

GI SPECIAL 2#16



A Marine Vet's View Of The "Opposition Party;" "Which Pile Of Shit Is The Better Plate To Swallow?"

By Sean Bell, Anti-Sheep.com, Jan. 22, 2004

I grew up wanting to be a Marine to serve my country. I became that Marine swearing an oath to my country and to my Marine Corps and above all to the Constitution of the United States.

Years after the Gulf War, during which time I served as an infantry Marine in an anti terrorism unit often on heightened alert and always facing the possibility of war around the corner, I learned about betrayal and disregard for all the things I swore an oath to

protect. **The betrayal was the fact that my brothers in uniform had been exposed to something terrible, not by enemy hands, but by our own countries arrogant use of a toxic by-product on their weapons of war.**

As they continued to fall sick and die, long after the war had ended, no party arose to stand up for these troops and through several administrations. They simply died off, told that their illnesses had nothing to do with that war. No news outcries, no public demands or concern, no real care for those who served. Those aware of this deception know better. Those attempting to expose this abomination of twisted policy found themselves speaking to blank and un-reacting faces.

Like the veterans before who had been used and exploited once their purpose of killing was done, these Gulf war vets had no voice loud enough for the politicians of either party to hear. And, as a new decade passed by, I watched the facade of a representative political system filled with its own piousness spout rhetorical speeches, grandstanding for the theatre of corporate owned news and corporate sponsors who flipped the bill to get them elected in the first place.

The bite and sting of betrayal bleeds like a gaping wound, never fully healing. A thought never leaves the mind - I would have pulled my trigger to my weapon willingly for my country because they told me to go to war. But who controlled the strings and who made the decisions and for what real cause? **The shock of realization that, maybe, the troops have been used not to fight for some altruistic reasons, but instead they were used for a power grab by narrow-minded traitor business men who hold office and use it as a means of job security and as a profit producing generator.** A Marine wonders, "Did I participate in a deception that caused the deaths of innocent people for a lie?"

Why did we tell the Iraqi people in 1991 to rise up against their leader, but then allow the republican guard to fly through our containment lines to suppress (slaughter and maim and kill with brutal precision) the rebellion? Why do so many politicians have conflicting business dealings with companies that benefit from the wars we wage? **Secret closed sessions by oil men who continually benefit from the wielding of their political influence stirs little emotion from the so-called opposition party.**

Offshore bank accounts siphon more money from our collective treasury, while the same mega-corporations continue to pay off politicians for the privilege of raping the American working class family. More and more otherwise productive citizens have been tossed behind bars for exercising their private right to personal happiness for smoking a plant, yet neither party has done so much as read the governments own report conducting during the Nixon era that the private use of this plant is absolutely harmless.

We have ignored our Constitution that guarantees the right to privacy and happiness within ones own home, attempting to outlaw things a government has no right to interfere with. Somehow it is not against our laws to allow corporations to suck the welfare trough dry as they use sweatshop labour and exploited poor people to create their products (slapping the American spin into their commercials promoting their products).

Religion has crept its mad and two-faced head into the realm of political decision making. How corrupt and deep in the shit must one be, before demanding a real change to what has become painfully obvious as a seriously flawed and corrupt system?

After 911, no shock to those who followed foreign policy, this Marine watched a sheeply Congress tuck tail and blatantly attack the Constitution with minimal oversight or questions for their "president". The image was marketed that we were united, but everything was disgraced by the gutless elitists who could not afford to look soft on terrorism because, ultimately, it is their own skin they protect and not the document for which better men have fought to protect.

Those representatives who stood ground and defied the call to shred our most sacred document, were branded as traitors and left to dry. **Unheard of executive secrecy regarding business dealings with the family of our enemy had no strong voice from the so-called opposition party.**

When an un-elected group known as the supreme court placed a man in office, insulting the very core of our ability to show that the people are the owners of our democracy, the leading opposition candidate tucked his tail and laid down like a lap dog. A leader inspires and leads by example; holds principles higher than personal gains; attempts to grow and expand and look out for his men and women under his watch. **Most of our leaders show no form or shape that even closely resembles the desires of most people I hear and know.**

Many today are getting into semantic arguments over which pile of shit and lies is the better plate to swallow.

Here we all are with no real fear of reprisal before us should we care to take the large leaps and risks of pushing forth a real change in this bleeding and dying democracy. No one with guns will intimidate us for demanding real changes, yet many around us are comfortable with small accomplishments rather than aggressive leaps that come from the best of principals, inspired by the greatest leaders of history. We here today do not need to make dramatic personal efforts, like some have done (risking more than reputations to defy corrupt power). We need only to shoot for high standards collectively, yet we somehow fall short for what some consider wise and obtainable achievements.

Life is too short and the lies are too big to sit around and demand so little when the only thing stopping us is us.

