operation Iraqi Freedom soldier who apparently committed suicide at the same military hospital last July. The Pentagon said it is not counting suicides among troops who killed themselves after they left Iraq.

A veterans' advocate questioned that decision.

"I want to know why stateside suicides are not counted in the total number of suicides reported by the Department of Defense," said Steve Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center and a former Army Ranger.

Robinson said he fears an epidemic of mental problems among troops who have served in the war. "There appears to be a significant increase in both suicides and post-traumatic stress disorder," Robinson said.

In interviews by United Press International at Fort Stewart, Fort Knox and Fort Benning, soldiers described mental problems among troops returning from war and little if any access to mental health help.

At Fort Benning, four soldiers from the same company in the Army's famed Third Infantry Division have been charged in connection with the fatal stabbing of a fifth soldier in July. Medical records reviewed by UPI show that at least one of the four charged in the death had attempted suicide in Kuwait before returning home, but was given less than an hour's counseling at Fort Benning before being released.

At least a half-dozen other soldiers from that company have spent time in the psychiatric ward at Fort Benning.

Army Chief Of Staff Babbles Blatant Bullshit

January 22, 2004 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

"War is a tremendous focus," Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, the Army's chief of staff said. As a large institution, the Army "tends to perfect what it knows," he said, rather than seek change. **"Now we have this focusing opportunity, and we have the fact that (terrorists) have actually attacked our homeland, which gives it some oomph."**

"You can't create armies and expect to be effective on the battlefield if their culture is only to practice," he said. "There's got to be a certain appetite for what the hell we exist for."

"I'm not warmongering," he said. "The fact is we're going to be called and really asked to do this stuff."

He likened the idea of expanding the Army to pouring water on sand. "It would go right through the sand and disappear," he told one group of officers.

Iraq Soldier 'Sickened' By Amputation Claim

Sun 18 Jan 2004 KIM MUNRO, Scotland On Sunday

A SCOTS soldier at the centre of a row over the quality of equipment supplied to British troops in Iraq last night demanded to know if his leg was amputated only because there was a lack of medical supplies.

Sergeant Albert Thomson said it "sickened" him to think this could be true and confirmed that his family have hired a lawyer to investigate the claims.

Thomson, from Whitburn in West Lothian, lost his leg after a fellow soldier in the Royal Highland Fusiliers accidentally fired a machine gun in March 2003. **But MPs are now investigating claims by a whistle-blower that army doctors would not have removed his leg if they had had the appropriate surgical equipment.**

The case comes only days after the widow of Sergeant Steven Roberts - a tank commander who was shot dead in Iraq days after being ordered to hand back body armour because of shortages - called for embattled Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon's resignation over inadequate army supplies.

Thomson, 35, said: **"I was just grateful to be alive after I lost my leg, but now I can't believe this. It sickens me to think this could be true. I'm in complete shock. For the past few months I have just been trying to get on with day-to-day living."**

His wife Michelle, 35, said "We're in shock and we are aggrieved. At least they could have come to us and said 'this is not true', and if it is true they should have come to us before.

"I don't believe what Geoff Hoon says because he said they had all the equipment and when they went out there they didn't. We know they said there was body armour, and that's untrue, and my husband didn't have desert combats or boots.

"Even if it was the case that they couldn't have saved his leg but the equipment still wasn't in place then, yes, we would call for [Hoon's] resignation."

Thomson, who has a two-year-old son Luke, was later flown back to the UK for treatment and now has a prosthetic limb.

The incident was highlighted by an unnamed senior army reserve officer who gave evidence in private before MPs on the Defence Committee last year.

He claimed that doctors treating Thomson were angry at not being able to save the leg because they lacked a vascular repair kit. The equipment allows medics to clamp and repair blood vessels without causing further damage.

Base Cleanups Will Take 300 Years; Rocket Fuel Ingredients, Explosives Biggest Contaminants

(St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 18, 2004, Pg. 5)

Removing unexploded munitions and hazardous waste found so far on 15 million acres of shuttered U.S. military ranges could take more than 300 years, according to congressional auditors. The General Accounting Office said the Defense Department has yet to assess three-fifths of the 2,307 potentially contaminated sites identified as of September 2002 and has finished cleaning up only 1 percent of them.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

100,000 March To Demand Free Elections; “Yes To Elections, No To Occupation”

Associated Press January 19, 2004 & Edward Wong, The New York Times, 19 January

Shia Muslims demonstrated in Baghdad today to demand prompt elections, the protest coming hours before US and Iraqi officials prepared to seek UN approval for their plans to transfer power in Iraq.

