

GI SPECIAL 2#44



Baghdad demonstration against the Occupation and the killing in Gaza of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, March 22, 2004. (Ali Jasim/Reuters)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

**Convoy, Coalition Headquarters,
Sheraton Hotel, U.S. Patrols----
Resistance Attacks Everywhere;**

At Least 5 U.S. Personnel Wounded

3.24.04 By DANIEL COONEY BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)

Insurgents attacked a U.S. military patrol west of Baghdad early Wednesday and an ensuing fight left three civilians dead and two U.S. soldiers wounded, the U.S. military and Iraqi hospital officials said.

Associated Press Television News footage of the aftermath of the fighting in the town of Fallujah, 32 miles west of Baghdad, showed two civilian cars burned, blood stains on the ground and bullet holes in walls, as well as two wounded Iraqis being taken into a hospital.

“American troops came under attack while they were patrolling in the main street,” Fallujah resident Ahmed Ali said.

The U.S. military said two “coalition personnel” were injured. The pair were airlifted from Fallujah to a combat hospital after ambushers detonated a roadside bomb and raked their vehicle with gunfire, a U.S. official said.

Muthana al-Jumeili, a doctor at Fallujah General Hospital, said three civilians died and three others were wounded. Fallujah is a hotbed of insurgent activity.

Also before dawn Wednesday, attackers fired a rocket that struck the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad, where foreign contractors and journalists stay. The rocket hit a sixth-floor ledge and the explosion left the lobby strewn with glass.

American soldiers protect the Sheraton, which is ringed by a concrete blast wall to ward off bombing attempts. **(Some “attempt.”)**

Another rocket was fired into the headquarters of the coalition in Baghdad early Wednesday, wounding a contractor, a senior U.S. official said without elaborating.

In Ramadi, west of Baghdad, Iraqi police fired shots to disperse a violent protest against Israel’s assassination of Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin in Gaza City.

Iraqi police fired in the air after protesters burned two police cars and two hand grenades were thrown at the governor’s office, witnesses said. **Television footage showed U.S. soldiers remaining behind at the building, protected by concrete blast barriers, as police with assault rifles moved down the street to disperse the crowd. At least two police and three protesters were wounded.**

Muslim clerics in Ramadi, where support for the anti-U.S. insurgency is strong, had urged followers to protest the slaying of Yassin, the spiritual leader of the Palestinian militant group.

(For more on how this shit came down, see the article "Bush's War Lies Exposed Again" at www.socialistworker.org.)

Four 1st ID Soldiers Hurt In Wreck

3.24.04 Earlier today Cenctom posted the following release:

Four 1st Infantry Division soldiers were injured in an accident involving two military vehicles near Tikrit on March 23.

The URL for this release is no longer working.

Southern Oil Pipeline Blown Up & Burning

March 24, 2004 Trade Arabia: Baghdad

An oil pipeline in southern Iraq was on fire but the main crude export link to the Basra oil terminal was not affected, officials said.

A Coalition Provisional Authority official said that the crude oil pipeline ran from southern oilfields to the Khor Al Amaya terminal, around 50 km offshore in the Gulf.

A senior oil official said the pipeline was not the main line feeding Khor Al Amaya terminal, which has been shipping about 100,000 barrels per day since opening a month ago.

"The second hand information we have indicates it is to the east of the main pipelines," the official said.

An engineer who led an Iraqi crew to inspect the damage in the Fao Peninsula bordering Iran said "**There was an explosion, but we cannot determine what was behind it at this stage.**" (Three guesses.)

Reuters Television cameraman Salem Al Oreibi saw a huge pool of oil on fire in Fao and Iraqi fire fighters on the scene.

The Basra and Khor Al Amaya terminals account for the bulk of Iraq's crude oil exports. **Routes out of the north have been hampered by sabotage and damage to the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline from bombing during the US-led invasion.**

Saboteurs set a liquefied petroleum gas pipeline in northern Iraq on fire earlier this week.

An attack on the north-south crude oil pipeline near the holy city of Kerbala last month raised concern that sabotage could be spreading south as US-led occupation forces focus on crushing insurgents mainly based in the north.-

TROOP NEWS

Dying For Lack Of Armored Humvees; Too Late For Capt. Birge?

Wall St. Journal 3.19.04

Unfortunately for Capt. Birge, who leads twice-weekly convoys through Iraq's restive Sunni heartland, the new armored Humvees and specially designed add-on armor kits won't arrive until later this fall. His deployment ends in September.