With so many disenfranchised people out there who feel the lies and weight of generations of corruption on their backs, those "grounded" intellectuals who nit pick the minor differences of one party over another offer no inspiration to those looking for a loud and untainted voice to say what everyone feels to be true - We want a real change and we want it now. We want peace and we want it now. The system is broken and falling apart before our eyes, and minor changes simply are not enough to fix it. The list goes on and is so long and filled with so many problems that it is stunning to hear mediocre voices calling for marginal changes as if that were the best path to follow simply because it seems winnable.

I feel the grand scheme of continual wars and the profiteers who hold allegiance to no flag or concept other than power and money. I hear of the accomplishments of those who proudly stand behind their parties, yet the suffering, the wars, the huge lies never stop.

The wars continue for the new patriotic reasons of the moment and the resistance seems comprised of intellectual masterbationists who couldn't inspire a movement out of a wet paper bag. The wars and lies that ignite them go on, while the politicians on all sides of the fence debate and discuss the issues within a confined parameter of options - making sure to never expose the corporate tit that they all suck on to maintain the privileged status, painting pictures of their "honorable" duty to country and seemingly clean of the blood on their hands when they send other peoples kids to kill and die for what is the continual lie under some guise of some flag or some god.

The bullshit is so high that those way down in it choke and fight or learn to distinguish bad shit from good shit and take their positions accordingly. Our elderly are un-honored, our poor are blasted with such a hatred that is rarely directed with the same intensity towards the wealthy whore businessmen that contribute nothing to help alleviate the problems that contribute to permanent poverty.

The system does not work (if by working you mean no more wars of profit and no more poverty and no more sick unseen due to lack of money). We all try to make life better somehow and more than most, we all work hard to affect change, but we are failing and the lies are never ending. I can't stand the terror at night and am not satisfied with small changes. If we're not using our energy to raise up the most resistance possible, then what is the point? **Have we realized that we are already beaten that we can't even intellectually agree to push the best resistance to our opponents?**

Show disapproval by putting a sticker on your car for all to see - it is the least you can do to reach lots of people. Do something and make it visible. Our efforts to work towards our collective goals are many things, but to me it is less than fulfilling if not totally and truly a **loud voice of opposition.**

Comment:

No election will stop any bleeding.

Movements on the ground do that.

No election stopped the Vietnam War.

Movements on the ground and in the army did that.

Nixon was president.

The Democratic Party is the graveyard of movements.

Every hour spent working for their Imperial candidate, whichever Imperial candidate you pick, merely prolongs the killing of U.S. soldiers and Iraqis, because it is one more hour wasted doing what doesn't work, and not doing what does work.

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IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Attack On Khaldiya Base Kills Three U.S. Soldiers

By Dean Yates, 1/24/2004, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

A car bomb exploded at the entrance to an American military base in Iraq on Saturday, killing three U.S. soldiers.

Witnesses said they saw a car ram a checkpoint outside the base in Khaldiya, 110 km (68 miles) west of Baghdad, and explode as a number of soldiers were getting out of a vehicle.

In the Khaldiya attack, a four-wheel-drive vehicle drove up to the checkpoint at a bridge and blew up in front of a Humvee that tried to block it, said a witness, who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said there were about 20 soldiers in the vicinity at the time.

A U.S. Army spokesman said six soldiers were wounded.

Three taskforce All-American soldiers were killed and six were wounded when a vehicle-born explosive device detonated at an installation in Khaldiya," the spokesman said, adding that several Iraqis were also wounded.

Earlier on Saturday a bomb exploded in Samarra, killing four Iraqis and wounding 40 people, including seven U.S. soldiers who were slightly hurt.

The Samarra blast, outside the courthouse and town council buildings and close to the main police headquarters, scattered wrecked cars and broken glass across a wide area. Bob Silverman, head of governance for the U.S.-led administration in the area, said the bomb went off shortly before councilors were due to elect representatives to the provincial council. The vote would now be delayed a few days.

"I am sure the bomb was meant to prevent the vote," he said. **(And so it did.)**

Military Police officer First Lieutenant Alexis Marks was 100 meters (yards) away when the Samarra bomb exploded. "The blast knocked me off my feet," she said. "It shook all the vehicles and everyone nearby was thrown to the ground."

The self-made blast device exploded soon after an American military patrol had passed.

In Baghdad, the thud of distant explosions rumbled across the capital late Saturday, heightening the sense of insecurity that still prevails nine months after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime.



LUCKY THIS TIME; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW ALIVE

A US soldier at the site of a car bomb attack in Samarra. (AFP/File/Karim Sahib)

U.S. Soldier Killed In Rocket Attack

25 January, 2004 08:57

TIKRIT, Iraq (Reuters) - **An American soldier has died from wounds he suffered when insurgents fired a rocket-propelled grenade at his armoured vehicle in Iraq, the U.S. Army says.**

A spokeswoman for the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, Major Josslyn Aberle, said the attack occurred on Saturday night near the town of Baiji, north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

"A 4th Infantry Division soldier was critically wounded when attackers fired an RPG at the Bradley Fighting Vehicle he was in," she said, adding the soldier died on Sunday after surgery.