Today's demonstration, the largest protest since the occupation of Iraq began 10 months ago, saw a huge crowd of Shia Muslims, estimated by reporters at up to 100,000 strong, march about three miles to the University of al-Mustansariyah, where a representative of

their spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, delivered a speech directed at the parties to the meeting at the UN headquarters.

Ayatollah Sistani, the country's most influential Shia leader, has rejected a US formula to transfer power via a provisional legislature selected by 18 regional caucuses. He insists instead upon full-blown national elections.

"The sons of the Iraqi people demand a political system based on direct elections and a constitution that realises justice and equality for everyone," Ayatollah Sistani's representative, Hashem al-Awad, told the crowd. **"Anything other than that will prompt people to have their own say."**

The crowd responded by chanting: "Yes, yes to elections. No, no to occupation."

The march today started at 8 a.m. around Khulani Square, and did not taper off until midafternoon, with people walking a mile through central Baghdad

"All the people are with you, Ayatollah Sistani," the marchers chanted as they flowed beneath an overpass to the area around Mustansiriya University, where they began to disperse.

An announcer with a bullhorn urged the marchers onward. **"Say yes, yes to elections and no, no to appointing the people in any way other than elections," he said.**

"Enough with America!" people yelled from the street.

Muhammad Masser, a 35-year-old doctor standing next to Mr. Ali, said he came here partly because he knew a delegation from the Iraqi Governing Council was arriving at the United Nations today. **"All people have the right to choose their representatives. So why shouldn't the Iraqis do that, too?** The world has become so small, and everyone has elections other than us."

"What our religious leadership is doing today is at the heart of its mandate," cleric Faras al-Tatrasani, 36, said. **"We are demanding democracy. And that's what America came to give us."**

Many marchers linked hands, while others carried portraits of Ayatollah Sistani and other Shia leaders and **waved banners saying "real democracy means real elections".**

There was little US military presence on the ground, but two US military helicopters hovered low over the demonstrators and scores of armed Iraqi police stood by.

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

100,000 Pissed Off Shias Change British Officials' Hearts and Minds; Free Elections Are OK; Bush Gets Sharp Stick In The Eye From "Partner"

(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: Coalition of the willing shrinks to one: Bush)

By Nicolas Pelham in Basra, January 19 2004, Financial Times.com

British officials in Basra no longer oppose early elections in Iraq, saying security and procedural obstacles to polls could be surmounted before the transfer to civilian control on June 30.

"We have a working hypothesis that you could manage an electoral process within the timeframe and the security available," said Dominic D'Angelo, British spokesman for the UK-led southern zone of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Basra.

The *volte face* comes after demonstrators packed Basra's streets on Thursday in response to a call from Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Iraq's senior Shia cleric, to back his demand for an elected assembly. British officials estimated there were between 100,000 and 300,000 protesters.

Coalition officials fear Ayatollah Sistani could issue a *fatwa*, or religious edict, to his followers to suspend co-operation with the coalition authorities if polls do not go ahead.

The Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad has had an unofficial policy banning even local elections since the end of the war, according to US military officials interviewed at locations throughout Iraq. This is despite the assessment of the military that elections are feasible within very short periods of time.

At the end of May, for example, a US Marine unit in the city of Najaf had prepared to hold an election for a local assembly, which was cancelled by Mr Bremer days before it was to take place.

In a matter of a few weeks, US marines in Najaf had built ballot boxes, a US army civil affairs unit had arranged for voter registration and polling stations throughout the city, and candidates had campaigned.

A US army civil affairs officer interviewed at the time clearly felt that the election was feasible, but declined to comment on the CPA's decision.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Why Bush Is Terrified Of Iraq Elections

Jonathan Steele, January 19, 2004, The Guardian

The occupation of Iraq continues to get worse for George Bush and Tony Blair.

Above all, Washington's plans for handing power to an unelected group of Iraqis is being strongly challenged by Iraq's majority Shia community. **The occupiers who invaded Iraq in the name (partly) of bringing democracy are being accused of flouting democracy themselves.**

The primary problem for Bush is the chaos in Iraq. His plans for minimising Iraq as an election issue are in tatters. They relied on three things: the capture of Saddam; a reduction in the toll of US dead and maimed; and the start of a process of handing power to Iraqis.

