

GI SPECIAL 2#42

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Photo thanks to Ewa Jasiewicz

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Mortar Attacks In Baghdad And Qusaybah Kill Two U.S. Troops; Ten Wounded

March 18, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) & Reuters

Military sources said Thursday **two U.S. service members died in separate mortar attacks that also wounded 10 troops.**

One soldier was killed and seven others wounded in a mortar attack near Baghdad International Airport Wednesday afternoon, according to the Coalition Press Information Center.

The soldiers, assigned to the 13th Corps Support Command, were at the Logistics Base Seitz when they were attacked.

In another mortar attack, one U.S. Marine was killed Wednesday evening in the western Iraqi city of Qusaybah on the Syrian border, a senior coalition official said. Three other Marines were wounded.

A spokesman said the attack happened around 10:55 a.m. EST Wednesday.

Two US Soldiers Dead In Balad Logistics Base Mortar Attack, Six Wounded

18 March, 2004 BBC News

Two American soldiers have been killed and six wounded in a mortar attack north of Baghdad, the US military says.

The attack occurred at a logistics base in Balad, about 70 km (45 miles) north of the Iraqi capital.

Troops Ambushed, Nine Wounded: Resistance Mounts Coordinated Attack On “Military Authorities” Meeting In Fallujah

March 18, 2004 Associated Press & (CNN)

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Insurgents clashed with U.S. troops Thursday in the Iraqi city of Fallujah, leaving a civilian dead, another wounded.

Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, Army spokesman, said eight U.S. Army soldiers and one U.S. Marine were injured. He said a military force had been working in a provincial building, meeting with local authorities.

The attackers used AK-47 rifles and rocket-propelled grenades against the soldiers, who were guarding a building where a meeting between local officials and U.S. military authorities was underway.

Witnesses said at least 10 masked men fired at the troops from four sides. Military helicopters and jet fighters flew overhead as the troops fired back.

The city's main street was blocked off to traffic and the gunfight spread to side roads. U.S. troops also came under fire as they attempted to leave the area.

The witnesses said insurgents attacked U.S. troops at the Fallujah mayor's office and the Americans fired back. **A child and a man identified as Sheikh Arif al-Lihaibi were killed at the back of the Humud al-Mahmud mosque, the witnesses said.**

The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps said insurgents fired at U.S. troops from behind the mosque and also reported casualties.

Supply Convoy Ambushed, Burned

March 18, 2004 Associated Press

Thursday, a convoy transporting supplies for U.S. forces was torched by unidentified men outside Baghdad. The three trucks were set ablaze after their drivers were forced to pull over. One of the drivers was wounded in the legs after he refused to leave his truck.

U.S. Helicopter Comes Down Near Fallujah- Witnesses

Mar 18, 2004 FALLUJA, Iraq (Reuters)

A U.S. helicopter came down on Thursday south of the flashpoint Iraqi city of Falluja, west of Baghdad, witnesses said.

Bomb In Basra

March 18, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

Three Iraqis were killed by a bomb in Basra that went off Thursday in the southeast city of Basra the U.S.-led coalition said.

That explosion, caused by what officials think was a car bomb or a roadside bomb, occurred as a British military convoy was passing. The convoy, however, was not affected.

Afterward, about 2,000 people gathered at the scene.

Basra is the largest city in the largely Shiite region.

The blast went off alongside the Buraq Hotel in the center of the city-- but Basra police said they don't think the blast was meant to target the hotel.

Baghdad Hotel Blast In “Affluent Neighborhood” Kills 27: Huge Car Bomb Destroys Business Hotel

March 18, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) & Jonathan Steele in Baghdad and Brian Whitaker, The Guardian

A powerful explosion destroyed a hotel in central Baghdad last night, killing at least 27 people and injuring 40, including two Britons. **The blast, three days before the anniversary of the US-led invasion, left a crater 20 ft across and 10 ft deep outside the Mount Lebanon hotel.**

Dazed and injured, some of the survivors were seen stumbling from the wreckage.

FBI agents arrived at the Baghdad bombing site early Thursday, said Col. Ralph Baker, a U.S. Army spokesman. **Most of the dead were in the houses and shops that surrounded the residential hotel in the narrow street, which winds through an ethnically mixed, affluent neighborhood called the Karrada District.**

The Mount Lebanon is used mainly by Iraqi businessmen visiting Baghdad.



One local, however, said some Americans and Britons had been staying there, and Col Baker confirmed that foreigners were among the guests. The US military said two Britons had been slightly hurt.

The hotel is close to Firdus square, where a statue of Saddam Hussein was symbolically toppled on April 9 last year when US troops rolled into the city.

Authorities believe the car bomb was more than 1,000 pounds and contained artillery shells and PE-4 packed into explosives. PE-4 is a plastic explosive similar to C-4 and is made in Portugal and England.

Buildings nearby were severely damaged, including the offices of al-Jazeera, the Arab satellite TV channel, and several cars caught fire.

After the attack, about 100 US troops in Bradley tanks and Humvees ushered away the crowds, while ambulances ferried the injured to hospital. **(BBC TV News reported U.S. troops, who had no Arabic translators, pushed away Iraqis who were trying to rescue survivors. They responded by throwing stones, and cursing America.)**

The US military confirmed last night that the blast was caused by a car bomb. "It has to be a car bomb. No rocket could cause that amount of damage," said Private Heath Balick, of the 1st Armoured Division, which is responsible for security in Baghdad.