4TH ID SOLDIER KILLED

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND

January 25, 2004 Release Number: 04-01-21C

TIKRIT, IRAQ - One 4TH Infantry Division soldier was mortally wounded when attackers fired a rocket propelled grenade at the Bradley Fighting Vehicle he was in, at approximately 10 p.m., Jan. 24 in Bayji.

Insurgents fired the rocket propelled grenade at the Bradley in the town of Beiji, north of Tikrit, late Saturday, piercing the driver's compartment and critically wounding the soldier.

The wounded soldier was evacuated to the 28th Combat Support Hospital and immediately went into surgery. However, the soldier died from his wounds a short time later.

The soldier was part of a combat patrol at the time of the incident.

Army Helicopter With 2 Crew Crashes Searching For Drowned Cops

AP Jan. 25, 2004

BAGHDAD, Iraq - A U.S. military helicopter crashed Sunday in the Tigris River in the northern town of Mosul while searching for a soldier, and both crewmembers were missing, a spokeswoman said.

She did not say what caused the crash of the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter, attached to the 101st Airborne Division. It was not immediately known whether the helicopter had come under fire.

The helicopter was searching for a U.S. soldier missing when the boat he was in capsized earlier Sunday, the spokeswoman said on condition of anonymity. The soldier was on a river patrol with three other soldiers and some Iraqi policemen, she said.

The other three soldiers were safe but two Iraqi police officers and an Iraqi translator are reported dead, said the spokeswoman.

It was the fifth helicopter crash in Iraq this month — at least three of them due to hostile fire.

Three New Explosions Rock Baghdad Sunday

25 January 2004 Sofia Morning News

Three consecutive explosions shattered the Iraqi capital on Sunday afternoon, the correspondent of the Russian agency RIA Novosti reported.

No further details were immediately available.

A hand-made explosive device went off near a hotel in the centre of Baghdad earlier on Sunday after a U.S. military convoy passed by. No casualties have been reported. AFP cited an American soldier as saying that the bomb was hidden in a junk-heap off the road and exploded at about 10.30 a.m. local time.

Resistance Attacks 3 Planes

(Columbia State, January 19, 2004

Recent missile attacks on three transport planes will not stop airmen from Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., from flying into Baghdad. "Every time we go there, we know there's a threat," said Maj. Rich Weaver, a C-17 pilot. "We go there ready for it and hope to react the best we can when it happens."

TROOP NEWS

Japanese Troops Welcomed By Shia Demonstrators Demanding Free Elections; They Wisely Keep A Low Profile

21 January 2004 AFP

Thousands of Iraqi Shia have taken to the streets for a third consecutive day in support of demands made by their leading spiritual leader for direct elections. The demonstration took place on Wednesday in the southern Iraqi town of Samawa.

The latest demonstration came less than 48 hours after the arrival of a contingent of Japanese troops on a humanitarian mission to the poverty-hit town. The Japanese troops stayed out of sight as crowds peacefully chanted "We are all with al-Sistani and we want no one else".

Vietnam Veterans Against The War



(From the Introduction, [The Turning: A History Of Vietnam Veterans Against The War](#), Andrew E. Hunt; New York University Press, 1999) (Check out: <http://www.vvaw.org/>)

“This account also explores the relationship between Vietnam Veterans Against The War and the antiwar movement. **At first, demonstrators were either hostile or indifferent to the veterans.**

With the passage of time and the growth of VVAW, ill will gave way to veneration. Neither tendency, however, promoted a greater understanding of the veterans or their motives for resisting the war. To paraphrase the psychiatrist Dr. Robert Jay Lifton, VVAWers were neither “baby killers” nor the angry victims of an unjust policy.

They were actors who fashioned their own histories, brought together by the common experience of service in the armed forces during the Vietnam era and a shared assumption that the Vietnam War was morally wrong. Some antiwar veterans arrived at this conclusion by reading books and underground newspapers, other by participating in combat operations.

They were young—most were in their early twenties—and blended easily among countercultural youths. **But VVAW members, by and large, were angrier and more abrasive than other protesters. (Rightly so.)** Even at the height of the antiwar movement, the veterans complained that they were misunderstood by authorities and radicals alike.

Their various war crimes hearings, medal-throwing ceremonies, guerrilla theater, and marches provided a much-needed human face to the “Vietnam syndrome.” Still, it is important to remember that VVAW members were inexperienced activists who made countless mistakes and had few mentors to guide them. Impatience, uncompromising militance.....undoubtedly undermined VVAW’s effectiveness on a number of occasions. **(And strengthened it on other occasions.)** Tensions were always palpable. National officers and regional coordinators were overburdened with unreasonable workloads, which often led to burnout.”