The US came up with a plan which made no mention of any role for the UN and cobbled together an extraordinary process of "caucuses" to pick a government.

At least in Iowa, the Democratic party caucuses involve elections. Not in the US plan for Iraq. The US is proposing that "notables" in each province attend these caucuses to appoint an assembly which would select a government. Not surprisingly, the Shia leadership smells a rat. After generations of being excluded from power, first by the British occupiers in 1920, and then by successive Sunni governments up to the one led by Saddam, they are angry.

Their spiritual head, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, has repeatedly denounced the plan. He wants direct elections. **His legitimate fear is that the US wants to control the selection of a government because it thinks the wrong people will win, in particular the Shia. Washington is also worried that Sunni fundamentalists and even some Baathists might do well in the poll.**

The other new element in the US plan was that power would be transferred to the new government at the end of June.

Now the whole thing is in ruins. Ayatollah Sistani refuses to drop his opposition, and people were out on the street in Basra last week to support his line. Protests may spread to other Shia cities. The latest allegations of US and British torture of detainees will only inflame passions. **Worst of all for Washington, Sistani has made it clear that no government which is undemocratically appointed will have the right to ask American troops to stay.**

Washington's plan for a transfer of power is a facade. The real intent is to get Bush re-elected and continue the occupation by indirect means. The UN should have no part of 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.

Surging Shi'ites Put Bush In A Bind; U.S. Can't Satisfy Them Without Pissing Off Sunnis and Kurds.

By Alissa J. Rubin, January 18, 2004, Los Angeles Times

BAGHDAD — The Bush administration has been backed into a corner on its political plan for Iraq by unexpectedly strident opposition from Shiite Muslim clerics, who played their trump card last week, calling on their followers to stage mass demonstrations.

There is every indication that no matter what shape it takes, the proposal could be unacceptable to crucial political players.

"The administration is facing problems on all three fronts — with the Shiites, the Sunnis and the Kurds ... and the situation with the Shiites is looking more and more like a crisis," said Bathsheba Crocker, a fellow at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. **"The picture could get a whole lot uglier."**

The bind for the U.S. is that if it accedes to the Shiites' demand for direct elections — and thus more clout — it risks alienating Sunni Muslims and Kurds. If the United States sticks to the proposal now on the table, it will face potentially destabilizing Shiite street protests.

The key figure in the Shiite play for power is the Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who for months restrained the masses from taking a stand against occupation forces, perhaps **lulling the Americans into believing that the Shiites would be easy to work with.**

Through last spring and summer, when the coalition had trouble keeping the electricity on and the gas stations pumping, the reclusive cleric told his assistant clerics to preach patience.

Last week, however, tens of thousands of his followers poured into the streets to reinforce his call for direct elections, and a cleric close to Sistani threatened strikes and further disturbances.

"The CPA has to start learning lessons. We don't want them to learn lessons the hard way, but if they keep on being pigheaded, they will be hurt," said Mouwafak Rabii, a Shiite and a member of the Governing Council, who has been present during most of the council's discussions with Sistani.

"Once the real political process starts, people grab for power," Thomas Carothers, director of the Democracy Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said. "They aren't going to stop — they are just going to keep pushing to see how much they can get. They know the door is open to a renegotiation of the process."

The Democrats Façade

By Hawzheen O. Kareem and Noam Chomsky 01/02/04: (Zmag)

Noam Chomsky Interview:

Hawzheen O. Kareem: As an opponent to USA policies, which political wing you belong to?

Noam Chomsky: **If you mean Democrat or Republican, the answer is: Neither. It has often been pointed out by political scientists that the US is basically a one-party state -- the business party. with two factions, Democrats and Republicans. Most of the population seems to agree. A very high percentage, sometimes passing 80%, believe that the government serves "the few and the special interests," not "the people."**

In the contested 2000 election, about 75% regarded it as mostly a farce having nothing to do with them, a game played by rich contributors, party bosses, and the public relations industry, which trained candidates to say mostly meaningless things that might pick up some votes. This was BEFORE the actual election, with the accusations of fraud and selection of Bush with a minority of the popular vote.

More serious political scientists in the mainstream describe the US not as a "democracy" but as a "polyarchy": a system of elite decision and periodic public ratification. There is surely much truth to the conclusion of the leading American social philosopher of the 20th century, John Dewey, whose main work was on democracy, that until there is democratic control of the primary economic institutions, politics will be "the shadow cast on society by big business."