The blast came hours after Iraq's US-appointed governing council invited the United Nations to return to Baghdad and advise on setting up an interim government by June 30.

The attack also coincided with the beginning of the coalition's Operation Iron Promise, a citywide sweep for insurgents. Kimmitt said there was "some initial success" with the operation. (Genius Kimmitt again. This time he's right, the resistance is indeed having "some initial success" with their operation marking the first anniversary of Bush's invasion.)

3RD ACR SOLDIER KILLED IN CONVOY EN ROUTE TO KUWAIT

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
March 17, 2004 Release Number: 04-03-10C

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait -- A Soldier from the 3rd Armored Cavalry reported was killed today while traveling in a convoy that was en route to Kuwait to prepare for redeployment.

The Soldier was killed when a passing vehicle struck his tank, causing a crew served weapon to strike him from behind. The Soldier was treated at the scene and evacuated by air to a Combat Support Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

1ST ID SOLDIER KILLED, TWO INJURED IN BRADLEY ACCIDENT

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
March 17, 2004 Release Number: 04-03-11C

TIKRIT, IRAQ - A 1st Infantry Division Soldier died and two were injured when their M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle overturned near Baji at approximately 11:35 a.m. today.

The injured soldiers were evacuated to the 67th Combat Support Hospital at Forward Operating Base Speicher for treatment.

More Rocket Attacks In Baghdad; Hotel Hit & Ministry Of Oil Targeted

March 18, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- Two rockets were fired Thursday at the Burj-al-Hayat hotel in Iraq's capital of Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

In the most recent incident, Police Brig. Thamer Sa'adon said the rocket strike took place in the Karrada district, the same neighborhood where a car bomb killed seven people and destroyed a hotel and surrounding buildings on Wednesday.

One of the two rockets struck the second floor of the hotel and the other hit an empty apartment.

The attack came from a wagon that was towed by a person who managed to escape. The wagon is now in the custody of the Iraqi police.

Police sources also said a rocket landed near the Ministry of Oil in eastern Baghdad and witnesses reported hearing an explosion near Rasheed Street in central Baghdad.

The incidents are the latest in a series of attacks in the days leading to Friday's one-year anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

U.S. Troops Kill Journalist, Wound Colleague In Baghdad

Mar 18, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

U.S. troops shot dead an Iraqi working for Dubai-based Arab satellite television channel Al Arabiya Thursday and critically wounded another in central Baghdad, colleagues said.

Al Arabiya employees said the Iraqis were driving in central Baghdad when another car drove through a U.S. checkpoint. They said U.S. troops then opened fire on both cars.

Doctors initially said both Al Arabiya employees had been killed but later said one of them was critically wounded with a gunshot wound to the head.

"I stopped in front of the checkpoint and then I saw another car coming fast toward it and I thought it was going to explode," said Ahmed Abdul Amiya, the driver of the Al Arabiya car. "I tried to race away...and then the Americans started firing at random. They hit the first car and then they started shooting at our car."

Explosions Shake Occupation HQ

AP 3.18.04

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Several explosions were heard in Baghdad Thursday night, and sirens wailed briefly in the area housing the U.S.-led coalition headquarters.

"There was an attack. We are investigating it," a U.S. military official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. There were no reports of casualties.

The blasts shook the Baghdad convention center inside the Green Zone, where the coalition headquarters is based.

TROOP NEWS

SOME MARCH 20 ANTIWAR CADENCES

From Vets For Peace 3.18.04

ONE YEAR AGO THIS VERY DAY
BUSH BETRAYED THE U.S.A.
A YEAR OF LIES HAVE COME AND GONE
TIME TO BRING OUR SOLDIERS HOME

HEY, HEY UNCLE SAM
WE REMEMBER VIET NAM
WE DON'T WANT YOUR IRAQ WAR
BRING THE TROOPS BACK TO OUR SHORE

WHEN THE GI'S COME BACK HOME
AND TAKE OFF THEIR UNIFORM
"SUPPORT OUR TROOPS" WILL SURE SOUND FINE
ON THE UNEMPLOYMENT LINE

MILITARY FAMILIES SPEAK OUT
WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE TALKING 'BOUT
SONS AND DAUGHTERS, HUSBANDS, WIVES
BRING OUR LOVED ONES HOME ALIVE

VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR
WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE MARCHIN' FOR
BRING THE TROOPS BACK TO OUR SOIL
WE SAY NO MORE BLOOD FOR OIL

BUSH AND CHENEY TALK THAT TALK
BUT WE KNOW THEY'RE CHICKEN HAWKS
IF THEY THINK THEY'RE SO DAMN RIGHT
LET BUSH AND CHENEY GO AND FIGHT

(For a moving interview with the mother of a soldier in Iraq, see the article "Wrong To Go To War, And Wrong To Stay" at www.socialistworker.org.)

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/>

U.S. General Supports Iraqi Resistance

Army Times 3.22.04

Maj. Gen. William G. Webster, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, delivered pep talks to soldiers in the field after getting orders to get ready for another deployment to Iraq next fall.

"Now it's much more carefully choose your targets and knock on the door and talk to the folks first **because the population isn't being overly violent...**" (So, if the Iraqi population is killing U.S. troops on a daily basis, and a State Dept. poll showed that 1/3 of Iraqis support the armed resistance, and the General says the Iraqis aren't being "overly violent," the obvious conclusion is that the General thinks they are behaving reasonably in fighting the invasion and occupation. Thanks, General.)