Recently he bolted more scrap steel to the back of his Humvee in the hope that it would provide him a little extra protection. Earlier this week, insurgents dynamited a section of the highway he travels regularly.

"I don't know what the Army has planned for me next," he wrote in an e-mail from Iraq in early March. **"But it's definitely time to stop ordering the Humvees with the canvas doors."**

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.

Haiti Occupation Troops Now More Than 3,300

March 23, 2004 Associated Press

The multinational force seeking to quell civil unrest in Haiti has grown to more than 3,300 troops, an increase of about 600 over the past week, U.S. Southern Command said Monday.

There are now nearly 1,900 U.S. troops participating, up from 1,750 a week ago, Southern Command said. They are mostly Marines.

Southern Command also announced a name for the operation, which began Feb. 29: "Operation Secure Tomorrow." (In their dreams.)

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/>

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

General Strike In Fallujah; More Collaborator Cops Killed

3.24.04 AFP

FALLUJAH, Iraq: The restive Iraqi town of Fallujah observed a protest strike at Israel's killing of an Islamic leader that many fear could fuel violence against the Jewish state's US ally, as four people died in attacks by insurgents.

Two Iraqis were killed and six wounded when four mortar rounds slammed into a base being used by the new Iraqi army trained by the US-led coalition in the northern city of Mosul, police said.

Resistance fighters later opened fire and seriously wounded a member of the Facility Protection Services (FPS) police force in east Mosul, the FPS said.

And at dawn, gunmen killed two policemen and injured two others in a drive-by shooting in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, while two rockets were fired at a nearby US base.

Shops, schools and public offices in Fallujah, west of Baghdad in the so-called Sunni Triangle where US forces regularly come under fire, observed a general strike to protest at Yassin's killing.

The one-day strike was called by the local council president and religious leaders, who called on residents to pay their respects for the leader of the radical Palestinian movement by presenting condolences over three days at a mosque in the town.

Iraqi Working For Time Magazine Shot

24 Mar 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

An Iraqi working for Time magazine in Baghdad was shot and critically wounded on Thursday, the magazine said, the latest casualty in a series of recent attacks on journalists and staff of media organisations.

"A member of Time's staff in Baghdad was shot and injured this morning," the magazine said in a statement. "An Iraqi citizen, he is in critical condition at the American military hospital in the Green Zone in Baghdad."

Some Iraqis working for foreign media organisations in Baghdad have also received threatening letters.

Resistance Kill Iraqi Collaborator Police Chief

HILLA, Iraq, March 24 (Reuters)

An Iraqi police chief was assassinated on Wednesday, a day after nine policemen and trainees were killed in a drive-by shooting in the same town south of Baghdad, police said.

Juwad Kathim, an Iraqi police spokesman in Hilla, said Lieutenant Colonel Yaseen Khudier died instantly when attackers riddled his car with bullets in the nearby town of Musayyab, about 60 km (35 miles) south of Baghdad. The resistance soldiers escaped.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“We Will Spread The Fire”

Interview with Jabbar al-Kubaysi on the Iraqi political resistance front.

(Abdel Yabar al-Kubaysi is director of the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance (API) (originally The Iraqi Alliance of the Patriotic Opposition), **which integrated different political organizations of the historic opposition to the Saddam Hussein regime, but also opposed the British and U.S. strategy of sanctions and war against their nation. Since the invasion and occupation of Iraq, it forms part of the resistance political front.**)

“We Will Spread The Fire”



Oil Pipeline Burns Near Basra
March 24, 2004. (Atef Hassan/Reuters)

General view of the situation of the resistance

How does the resistance against the occupation develop?

I give you an example from every day life that reflects how the mobilization has penetrated the populace. Old women are considered to be not interested in politics. However, during my travels throughout the county I often experience situations where elder women ask their sons and grandsons why they are still at home and not out there fighting with the resistance. **The resistance is not considered as the endeavor of some radicals but as an integral part of the people. Everybody has to contribute in the way one is able to.**

But isn't there significant difference between the Shi'ite South and the Sunni North?

The difference is much less than displayed by the Western media. For example, in the last Ramadan, Sunni and Shi'ites commenced fasting on the same day for the first time since the schism. This is an irrefutable sign.