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Fools In Command: “Pro-American Information Campaign” Means Letting People Believe They Can Be Shot Anytime, Anywhere

(Miami Herald, January 20, 2004)

U.S. troops are using long-standing Iraqi rumor mills to spread their own pro-American information campaign. *In Kirkuk, soldiers are discouraged from correcting the local legend that a nightly alarm from the U.S. military base in the city means U.S. soldiers have their guns trained on all moving targets.*

Running On Empty

David Ignatius

(Washington Post, January 20, 2004, Pg. 19)

"Despite many improvements in Iraqi life, the American-led occupiers haven't yet found a way to put Iraq back together—politically, economically or socially. That's why the Bush administration's decision to seek assistance from the United Nations made sense. **The administration doesn't have a lot of good alternatives left.**"

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Connecting the Dots to Iraq; The Democrats Love The Empire

Published on Monday, January 5, 2004 by CommonDreams.org by Robert Freeman

Oil is the water of today. It is the most widely traded commodity in the world. It is the one commodity without which modern civilization cannot function.

Control of oil allows the U.S. to extract all of the surplus wealth created by its rivals, ensuring that they remain forever subservient. It also ensures that the U.S. has a universally desired, fungible, liquid commodity to collateralize its massive debts. Iraqi oil

is a magical two-fer: it solves the U.S.'s primary strategic and economic challenges in a single felled swoop. But its capture can only be justified by deceit and accomplished by plunder.

The problem for most of Bush's Democratic challengers is that they know the above situation to be true. That is why-Dean and Kucinich excepted- they went so sheepishly along with Bush's pathetically transparent casus belli in Iraq. They are left with petty quibbling about the adequacy of post-invasion planning. It is why they raised hardly a peep of protest over the ramming through of the Medicare package.

It is why they bleat only procedural protests about the incivility of discourse as the three-quarters-of-a-century legacy of the New Deal is being peremptorily dismantled.

(For more, see the article "The 'Lesser Evil' Is Still Evil," at www.socialistworker.org.)

WMD Die-Hard Still On The Loose

Cheney Says It's Too Soon To Tell On Iraqi Arms

(USA Today, January 19, 2004, Pg. 7)

Vice President Richard Cheney says he believes "the jury's still out" on whether Iraq had the chemical and biological weapons that were the Bush administration's justification for war.

Democratic Party Filibuster Kills Money For Veterans' Health Care

January 20, 2004, By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

Senate leaders fell far short Tuesday of bringing an end to last year's legislative business.

They mustered just 48 of the 60 votes needed to cut off a filibuster of the \$328 billion omnibus appropriations bill that covers funding for 11 federal agencies, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the current fiscal year.

The most likely outcome will be for lawmakers to simply throw up their hands and shelve the 2004 budget, passing what is known in legislative circles as a continuing resolution that would allow federal agencies without a separate funding bill to continue spending at last year's levels.

For veterans, failure to pass the omnibus bill threatens a hard-fought agreement for an increase in funding for health care programs. Under pressure from

veterans' groups, congressional leaders agreed to include \$1.57 billion more than Bush requested to fund VA health care programs.

Not only would operating under a continuing resolution prevent that increase from taking effect, but it also would negate the \$1.3 billion increase for VA health care initially proposed by the Bush administration.

The extra money was intended to help reduce the backlog of veterans awaiting treatment but was not directly tied to war-related injuries.

Bush Down In Poll; Support For War Resumes Drop

By Richard Morin and Dana Milbank, The Washington Post, 20 January 2004

Bush finds himself in a statistical dead heat with the opposition nine months before the election. When matched against a generic Democratic presidential candidate -- the party held its first nominating contest last night in Iowa -- Bush narrowly wins, 48 percent to 46 percent. On the question of who is trusted to handle the nation's major problems, Bush is roughly even with Democrats, ahead 45 percent to 44 percent -- down from an 18-point advantage Bush enjoyed nine months ago.

At the same time, the number of people who strongly disapprove of his presidency reached 30 percent. That's the highest level of strong disapproval ever recorded in his presidency, and a clear sign of the intensifying dislike for Bush among his political opponents.

On Iraq, Bush's ratings have retreated from the surge he experienced after the capture of Saddam Hussein. A majority of Americans -- 55 percent -- continue to approve of the job Bush is doing handling the situation in Iraq, down from 60 percent one month ago but still higher than at any time in the fall.