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

Complete Asshole In Command Tries To Punish 640 Soldiers Over TWO Missing Pistols

Army Times 3.22.04

Missing pistols nearly cost 640 Washington National Guardsmen their three-day passes before leaving for a year to battle insurgents in Iraq.

The troops were told March 7 they wouldn't be getting their final three days with loved ones because two pistols were missing.

The leave was reinstated hours later for all but 30 soldiers, even though the pistols hadn't been found. The 30 soldiers were restricted to post because they **might** have information on the missing weapons, military officials said.

MORE:

In *If I Die In A Combat Zone*, there is a description of the GIs' reaction to what appears to be a fragging. Alpha Company got a new colonel, Colonel Daud, who was gung-ho. He liked Combat Assaults, flying out in helicopters, landing scrambling out terrified, patrolling the villages:

"More Combat Assaults came in the next few days. We learned to hate Colonel Daud and his force of helicopters. When he was killed by sappers in a midnight raid, the news came over the radio. A lieutenant led us in song, a catchy, happy celebrating song: Ding-dong, the wicked witch is dead. We sang in good harmony. It sounded like a choir."

This was 1968. **Already the officers had to negotiate with the men, and fragging was just beginning. Year by year it grew.** According to one set of official figures, there were between 800 and 1,000 attempted fraggings in the armed services in Vietnam. According to the army there were 563 fraggings from 1969 to 1970, and from 1970 to 1972 there were 363 court-martials for fraggings.

The great majority of these fraggings, 80 percent according to one set of figures, were directed at officers and NCOs. Most of them resulted in injury, not death. But the official figures miss most of the killings. They include only attempts with explosive devices, not with guns, which were easier to get. And in many cases nobody was prosecuted. The point had been made. To prosecute somebody was to keep up the struggle and possibly have more fraggings. A smart commander let it go. And if he didn't let it go, how was he to find out who did it?

Moreover, the usual way of killing officers in armies is to shoot them on patrol. This is doubtless what happened in Vietnam. It's what happened to the first sergeant in Alpha Company and it went on elsewhere. Miguel Lemus was in the 25th Infantry.

Once his unit came back from a hard mission, scared and tired, and 90 of them smoked weed together:

“It was party time...and this officer tried to be a hero—bust ninety guys... We were along the trenches and they shot him. They threw him over a trench and shot him with a machine gun. No one said anything. Someone called on the radio and told them the captain had been shot by the gook . Who saw it? Nobody saw it!!”

The best guess is that over 1,000 officers and NCOs were killed by their own men.

From the book, *The American War*, by Jonathan Neale, chapter: *The GIs Revolt*

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/>

REMF Slugs Slammed

Letter To The Editor, Army Times, 3.22.04

I am not surprised by the Feb. 17 letter “Is TraDoc out of touch?”

It is rumored that the Primary Leadership Development Course here at Fort Hood, Texas, also has instructors who will not leave to give other noncommissioned officers a break or a chance.

In the late 1980s when I was in the Army, I was under the impression that you could hold an instructor's position for only three years before having to move on to another assignment.

I also was under the impression that these positions were held for outstanding soldiers who were recommended by command for outstanding performance.

I am getting ready to send my husband off for the third time to Iraq within a year and a half on his sixth deployment in three years. The longest he has been home at one time has been six months.

He has missed one of our son's birthday four times in five years. He is in his re-enlistment window and can do one of two things: He can stay with his present unit and do more multiple deployments or he can waive his stabilization and move to any of the units that are getting ready to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan for a year to 18 months.

Many of the soldiers rotating in and out of Iraq and Afghanistan are not volunteering; they are on stop-loss or stop-movement. The “slugs” who

overextend their stay in TraDoc positions prevent deployed soldiers from getting a break with their families. And incoming soldiers are losing out on gaining knowledge from those who have firsthand experiences with the job skills and battlefield strategies.

I agree that the higher ranks need to step in and correct this. These assignments should be bonuses for outstanding soldiers. They can get a deserved break, share their knowledge, gain experience, enjoy their families without the worry of deployments and be refreshed for the next assignment, wherever it may take them.

Jay J. Kimbrel
Fort Hood, Texas

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.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Three Occupation Propagandists Killed By Resistance, Ten Wounded

3.18.04 news.com.au: Baghdad, Iraq

Iraqi police say gunmen opened fire on a minibus -- **killing three Iraqis and injuring ten other employees of a coalition-funded T-V station.**

The attack happened in the volatile town of Baqouba, which is northeast of Baghdad.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

BUSH CALLS GAY MARRIAGE NEW FRONT IN WAR ON TERROR: Pentagon Launches Operation Pink Storm

The Borowitz Report, 3.16.04

In a televised speech to the nation last night, President George W. Bush called gay marriage "the new front in the war on terror" and called on the civilized nations of the world to unite against "the gathering threat of gay and lesbian weddings."

"There are those in the world who would replace freedom and democracy with gay marriages," Mr. Bush said in his speech from the White House. "This will not stand."

Mr. Bush's speech coincided with news from the Pentagon that the U.S. was launching a spring offensive, Operation Pink Storm, to root out gay brides and bridegrooms hiding in the mountainous region on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In raids conducted over the weekend, U.S. Special Operations forces disrupted half a dozen gay marriages being performed in a serpentine network of underground caves, seizing hors-d'oeuvres, seating charts and flower arrangements.