Still, VVAW grew steadily until 1973, and members came to see themselves as the inheritors of a legacy of radical resistance in the United States dating back to the American Revolution. The antiwar veterans, motivated in most cases by the

carnage they had witnessed in Vietnam, sought to narrow the gap between the ideals and the reality of American society. Their search for redemption in a world beset by war is compelling because it teaches us the potential for political awakening among a segment of the population where one would least expect to find it. Those who built VVAW regarded their commitment as an extended tour of duty, a struggle to find meaning and compassion in the human experience.

Reading Between The Lines; A Message From Iraq

He said they were told to make sure to not hesitate to shoot the enemy, and he made a comment that fine, when he saw people wearing bright orange jump suits printed with enemy in big black letters he would make sure to shoot them. He also asked what he should do about kids asking for candy, should he shoot them too? and generally made a lot of smart comments and did a lot of push-ups as a trivial punishment.

They joke a lot, but they don't think this is particularly funny.

Especially since it seems that the officers of his company have decided that it is all right for them to fly to Kuwait, not drive down with the enlisted.

C--- seems to think this is just fine, they would rather not have officers with them, he thinks they would only get them lost, as happened when he drove some trucks down to Kuwait a couple of weeks ago--and we all know what happens to lost convoys.

Anti-War Visitors Get High Fives From Baghdad Soldiers

January 20, 2004 Fox News

Clad in white peace bibs, an American watchdog group called Global Exchange tours schools and hospitals in Baghdad.

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Global Exchange said "The soldiers love us." "They give us high fives every time they see us walking down the street with our peace bibs on because they know we're trying to get them home."

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/>

Mass Protest Against Sending Troops To Iraq



Japanese protesters dressed like U.S. President George Bush and Japanese leader Junichiro Koizumi take part in a rally against sending Japanese soldiers to Iraq in Tokyo January 25. (AP Photo/Kyodo)

“Nothing He Would Miss About Iraq”

CAMP FALCON, Iraq (Reuters) 23 Jan 2004

No longer afraid of dying, thrilled to be going home and thirsty for a beer.

That's how American soldiers felt Friday as they handed over control of a Baghdad suburb to fresh troops and prepared to return to the United States after nearly a year in Iraq.

Those leaving said they had never expected to stay in Iraq for nearly a year and would always remember the fear of patrolling Baghdad's dangerous streets.

"Almost every time I went out, every time we got mortared, something could have happened. All I could think of was my family," said Private Caesar Sierra, 19, from Los Angeles.

Sierra said there was nothing he would miss about Iraq.

Specialist Jose Torres, 20, from Lexington, Nebraska, said he just wanted to get home.

"I was afraid that I was never going to see my family again," said Torres, adding that when he got back he wanted to buy a car and drive around Nebraska.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraqi Tribal Leaders Remind Occupation Of 1920 Revolution

BBC Monitoring Middle East. London: Jan 19, 2004. Text of report by London-based newspaper Al-Hayat on 18 January

Over the past two weeks Ayatollah **Ali al-Sistani's** office in al-Najaf was the scene of **increasing activities, in response to the US indifference to the proposals the highest Shi'i religious authority in Iraq had put forward. The most conspicuous meeting was that held between leaders of the Al-Samawah and al-Rumaythah tribes and al-Sistani. Al-Sistani addressed the tribal leaders as "the sons of the 1920 revolution," and urged them to adhere to the option of elections.**

Shaykh Adnan al-Khawwam, the leader of the Bani-Zurayj tribe in al-Rumaythah (350 km south of Baghdad), the town that witnessed the first shot that heralded the revolution of the tribes of Al-Rumaythah and central Al-Furat in 1920 against the British occupation, made a statement to Al-Hayat. He said that during the meeting with Al-Sistani, the latter advised them to cling to three important things:

First, to refrain from dealing with the coalition authorities and to refuse to participate in any government or entity established in Iraq by the United States as a substitute to people's rule.

Second, to resort to demonstrations and protests; to appeal to the world to stand by Iraq, and to expose the intentions of the United States and of all Iraq's enemies.

Third, to unify the people and fight all calls for segregation made by any party whatsoever in order to avoid offending any party; and to underline that action should be undertaken by the Iraqis regardless of their stripes, creed, religion, or ethnicity. He also urged them to underline that what is wanted is not a sectarian rule, but one that is grounded in right, justice and fairness, and that is established in an atmosphere of freedom. He stressed that only democracy is the path to this rule."

Shaykh Al-Khawwam said that the meeting between leaders of the Bani-Zurayj, Al-Rumaythah and Al-Samawah tribes with Al-Sistani sends a "message that must be well read by all those who really want to avoid getting bogged down in a quagmire."