By 58 percent to 39 percent, they rate the economy and not terrorism as the bigger problem facing the country. And when asked who they would prefer handling the nation's economy, more Americans favored Democrats in Congress (50 percent) than preferred Bush (43 percent), the first time in more than two years that Bush has failed to best the Democrats on this key issue.

Even among Republicans, fewer than one in four -- 24 percent -- said they were enthusiastic about Bush's policies.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Raid By Resistance

19 January KABUL (Reuters)

Three U.S. soldiers have been wounded at the weekend in an unusually bold attack on a base in Afghanistan by guerrillas firing assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, the U.S. military says.

One attacker was killed in return fire from troops at the U.S. base at Deh Rawud in the central province of Uruzgan on Sunday, U.S. military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Hilferty told a news briefing on Monday.

Sunday's raid was rare because the attackers came close enough to fight with rifles and rocket grenades.

"This attack was relatively uncommon," Hilferty said, adding that the three wounded soldiers were in stable condition at Bagram, the U.S. military headquarters in Afghanistan.

Relatively mild winter weather has facilitated guerrilla attacks.

US Helicopter Hits Village Home, Killing 11

Associated Press, Kandahar, January 19

A US helicopter bombed a village home in southern Afghanistan killing 11 people, four of them children, Afghan officials said on Monday.

The attack occurred at around 4 am on Sunday, a day after US forces hunting for Taliban insurgents had searched Saghatho village, where the home is located, said Abdul Rahman, chief of Char Chino district in Uruzgan province.

"They were simple villagers, they were not Taliban. I don't know why the US bombed this home. We have informed our authorities," he said by telephone in the southern city of Kandahar.

Major Steven R Moon, a spokesman for the US military in Kabul, had no immediate comment.

The governor of Uruzgan, Jan Mohammed Khan, confirmed Rahman's account that four men, four children and three women were killed in a US bombing.

He said that US authorities had told him they spotted ammunition during their search of the village, which apparently raised suspicions. **During the search, "the people were afraid, they started running," Khan said.**

"The Americans bombed this home," he said.

Rahman said the 11 victims were buried at 9 am on Sunday in the village, where residents were "very afraid and very angry."

Resistance Ambush Hits Convoy; Kandahar Residents Protest Against US Troops; U.S. Base Attacked

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan, Hi Pakistan, January 18, 2004

An ambush on the convoy of a government official in troubled southern Afghanistan has left three suspected Taliban and three Afghan soldiers dead, officials said on Sunday. A further five Taliban were injured and carried away by other militants who numbered about 40, foreign affairs director in Kandahar province, Khalid Pashtun, told AFP.

The ambush on district chief Hayatullah lasted some 40 minutes and occurred in the mountainous area near Khakrez, some 55 kilometres north of Kandahar city, Pashtun said.

Two Afghan soldiers were killed and four wounded at the scene but one died on his way to hospital in Kandahar, a local official said.

Meanwhile, a group of Kandahar's residents on Sunday protested against search operations carried out in the city by US troops working to root out suspected Taliban and al-Qaeda operatives.

Separately, suspected Taliban have fired several rockets at a US military base in southeastern Afghanistan in the second attack on the base in three days, American and Afghan officials said on Sunday.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

U. S. Support For Israel Dropping

An article published by (Jewish TA) December 9th. 2003 said that there is a feeling of loss among some of the leaders of the Zionist organizations loyal to Israel, because the Israel "is losing the battle of influencing the hearts and brains of the Americans". An intensive campaign was started eighteen month ago to face the problem of the deterioration of the image of the Zionist entity among the majority of the American public.

Israeli leaders admitted that Israel, which succeeded in gaining the support of the American political elite, is presently facing a problem in its relations with the American public, thus the problem should be seriously handled.

The results of a poll conducted by "The Israeli Project" (Nov. 2003) showed that 62% of the Democrats and 47% of the Republicans want from the Administration to have a neutral policy towards the Middle East problem.

The poll also showed an ever increasing inclination among the American public for equalizing between Zionist and Palestinian acts of assault. In Nov. 2003 45% of the Americans see that Israel is acting in the same manner as Palestinian gunmen, compared to 39% in July 2003.



UNCONQUERED. UNCONQUERABLE.

Palestinian boys hurl stones at an Israeli Armored Personnel Carrier in the West Bank city of Nablus, Occupied Palestine. (AFP/Jaafar Ashtiyeh)

(To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafah.vze.com. The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.)

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