In his speech, the President urged America's allies in the war on terror not to lose resolve in the face of what he called "increasingly brazen wedding ceremonies staged by the world's gay and lesbian community."

In what appeared to be a pointed remark aimed at his rival, Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass), Mr. Bush said, "It would be tempting to believe that gays and lesbians are not at this moment planning new and bigger weddings - but we do so at our peril."

In other news, the Department of Labor announced that the U.S. has lost over 2.9 million manufacturing jobs in the last three and a half years, largely due to gay marriage.

BUSH CLAIMS SUPPORT OF UNMANNED PREDATOR DRONES Speaks to Rally of Robot Planes in San Diego

The Borowitz Report, 3.17.04

In the wake of poll results showing his approval ratings plummeting around the world, President George W. Bush today said that he remains popular among the constituency most important to him, unmanned Predator drones.

Predators, the unmanned robot planes used widely in Afghanistan and Iraq, remain "solidly committed" to his policies, the President told reporters at the White House today.

"I am proud to have Predator drones on my side," Mr. Bush said. "They are great Americans."

Mr. Bush later left the White House to speak to a rally of Predator drones at a General Atomics aeronautics plant in San Diego, California.

Expressing what he called "deep solidarity" with the Predator drones, Mr. Bush reserved his most rousing remark for the end of his speech: "I'm proud to say that I, too, am a drone."

But critics said Mr. Bush's appearance before the audience of robot planes was merely a photo opportunity to take attention away from the new poll results in Europe, which showed his popularity plummeting below that of actor Ben Affleck for the first time.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan questioned those results, however, arguing that the surveys did not account for the opinion of the thousands of Predator drones currently flying surveillance missions over Europe.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

TWO U.S. SOLDIERS KILLED, TWO WOUNDED

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND

March 18, 2004, Release Number: 04-03-12C & By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

Kabul, Afghanistan -- Two U.S. Soldiers from Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan were killed and two were wounded during a firefight in Oruzgan province this afternoon.

Coalition Soldiers, accompanied by the Afghan National Army Soldiers, were patrolling in a village northwest of Tarin Kowt when they were engaged by anti-coalition militia.

The wounded Soldiers were evacuated to the Kandahar Air Field for treatment.

Central Command called the attackers "terrorists" but did not elaborate. **Pentagon officials said there was no indication that they were part of al-Qaida.**

The two soldiers' deaths raised to 114 the number of American troops who have died in Operation Enduring Freedom, as the war in Afghanistan is called by the military, which started in October 2001.

DISCUSSION ARTICLE

(This article is from Max Watts, who began helping GIs resisting the Vietnam War in the 1960's, and has never stopped helping soldiers opposed to imperialism. He asks for comments on this article about the changing nature of Imperial wars and resistance to them. See his email address at the end.)

IMPERIALISM – CONCEPTS

1/ Associated, or Preliminary: Concepts:

A short thought about these concepts may help limit the fundamental obfuscationism we all are brought up with. – I do wonder why this upbringing is so generalised, wide-spread. My first guess is that in a class society this makes life more acceptable to members of the non-ruling, lower, classes, who otherwise may get headaches looking at life from underneath too clearly.

Let's try:

1. Left/Right:

I have no problems with this, these, term(s). No more than with "up/down". Certain things, certain behavior (patterns) – are, ipso facto, left. Or right. Many years ago Simone de Beauvoir ran a special issue of the Magazine "Temps Modernes" – with many pictures, examples, of "Life". As I remember there were multiple choice "comments/answers" to each. And the keys indicated – according to choices made –how and where the respondent stood. (MW: at that moment). One pix I remember showed a gentleman (white) sitting, having his shoes polished by a smiling child (boy), "brownish".... Kneeling at his feet. But this was 50 years ago, and far away..

This elementary separation seems beyond the thought-patterns of some people, either intentional or incapable obfuscationists. They will, for example, go one on not one about: "Left-wing anti-semitism": But anti-semitism is racism, and racism is (per marxist definition) right-wing. Thus: anti-semitism is right-wing. That a given anti-semite may "claim" to be "on the left" is irrelevant. In that particular aspect of his/her life he ain't.

It is obvious that any person, thing, concept, can, often does, have, include, several parts. Upper, downer. Left/er, Righter. And that these are moving, not fixed. (*see next sections*)

2. Yes/No - More/Less (0/1 - Binary; 0 - 10: Decimal):

A common obfuscationism, very widely accepted, is to attach "total" terms to given objects, concepts. For instance: Democratic/Dictatorial. "The USA is a Democracy". In my days (I do tend to live in the past !) New York City was **more** democratic (we will not, here, discuss the meaning of that word !) than Mississippi, if only because **more people (demos)** were able to vote, express their opinions "freely" (as above, no discussion here/now !) in Manhattan – even elect a Black Communist to the City Council – than in

less democratic Mississippi (where blacks and communists were (then?) dictatorially suppressed).

To discuss US, New York or Mississippi Democracy/Dictatorship meaningfully
More/Less: 0 - 10: Decimal concepts, rather than yes/no, 0/1 – Binary thinking are needed.

Of course this can be applied generally, not just to that example, there, then.