He added: "The question being asked by Iraqis is: What guarantees do we have should the other party (the Americans) renege on its obligations and pledges? The fulfillment of the obligations cannot be guaranteed by written documents or public statements, their importance notwithstanding. The constitution that the Iraqis want can only be reached by another kind of guarantees, that is, the guarantee of popular presence. This popular presence was manifest in the Friday meeting when the people played the role that we believe would achieve the task of protecting the political process, enable the Iraqi people to rule their country, and eventually restore their sovereignty and full independence.

Shaykh Adnan, son of Shaykh Khawwam al-Abd-al-Abbas, one of the most prominent leaders of the 1920 revolution, who later led the 1935 liberation revolution, compared what is occurring now to what had occurred prior to the 1920 revolution. He said Britain misread the Iraqi scene when it occupied Iraq in 1914, declaring that it had come as "liberator, not invader".

At first, the Iraqis believed Britain. However, they soon discovered that the British leaders reneged on the promises they had made, prompting the Iraqis to rise up and revolt in 1920. The Al-Rumaythah people fired the first shot to force the Britons to submit to the Iraqis' will, allowing the Iraqi people to establish a national government that lasted for 38 years.

Shaykh Adnan pointed out that before and after the meeting with Al-Sistani, contacts were held with all Iraqi tribal leaders of all creeds to prepare for a general conference of various Iraqi tribes to cement Iraqi unity so that the Iraqi people can stand like one man.

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

Searching Amara; A Folk Hero Falls; Now A Fugitive From The People

By Ewa Jasiewicz, Occupied Amara 11/1/2004

It's a bright-cold Tuesday morning in Amara and a man who's too afraid to be named is talking to us frankly at a local kebab street caf. He's a former Daawa party activist and current member of the Union of Political Prisoners, a nationwide group formed to pick up the pieces, collectively, of the lives and pasts of some of Iraq's most obvious walking wounded.

Regime-labeled as the enemies of Iraq; they were disfigured, thrown in acid, sliced open, stabbed with electric rods into involuntary limb flipping unconsciousness, stretched, torn, hammered and placed in rooms: dark rooms, dank rooms, rooms with floors turned black with freely and frequently spilt blood, rooms with hooks where a man

would hang, broken shouldered in agony, rooms infested with cockroaches, rooms hidden underground unopened for decades, rooms locked behind urban underpasses, internees beaten daily in thick dank darkness to the sound of traffic streaming, the steady hum and sigh of cars passing by, life passing by to the daily corrosion and gnaw of being ignored, being so close to ordinary life but unable to see or touch it; and the insanity rooms, rooms painted red, bright red, with bright lights on every day, all day, for years.

Our friend had his house destroyed by the Baath, and had spent seven years of his life being dragged around different prisons. The Dictatorships most notorious intelligence torturers, the Fifth Brigade, smashed his head open in Rgadwania (he moves his hair back to show us the scar); the Mokhabarat (Secret Police) shattered his hand in Nassiriyah (he exposes a crippled, awkward right hand to us), and military intelligence beat his back out of shape in a Baghdad security cell.

Flimsy shirted teenage boys and keefaya wrapped white-stubbed old men are gathering closer to get a load of the talk. **The subject is the course of events three days ago that left six men dead and 10 bleeding into the streets outside the governors office.** The youths and older men start to draw near, others shift their chairs up, and a few low-key customers chew slowly, stare ahead and open their ears to listen.

'Unemployed youth came outside the city hall on Thursday. They'd been getting promises from the political parties for jobs. They'd lost all their patience. Most of them had been under pressure by the ex-regime, many had escaped from military service. The parties had told them that there'd be work for them from the governor. The governor told them he'd have jobs for them in two days.

On Saturday, more people joined up. They were faced by the Iraqi police who fired on them directly. Kareem Mahoud, the Governor, gave an order to the police and his militia to fire onto the crowd. After a short time, old Baathists started to join up. How do we know who they are? We know all of them. They used the situation to loot the city hall, looted the hospital beside it, the medical stores. **The governor himself was shooting people - now he's in hiding. People are demanding he be removed and that his militia's be arrested.**

We used to love him, he was a national hero, but when we realised he is working for the benefit of the British, we turned against him. One of his biggest mistakes is employing his family to take over Amara - using the same methods as Saddam Hussein. His cousin was killed in October by Amara people. He'd been made Chief of Police.

For the Governor, the judge, the local council of Amara, they were elected - how? We don't know. No one elected them. The whole thing was a forgery.

Before 6 months, the population of Amara was low, people had escaped to Iran and further, but now they've all returned. This raises the pressure on people because of the fact that there's not enough jobs. We have 75% unemployment. Many kids don't go to school. Its not that the schools were destroyed or there aren't enough teachers, its because they're not convinced of it, they think there's no point. One of my kids quit after six years of school and no one can make him go back.