3. Fixed/Moving (Static/ Dialectic):

Another common obfuscationism is to consider "things" (concepts, persons, entities..) as they are, appear, fixed. at a given moment, date, period, in time. This **static, non-Dialectic** approach limits understanding, previsibility. For example, consider these at the time uncontestable Facts:

In 1857 the United States of America was a Slave owning Society. John Brown was a soon to-be-hung terrorist. In 1947 the Jews of Palestine fought an anti-Imperialist, anti-British, "left" wing struggle which hastened the decline of the British Empire. Ten years later both these Facts no longer applied. The United States had won a bloody war against the Slave-owning Confederate States of America, Chattel Slavery was illegal and though "John Brown's Body (and 600,000 others) lay a-moldering in his grave, his ghost was marching on". And the Israeli army had distinguished itself trying to – in this unsuccessful – recover the Suez Canal for its British, French, shareholders.

It is more "productive", though often tiresome, to try and see how things were, are, will be. Moving, from where, where to? From the past to the present, to the future? Smoothly, or with breaks ? **Dialectically**.

4. General/Particular: Comparisons are not odious

I have long noted that it helps to study people, concepts, situations by comparing particulars to generals. Not privates to officers – but soldiers in the American Army today with their fathers there 35 years ago, and those to their then contemporaries, in – let's say: the Dutch or French military... Look at the woods, not only the trees. And see if, and how much, this wood resembles that one.

These "lateral comparisons" often infuriate some people, particularly "specialists". They insist their specialty is "unique", and they find such comparisons odious, irrelevant. Others some of our friends, simply cannot think of them, limited by a specific, "this only" "America is unique", education ?

Who would (bother to) look at American GI Papers of the 1967-1977 period and compare them with Swiss, Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, French, Italian soldier publications of the same time ? Wonder why (only) the German Links Um (Left Face) has cheese-cake girls on each issue's Page 1? Hardly worth while ? Or ? Can that help us understand why American GI's are dying in Baghdad ? Irrelevant question ?

5. Present/Past

Well, already covered that ? In Dialectics, Comparisons ? But insist again: this applies to almost everything. Further on I pick on "**Maps**". Political maps, not those of geology, how the earth moved over the Ages. But: Look at one of 1939, or best: 1941 – when the apparently so permanent Flag Empires began their decline.. The German Reich was pretty big then, in December it reached Moscow, next year the Caucasus, Stalingrad... Ah yes, Stalingrad. How many things "went wrong", when think about that name.. and you can't even find it on a new map, anyway, anymore (try Volgograd).

6. Facts/Opinions:

Like: What does the Bible (Bibles) say about why Adam gets kicked out of Paradise, the Garden of Eden ? There's no fact, only opinions, about what really happened, because its, in any case, a fictional, made-up, story – though for millennia that statement was dangerous to utter. That is a fact. It is also a fact that the Bible(s) all say something quite different from the widespread opinion (they, snake, Eve, Adam: DID wrong, ate apple, forbidden fruit). Look it up yourself, if interested (Genesis Ch 3, last 3 verses).

Many well-and widely- held opinions are, (at given times and places) contrary to facts. The Earth is flat. The Iraqi government had Weapons of Mass Destruction. Flag Imperialism is for the benefit of the Colonised. Make your own list.

7. Controversial/Accepted:

FLAG IMPERIALISM / DOLLAR IMPERIALISM are abstract terms, without reality, without effects on our lives.

2/ Thoughts:

1. A generalisation: Activists (and others) hate/dislike/avoid: comparisons, generalisations. If "generalist" (Max) points out similarities to other struggles, they (activists, others) shy away.

Above all, they do not like their local situation being compared to "other" struggles, elsewhere, elsewhen. This became very apparent in the comparative study of RITAs which led to the book "Left Face".

2. Pet concepts must be considered "unique". Comparison to other similar such concepts annoy. Examples:

- "Self-hating Jews"
- Un-American Americans,
- Vaterlandlose Gesellen (= German for critical Socialists pre-1918, and later);

3. All "rulers" always (when rule) call themselves "the whole":

They very loudly proclaim themselves as the "We". They are **the** country, section, community (American, German, Australian; the "South"...;) On a minor key they are aped by such organisms as The Leaders of The Jewish Community..

However, many, most (not all) members of the (previous) ruling class, group, are quick to ally themselves with any previous "hereditary enemy" once their rule is effectively challenged.

This was particularly evident when French and English monarchs searched for ought available to reverse their revolutions in the 1640's, the 1790's, or the Russian "Whites" with anybody, the Japanese! In Siberia. In Finland even the "enemy" Germans. In these cases Class solidarity quickly overcomes the previously so loudly trumpeted "National" interests.

4. Revolutionary national and class movements often fail to bring "most (objectively) oppressed" along with them

In the specific situations these "most oppressed" may, alas, become important allies of counter-revolutions. Examples:

Many Irish during the English Revolution in 1642-1660

The peasants of the Vendee in Western France after 1790

Bushmen in South African and Namibian Liberation struggles

Indians ! (Native Americans) and some Blacks (including Slaves) in the American Revolution;

Arabs in Palestine (pre-1949)...

Facts. Again: Alas !

3/ FLAG IMPERIALISM: HISTORY !

3.1.1/ From **1492** (1) to **1941** (2) Flag Imperialism (3) successfully conquered and subsequently controlled as **colonies** almost the entire "world". (4) Exceptions: Afghanistan, Thailand.

3.1.2/ Flag Imperialism **only** became (permanently) successful once the Imperialist center had achieved National Unity - and at least some switch to a capitalist economy. (Compare Spanish/Portuguese/British/Dutch/French etc. Flag Imperialism with Venetian (not yet "national" Italian) or other earlier pre-Capitalist conquests (Turkey).

Latecomers (Italy, Germany - post 1870 unification) or (late-capitalist) Japan faced old-established colonisations when they began looking for colonies. Their attempts to emulate earlier successful Flag Imperialists became a source of subsequent inter-imperialist conflicts in World Wars 1 and 2. Note: Belgian Independence (from Holland) came only after 1830... when did Belgium (or rather its king !) colonise the "Belgian Congo"? I think "they" got Ruanda, .. off Germany after 1918?

Note that British, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch Flag Imperialism only "took off" after the Imperialist center had achieved "National Unity" (Spain in 1492; English and French Revolutions; Netherlands 1600s?)

3.1.3/ Note: US and Russian Flag Imperialisms initially were predominantly "continental": both expanded against, conquered, pre-feudal (Native Americans, Siberian and Inuit tribes) or pre-capitalist "weaker" societies (Mexico, Tartars, Turkey, China) until they had reached terrestrial limits, when they began conqueringly crossing water (US: Hawaii, Philippines, Russia: Alaska, West Coast America). Both the US and Russia also ran into other Flag Imperialist powers which limited their expansion after lost wars, lost battles (US: against Britain in Canada: 1776, 1812, Russia: against Britain/France/Sardes in Crimea, against Japan in Manchuria/Korea -1904-5).

Their expansion was also slowed by relatively peaceful confrontations (Russia/Britain in Asia). Russian and Prussian terrestrial expansion "westwards" also ran into other "major" powers (The Russians had to leave parts of Poland to Austria-Hungary; Prussia, although they did get all Finland off the Swedes) Prussia/Germany moved West and took Alsace-Lorraine off France in 1871 and again in 1940, but hasn't been able to "keep" it.

3.1.4/ Austro-Hungarian and Prussian/German Flag Imperialism were also predominantly "continental", expanding initially against weaker pre-or early capitalist societies to their east and south (Poland, Balkans), checked by other Flag Imperialist powers (France, Britain to Prussia's West, Russia in the East). After German "National Unification" (1871) the "Reich" began to expand overseas, but lost its Flag Colonies after World War 1.

3.2/ This conquest and control of "pre-capitalist" societies **normally** needed only **minimal" forces** (far less than were employed in inter-capitalist conflicts).

3.3/ Until 1941 no indigenous (5A) anti-imperialist colonial struggle outside Europe (5B) **succeeded** in liberating any colony.

3.4/ Successful anti-imperialist struggles liberating colonies before 1941 were always those of "**settler" colonies** - (North, Central and South Americas Englishmen, Spaniards, Africans, vs Britain, France (Haiti !), Spain and Portugal), or peaceful arrangements between settlers and Imperialist centers (Australia, Canada, Brazil...).

Such anti-Imperialist struggles against settlers were lost by the Flag Imperialists despite sometimes major military efforts (US/Britain, Spain/Americas, Philippines..) and also sometimes involved inter-imperialist conflicts (France/Britain in American Revolution, sometimes simply replacing one Flag Imperialism by another: Spain/USA in Cuba,

Philippines...). The Israeli struggle against the British Empire (1945-1950) was also a settler revolt against its previous protector/coloniser and, as in the USA and South Africa, left the indigenous (Black, American "Indian", Palestinian Arab) populations on the side of the defeated Imperialists.

3.5/ From 1941 onwards (till 1975) all colonial struggles against FLAG IMPERIALISM eventually - more or less bloodily - succeeded. This success came sometimes despite very major military effort by the Flag Imperialist ruling classes to retain their colonies (e.g. Indonesia, Indochina, Algeria, Angola....).

3.5.2/ These successful anti-Flag-Imperialist struggles were (always) led by post-feudal (? Early capitalist ?) National elites (6), forming - despite the Imperialist "denial", new nation states (7). (No previous indigenous (extra European) anti-Imperialist colonial struggle had succeeded ! - e.g. Indian Mutiny (1857), Indochinese Anti-French revolts, Palestinian Arab Revolt (1936-39), etc., etc.

3.5.3/ In almost all these now successful anti-Flag-Imperialist struggles "left" class coalitions, sometimes even led by the Communists (China, Korea, Indochina, several African Nations) were determinant. Flag Imperialism attempted to hide its policies as "Anti-Communism".

3.6/ Flag Imperialism after 1941 was progressively ! replaced by "Dollar Imperialism" (8).

3.7/ The USA attempted and conducted some of the latest, most bloody, desperate, Flag Imperialist struggles; these (North Korea, Indochina..) failed. The American government took the American flag down without major direct engagements in China and the Philippines.

3.8/ Despite the USA with their bloody failures of North Korea and Indochina - and the present success of Dollar Imperialism in Indochina and the FSU (9), at present decisive elements of the US ruling class are also attempting to revive FLAG IMPERIALISM, based on military superiority, in conquered potential colonies (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq). This renewed Flag Imperialism assumes the "effective" absence of other flag imperialist competitors.

Note new Version of old Imperialist Poem:

Then:

The difference is - that we have got - the Maxim Guns. And they have not !

Today:

The difference is - that we have got - B-52s. And they have not.

3.9/ US Flag Imperialism apparently is now considered preferable (or at least an available substitute) to Dollar Imperialism by determinant sections of the American ruling class. Dollar Imperialism, which "worked" fine for the USA, is now not always seen as sufficiently profitable and/or reliable. (An independent Iraq could have banked its income from oil sales in Euros instead of the rapidly

depreciating US Dollars, but I doubt that this is now "allowed" to the "Baghdad authorities".)