We were expecting the British to bring us work, a decent budget from Baghdad - for regeneration, for reconstruction. Everything needs rebuilding here - look around you - the streets, the drains, the hospitals. There's no pure water, no clean water. **The British forces, we used to respect them, they were different from the Americans. But as a result of our respect, they went far in violating our traditions here. Take a look at Baghdad - there is a lot of killing, but not here. There will be soon, we are prepared to.**

Bremer visited Nassiriyah, and set a budget - why not Amara? Amara has mercury and oil. We were ignored in the old time and we are being ignored again. They've made a big mistake ignoring Amara. And why didn't Blair visit us? People were mad that he didn't visit. We want to talk to Bremer, to ask him to begin reconstruction. **And aid? So far, new organizations here have been stealing all of it. I used my machine gun just to get a blanket. Now my children have a blanket.'**

'Khosh hachi' - 'Good Talk' is the all-round response. The neglect of poor southern governates, their debasement under the regime, pervasive persistent unemployment plus the filling of the power vacuum left gaping in May by anyone with enough machine guns has left a trail of frustration and desperation for most people in the south. Baath repression, particularly severe in the Daawa-roots south, the Iran and Kuawiti/US 1991 war and 13 years of sanctions have left the southern provinces worn out. The relief most people felt round these parts where the resistance to the regime was the strongest and best organised is giving way now, rapidly, to vehemence and street-battle expressed antagonism.

Kareem Mahood Mohammedawhi was a folk legend in the south for his canny resistance efforts against the Baath. Independent from any party, he managed to fake Saddam Hussein's own signature in 1991 on a release form and liberated 23 prisoners. He bombed the headquarters of the intelligence services of Basra three times, led attacks on military training camps, lived in the desert as a fugitive, and moved clandestinely between Iraq and Iran, transporting, weapons, ammo, information and ideas.

A friend recounts a famous story of how he managed to escape from a Mokhabarat Prison in Basra. Saddam Hussein had commanded that he be brought to Baghdad to be executed before him. Three dark tinted windowed intelligence cars, complete with national coverage antennas, pulled up to Intelligence Service HQ. Agents entered the building, transfer papers in hand, took their prisoner and drove away smoothly. 30 minutes later three dark tinted windowed cars pulled up outside the Intelligence Service HQ. Agents exited, entered the building, transfer papers at the ready, only to find that they had already been and that Kareem Mahood had vanished. Upon hearing the news, Saddam Hussein passed an instant death sentence on the Head of Intelligence. He was executed immediately.

This story lends an insight into how much of a well organised and professional threat the resistance was. The Islamic Daawa Party, founded 1958, was the also one of the most organised and its armed wing the most militant carrying out a number of suicide operations and bomb attacks on ministries (famously the Ministry of Interior) and assassination attempts against the dictator himself and his sons. By 1980, the Daawa had become such a threat that The 'Revolutionary

Command Council' of the Iraqi regime passed Decree 461 meaning death for all those active within or were affiliated, sympathized or supported the IDP.

The hunt for and murder of Daawa party members and also any Daawa-labeled dissidents or those who fell out of favour with their local neighbourhood watch cell police, was carried out by Special Security, General Security, General Intelligence, Military Intelligence and Military Security operatives. Its worth remembering that a third of the population of Iraq was employed by the regime in some kind of security/surveillance capacity. Thousands of Daawa party members were killed and tortured under the regime, with opponent leaders such as Muhammad Baqir al Sadr. Sadr was viewed as a visionary philosopher after he wrote the highly influential works Falsafatuna (Our Philosophy, 1958) and Iqtisaduna (Our Economics) representing the first Islamic theory of modern political economy. He also issued a Fatwa prohibiting Iraqi Shiites from joining the Baath party in 1979, earning him house arrest by the regime and then execution the following year.

We have to leave. People around us are saying its not safe to be out. Yesterday two female journalist - one of them Croatian - were allegedly beaten 'hard' during the demonstration and had to be taken into British Army protection. Our friend comes with us and guides our fear-gripped driver to Al Sadr Hospital. Here our friend implores us not to mention him or anything he said as 'These are Kareem Mahood's people'. He then leaves us, a bundle of nerves.

We visit the coroner. Rahim Hanoon Adiel, 35, and Mahour Abdel Wahad, 18, - both shot in the head, and Mohammad Jasim Greyed, 18, shot in the stomach, were brought in yesterday (Saturday January 10). Hit with live ammo, the police or the governor himself, were shooting to kill, not disable or disarm, but kill directly. The type of bullet, we are told, is unknown as all the bullets which hit the victims exited.

We are informed by Dr Ali Abdel Aziz Shaawi, the Hospital's General Surgeon, that British military investigators had been to visit just minutes before us and had taken the names and addresses of those killed. It is their responsibility under the European Convention on Human Rights 1950 to conduct a swift investigation into any civilian killing involving the army. The ECHR 1950 is best placed law to sue the British Army for negligence as British law and the International Criminal Court require the signature of the Attorney General before proceedings can be taken. Given that over 1000 people, mostly Black people, have been murdered in Police custody since 1969 in the UK and No officer has ever been convicted of murder, with just a handful ever even being prosecuted, the likelihood of the Attorney General accepting cases against the British Military is low.