4/ A BASIC US ASSUMPTION: WITH SOME "TARTING UP" FLAG IMPERIALISM WILL STILL, OR RATHER: AGAIN ! WORK AS IT HAD DONE BETWEEN 1492 AND 1941.

At least two ex-Flag Imperialist nations, Britain and Australia, have already firmly hitched their policies (Blair, Howard) to the New Flag Imperialist cart. For Australia it has worked in the Solomons, and is now being tried in Papua New Guinea..

Reste a Voir !

Footnotes:

1. 1492 "Columbus sailed the Ocean blue..." - a good date to "anchor" the beginning of Flag Imperialism. Of course the Portuguese had begun to "colonise" in and off West Africa some decades before, but who noticed ?

2. 1941 The beginning of the end... of Flag Imperialism. A/ In Africa: The last conquered (1936) colony, Italy's Abyssinia/Ethiopia, took down the Italian flag, and - for the first time - put back up its own. Compare this with previous "lost colonies", such as "German" Namibia, et al., which did not become independent in 1915, when the Germans were kicked out by the Brits and "South Africans." Namibia only became independent much later, after bloody struggles against (White) South Africa.

(2B) In **Eastern Europe**: The Prussian/German "Drang Nach Osten", the colonisation of Poland, Russia, the Baltic, etc., began to come unstuck, reversed, on 7 **December 1941** in front of Moscow, when the till then unbeatable and unbeaten Wehrmacht was beaten back, began a retreat ending in Berlin. This was the beginning of the end for one of the most vicious Flag Imperialisms, the German/Fascist variety.

3. Flag Imperialism: Marxist term: Where the Imperialist's flag is hoisted, and (normally) stays up - over "colonies", until it, after 1941 (2) it is pulled/taken down. I consider Flag Imperialism distinct both from preceding conquests, such as the Vikings or Venetians of economic and technically "equal" societies, and from the subsequent Dollar Imperialism (8). It is, in my opinion, almost irrelevant what terms are used (Colony, Mandate, Occupation, etc.) - the essential is the open, admitted (boasted!) military control of the colony. Note that the present (2003) US Flag Imperialist conquest of Iraq "hides" its flag - when American flags were hoisted in front of TV cameras in Um..X and Baghdad, the then exuberant GI's were told to "take that down, immediately" ! Imagine it happening in Washington ? or Wall Street ! (Iraqi, or Red! Flags)

4. Exceptions:

(4A) **Afghanistan**: The British efforts to conquer Afghanistan in the 1840's failed bloodily. I don't know why Britain thereafter left that country unoccupied, unconquered. By 1904 British Expeditionary Corps had made it to Lhasa (Tibet), so it could not have

been "the terrain". Possibly a "gentlemen's agreement" with Tzarist Russia to "leave a buffer zone"?

(4B) **Thailand:** To the best of my knowledge, never "Flag Imperialistically" colonised. Had been told that this was in part due to Franco-Brit acceptance of Thai "independence" as a buffer zone between British Raj (India, Burma, Malaya) and French Indochina. Friend Goss tells me that Thai pre-1941 independence more or less fictive, in fact country was under Brit (and Oz) dominance. However, this makes it a "Dollar Imperialist" rather than Flag Imperialist colony. My point remains that Thailand cannot be assimilated to the other colonies (as above) "red on the map". It was not part of the British Empire or French Indochina.

5. Until 1941 **no**

(5A) **indigenous** anti-imperialist colonial struggle **succeeded**. - Of course there had been major successful anti-Flag-imperialist struggles in North, Central and South America after 1776 against Britain, France, Spain and - Portugal. However, these were always those of "colons", i.e. immigrant settlers, English, Spanish, or - as in the case of Haiti, imported slaves - against the French Flag Imperialists. The indigenous "Native Americans" (Indians!) nowhere recovered their "independence" at that time.

(5B) **outside Europe...** After 1918... Ireland (22 counties of 28) partly freed itself from British; Finland and the 3 Baltic countries from Russian; Poland from Russian, Prussian/German and Austrian; Czechoslovakia, Slovenia-Croatia-Bosnia/Herzegovina, Yugoslavia from Austro-Hungarian.. Flag Imperialism.

Note: Although colonised, these nations had often had integrated, almost equivalent or even more highly capitalised economies as those of their Imperialist "centers".

An ESSENTIAL FACTOR: The average rate of profit p' and usually specific rates of profit p are higher in the overseas colonies than in the Imperialist center. This is not so clear in the above European "colonies".

These European "settler colonies" (ex Austrian Bohemia) should be considered separately from the non-European (particularly Afro-Asian) Flag-Imperialist Colonies.

6. These successful anti-Flag-Imperialist struggles were (always) led by post feudal (? **Early capitalist** ?) National elites:

Demonstrable **Fact:** Pre-1941 indigenous anti-Flag Imperialist struggles always failed. Subsequently they succeeded. Three "**Explanations**" (6A) The "World" had changed; (6B) The Imperialist Powers had changed (weakened); (6C) The colonised had changed.