We drive up to the Town Hall, Kareem Mahoods office. Our driver is really agitated now because someone stole a couple of his headlight covers. He wants get out of Amara. Its getting late (12pm) and the road is notoriously unsafe out after midday. Approaching the scene of yesterday's riot, we see a group of about 15 teenagers trying to smash up a window and drainpipe on the side of the building. A police pickup guards the front door. An irate but small and knackered looking crowd of about 15 are round the front, milling around outside huge locked gates. The atmosphere is gripped. A small wiry geezer swaggers up to us and tells us to 'be careful, two journalists got beaten up here yesterday'. Turns out he's a friend of our translator, they know each other from the

Betbetween gangster hood in central Baghdad, so he gets in our car, we drive to a nearby park and he tells us what he saw yesterday in a rattled-out, racing details.

'Kareem Mahood's brother Riyad wanted to leave (the Town Hall). The crowd were throwing molotovs and stones on the Town Hall. Ryad was guarded by a militia. Kareem Mahood turned up with his gang and five pickups – seven men in each. He was in a large white car. He got out of the car and began to use his Machine gun on the crowd. He's a criminal. He shot three people. He took his brother and headed for the British base.



**UNCONQUERED. UNCONQUERABLE
MARCHING AGAINST THE OCCUPATION**

(AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen)

A helicopter turned up, 2 APCs, 15 jeeps, and the British with plastic shields. They shot rubber bullets. Iraqi police disappeared behind troop lines. The fight resumed. Because it took all day, the British were taking turns in shifts. A lot happened but its not been written about or shown on TV.

Kareem Mahood is using the same methods as Saddam. All of his tribe are employed in the police force or government positions. The same thing happened here in the summer. I can't specify what month but 2-3 people were killed. He's taken money, stolen fuel, he's controlling all the fuel. He's even been involved in dealing hashish by college students. Nobody knows where he is now but if he's seen in Amara he'll be killed. Some people say he's in Baghdad, other that he's at his house and other that he's being protected by the British in a military base. We just don't know.'

When we bid him farewell he tells us, 'You can't leave now, don't be leaving Amara now, its not safe, the road's not safe'. It's 1pm and beautiful day. We brave it anyway.

Back in Basra, when asked about the incident involving Mahood. Dominic D'angelo, Director of Press and Public Affairs, CPA South is clueless. 'No one knows anything about this at all down here, and it seems unlikely to say the least'. He added that Amara police had not said anything about the incident either, but that he would be checking

locally about the incident to obtain further information. The police are controlled by the Governor. Mahood's Cousin was former chief of police, its all 'in the family' or rather the tribe, and its unlikely any officer will open up a chasm of worms by speaking out against his employer or the dominant tribe. **Its unsurprising that CPA South isn't hearing the word on the street, with staff holed up 24-hours a day in what is effectively a large open topped concrete bunker.**

However, tribal leaders are all talking about it at the Democratic Gathering of Iraqi Tribes in Basra. His own tribe, the Mohammedawhi, is supporting him and conducting tribal meetings with the relatives of the deceased. **Other tribal leaders think he should and must be killed. And its a well-known scandal in hotels, shops, tea-stalls, on the streets, the word is out: The Governor of Amara, one a folk hero, has lost the plot. He shot into a crowd of unarmed demonstrators, is considered to be a 'Jaysous' (collaborator), 'Haraami' (Thief) and has become a wanted man, a fugitive once again, this time from the people, from bottom up rather than the top dictatorship down.**

A portion of responsibility for Mahoud's appointment, his alleged shooting spree and the accountability for the Iraqi police force - subservient at the end of the day to British commands - lies with the British Occupation.

The steps they are taking to cultivate a culture of accountability remain to be seen but if the Governor can open fire on demonstrators, and the official word from CPA is 'We don't know anything about it, we don't think it actually happened' then the system is in bad shape. **Over 30,000 people took to the streets in Basra a few days ago demanding swift and fair elections. People want to be able to elect their own representatives and remove them when they get flagrantly screwed over. And if people like Kareem Mahood start to reproduce the authoritarian, mafia-like and murderous modes of clinging on to their own power, like the Baath, then people will tear them down unceremoniously.**

OCCUPATION REPORT

Turkey PM Says Chaos Worst Ever

24 Jan 2004 Dow Jones Newswires

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP)--Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan said Friday that he will express his misgivings to U.S. President George W. Bush about developments in neighboring Iraq.

"The current Iraq is worse than Iraq prior to the war and worse than Iraq during the war," Erdogan told reporters at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland before heading to Washington.