It should be remembered (although the Imperialist Ruling classes would very much like it forgotten !) that all Flag Imperialists sometimes very bloodily resisted their ouster. (E.g. Britain in Palestine, Egypt, Kenya, Malaya, etc. France in Indochina, Algeria, etc., Dutch in Indonesia, USA in North Korea, Vietnam, etc.). The military means employed in these unsuccessful efforts were usually far greater than those needed for earlier successful conquests and occupations. Compare, for instance, the French armies fighting – unsuccessfully – to retain North Africa – Tunisia, Morocco, and above all Algeria (1945-

1962) with those much smaller forces used by France to conquer its colonies there (1830-1920's). (See also Indochina/Vietnam 7/ below)

Thus, logically, it is (6C) - the change of the colonised, which can be considered the principal factor.

7. Despite the Imperialist "denial", new nation states: A standard justification by the Flag-Imperialist "intellectuals" for refusing to pull down their flags, for attempting to maintain, now often bloodily, their domination, was: "X" never was a nation, did not/ does not exist as a nation". (E.g.: Algeria, Palestine, Indonesia.. etc.). This had sometimes been so in the past, but now was no longer true.

Dialectics: The conquest of the colonies by Flag Imperialism had aborted independent evolution, revolutions, of these pre-capitalist societies, but had also accelerated the decline of their previously existing pre-capitalist economic systems. Although Flag Imperialism had not initially intended the creation of new capitalist nation-states, of independent and possibly competitive capitalist economies, its impact had - willy-nilly - provided this impetus.

The retreats and defeats of the colonised before 1941 had been led by pre-capitalist (tribal, feudal, monarchic) elements. Their post-1941 victories were now fought, led, by new classes, individuals, formed and educated by and under Flag Imperialism in both Nationalism and Internationalism (Marxism).

Flag Imperialism had created not only a proletariat in its colonies, but also a petit-bourgeois intelligentsia. It had permitted the creation, or the survival and even growth, of some native capitalists. Above all, Flag Imperialism, by weakening, exposing, and destroying the previous feudal/pre-feudal rulers had sapped the "passivity" of many - now doubly exploited and oppressed - peasants, who, now better led, fought effectively for national and (hoped for!) class liberation.

It was, obviously, principally these changes in the colonies, plus the change in the world and the imperialist powers themselves, which swung the balance of power from hopeless, always defeated, uprisings, to those now always eventually (historically quite rapidly: 1941-1975) successful.

Perhaps the very best example is a comparison of Vietnamese resistance a/ to the French conquest between 1859 and 1884 (accomplished by minor French forces, defeating, almost off-handedly, also Chinese support of the Vietnamese), with b/ the extremely difficult victory of the Vietnamese against France 1946-1954 and c/ the incredible defeat of the USA, Australia, et.al, by Vietnam 1960-1975.

In 1972 I asked the Vietnamese Captain Ho Nam, who had fought both the French and the Americans - which war had been harder. To my surprise he answered: "The French. By the time we were fighting the Americans, all my soldiers knew how to read and write." Captain Ho himself had studied in the French Gymnasium in Hue until he went off, in 1947, to fight - the French. Later the Americans.

8. Flag Imperialism after 1941 was progressively ! replaced by "Dollar Imperialism"
Once the colonies had defeated Flag-Imperialism and achieved political independence,

the previously **politically** dominating Imperialist powers usually switched, with greater or lesser difficulties, to **economic** domination, necessarily now leaving a greater proportion of the surplus value to indigenous elites. For instance, French "Flag" rule over Western Africa was replaced by the French African Franc (CFA) ... now ? the Euro ?

9. Despite the bloody failures of North Korea and Indochina - and its present success with Dollar Imperialism in Indochina and the Former Soviet Union FSU, at present decisive elements of the US ruling class are also attempting to revive FLAG IMPERIALISM, based on military superiority, in conquered potential colonies (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq). This renewed Flag Imperialism assumes the "effective" absence of other flag imperialist competitors. Note the characteristic Flag-Imperialist attempt to "eliminate" competing Imperialisms, such as the French or Russians, in Iraq. While cloaking its operations under the (quite normal) "Freedom for Iraqis" line (10), the present US/British occupation will probably NOT allow any dominated Iraq to keep income from its oil sales in Euros..., rather than quickly depreciating US \$.

However, some more rational American capitalists see this "all ours" Flag-Imperialism as no longer economically rational, and would at least invite other imperialists "in" on a minority basis (in Afghanistan, where there is little profit to be made at present, and ? perhaps even in Iraq ?)

10. "Freedom for Iraqis" line: It was SOP (Standard Operational Practice) for Flag-Imperialism to justify its occupations as bringing "Freedom, Civilisation, for "X". The Australians prohibited cannibalism in the Papuan Highlands, the British suttee burning of widows in India... The US/Brits freed the Iraqis from their Weapons of Mass Destruction, sorry, from Saddam Hussein's terror. Of course they do not mention that Saddam Hussein was, for decades, their favorite ally and agent, at a time his terror against Communists, Kurds and opponents was in highest gear.

The present line "American/Brit occupation protects Iraqi Democracy from resurgent Baathists, Islamists and other baddies" is but slightly dented by the lack of appreciation by the "protected" Iraqis for their so generous, self-less, protectors, whose enthusiasm for Iraqi democracy is rather abstract, and does not- at present – include elections.

A "democratic" elected Iraqi government would certainly expel foreign Flag-Imperialists... thus too much democracy there is not such a good idea ?

**In case anyone has got this far, this is a "discussion" effort. Comments invited.
Completed and slightly edited 25 February 2004----Max Watts**

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