Remember That \$87 Billion? Occupation Officials And Iraqi Puppet Government Involved In Wholesale Looting

ROBERT FISK IN BEIRUT. The Independent. London (UK): Jan 21, 2004.

How the 19 billion 'dirty dinars' were quickly cleaned up

WHEN A private Lebanese jet arrived at Beirut International Airport packed with 19 billion new Iraqi dinars in banknotes (about pounds 6.5m), the authorities immediately impounded the aircraft and arrested the three men aboard. It was a coup that seemed likely to earn the favour of the US, which has, for years, been threatening Lebanon with financial sanctions if it allows dirty money to cross its frontiers.

But an astonishing series of revelations - including a faxed message from the American-appointed Iraqi Ministry of Interior in Baghdad - suggests that the cash was being sent to Beirut with the full permission of US military authorities to be used to buy armoured vehicles for the American army from a British company. **The three men aboard the cargo jet have told the Lebanese authorities that they were cleared to leave Iraq by American officials at the US base at Baghdad airport.**

Nevertheless, the Lebanese state prosecutor, Adnan Addoum, arrested the three men and a Beirut exchange dealer, who is a relative of the former Lebanese president Amin Gemayel, and demanded an explanation from Iraq's Charge d'Affaires in Beirut, Tahseen Aina.

Mr Aina told Mr Addoum that the Iraqi Central Bank Governor was unaware of any such money transfer. So the four men, Mohamed Issam Abu Darwish - who stated openly that he was undertaking business operations on behalf of the US authorities in Iraq - Richard Jreisati, a former Phalangist militia official in Lebanon, Mazen Bsar, the owner of the plane, and Michel Mukattaf, who runs an exchange company in Lebanon, were all held by the authorities.

Then two days ago, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior - which is, in effect, run by American officials working for the US proconsul in Iraq, Paul Bremer - sent a fax to the Lebanese government stating that the money was being legally transferred for the "urgent purchase" from a British company of armoured vehicles and "sophisticated equipment intended to confront the dangerous security situation in Iraq".

All four men arrested by the Lebanese were freed, although the Beirut authorities have ordered the men on the plane to surrender their passports until they receive a letter from the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs explaining why so large an amount of money was being sent to Britain via Lebanon. The British company was not named.

In Baghdad, meanwhile, several hundred Iraqis protested in front of Bremer's offices to demand the resignation of the US-appointed interior minister, Nouri Badrane, accusing him of "corruption" for allowing 19 billion Iraqi dinars to be transferred out of the country.

In Iraq, however, there have been widespread claims from Western businessmen that the American authorities and the Iraqi officials who work for them - not the businessmen with whom they deal - are guilty of fraud. Several have told The Independent that Iraqi sub- contractors are being asked to give cash commissions of between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of any contract awarded to them to one of five Americans working in the city.

In Iran, meanwhile, the authorities have been trying to find out how up to 200 earth-moving vehicles have turned up for sale in southern Iranian cities. The vehicles appear to have been sent across the border from Iraq and were originally intended to be part of a rebuilding programme. Several non-governmental organisations in Iraq have complained that millions of dollars of aid intended to help rebuild the country have gone missing.

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/>

“Life Here Is One Big War”

By Daniel Williams, Washington Post Foreign Service, January 20, 2004

BAGHDAD, Jan. 19 -- After midnight Monday, Ardashees Mherian heard the pitter-patter of footsteps on his roof and rushed upstairs to see what was going on.

The footsteps quickly turned into the rat-a-tat of automatic rifle fire, the bangs of exploding grenades, angry shouts and awful moans. His little house in far southeast Baghdad was caught in a raid by U.S. soldiers on suspected foreign fighters who lived around the corner.

"I was surprised. I did not know such people lived here," he said. "On the other hand, this is Baghdad. We're used to shooting and explosions. Life here is one big war."

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.

Kurds Not Happy With “Governing Council”

By Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad, 21 January 2004

Massoud Barzani, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, told The Independent in an interview about the governing council. "Their main priority seems to be travelling abroad."

Mr Barzani emphasised that the Kurds were giving up control over defence, foreign and fiscal policy to central government. **At the moment, that is not a great sacrifice as there is no Iraqi army.**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**Bush WMD Hunter Quits;
Says There Weren't Any**

By Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters 24 January 2004

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Former chief U.S. arms hunter David Kay has concluded Iraq had no stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons, a potential embarrassment for President Bush.

"I don't think they existed," Kay said. "What everyone was talking about is stockpiles produced after the end of the last (1991) Gulf War, and I don't think there was a large-scale production program in the '90s," he said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Resistance Bombs Military Training School



An Afghan investigator looks over the rubble caused by a bomb blast Jan. 25 in Kabul. **The explosion damaged a building housing Afghan soldiers at a military training school.** (AP Photo/Ed Wray)

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