The strata of collaborators from the clerics, sheikhs, self-proclaimed politicians and the so-called civil society of returned Westernized intellectuals and artists is very thin. Also the armed forces of Hakim's al-Badr brigades and Talabani's militias, who under the

guise of punishing Baathists terrorized all those who sympathized with the resistance, are now forced to go underground.

They have lost all credit for their collaboration while the supporters of the resistance come to the light of day swimming on a growing tide of popular anger.

Only in the last period the main Southern towns of Kut, Nasseriya and Amara saw mass demonstrations clashing with the occupation forces claiming about one dozen dead and an even higher number of casualties. Those taking to the streets were mainly former public employees like teachers, university professor, civil servants, clerks or soldiers who have been dismissed en masse by the occupants accusing them of being Baathists. Many of them were really members of the Baath party, some for conviction more for their professional career – by the way the majority of them naturally of Shia background.

Half a year ago that would have been impossible as the pro-US forces entering with the invaders conducted an outright McCarthyist witch hunt with thousands and thousands killed. Today the political climate has radically turned around. Baath party members and Baathism is accepted again as a part of the Iraqi national tradition. The demonstrators did not only ask to be re-employed and that their wages are being paid but they combined their social demands with the end of the occupation.

Also the level of military attacks in the South is increasing. In all the big cities resistance actions are being carried out. **Some places like Baquba located in the Diala province, where Shia and Sunni are completely mixed, is under full control of the resistance.** You will see in some months the South will reach the level of the North and will possibly even overtake it. Bear in mind that it is the poorest area of the country and our national hardship hitting hardest there.

What are the strongholds of the resistance?

Look, the situation is very dynamic. Maybe the South is today in the same stage as places like Falluja have been in summer.

For example the Americans are imposing curfews on nearly any town. In Falluja it is the other way round. The resistance has imposed a curfew on them. They had to leave the town and to build their bases outside for the unsustainable level of attacks. After the night falls they have to keep outside town. But there are also other cities the resistance controls completely.

The occupants are resorting to collective punishment of the civilian population like the Zionists do in Palestine. Especially grave is the situation in Tikrit where entire villages were destroyed and fenced off.

Did the humiliating capture of Saddam Hussein have the negative effect on the resistance as the US proclaimed it?

Certainly the presentation of Saddam Hussein in front of the media was a meticulously planned propaganda success. But on the ground it changed nothing. **On the contrary, the overall unity of the resistance has been strengthened. Many Baathists who did not agree to the rule of Saddam Hussein and who were opposed to him**

playing at least the role of a leader by honour, now actively engage in the resistance. The different Baathist groups became much more flexible in their decisions.

And on the other side the Islamic forces increased their co-operation. Saddam, despite the fact that a big majority did not agree to this methods of rule, is about to become a symbol of resistance. Even on Western TV networks they showed demonstrations carrying the pictures of Saddam defaming those boys of being Saddam-loyalists. The people have nothing to do with Saddam. They just use him as a symbol to defy the occupants just like many secular women wear the veil as a symbol against the occupation.

“We Will Spread The Fire”



British soldier burns in Basra from a bomb thrown during demonstration against occupation March 22. (Atef Hassan/Reuters)

The political resistance front

Why there is still no political resistance front in place?

There is no need to hurry. The level of military resistance is so high, from 45 to 70 attacks per day, that they create enormous military, financial and political problems for the US. In a certain sense the resistance has already been retarding their global preventive war. On the political level the US proved completely unable to stabilise the situation. **Their so-called Governing Council is more and more isolated. Not only their members but also the parties collaborating must be protected by the occupation showing to the people what they really are.**

I give you an example from my home town Falluja. After the arrest of Saddam the masses took to the streets – like in many other cities – and destroyed the offices of four collaborating parties. As revenge the US came by tanks and destroyed the office of the Patriotic Alliance. So time plays for the Iraqi people and against the US. However, the main components of the resistance have already been assembled and a draft programme is being discussed. Thus **the front will be proclaimed soon. When the US will try to pass some power to their puppets scheduled for the mid of the year, it might be already able to function as an alternative.**

What is the programme of the political resistance front?

- 1) All foreign troops must leave Iraq and the occupation must be ended. We stand for a fully sovereign, independent and united Iraq.
- 2) All means to resist the imperialist-Zionist project of occupation are legitimate.
- 3) The occupation is completely illegal. Therefore we demand full reparation by the aggressors.
- 4) All institutions created by the occupant are null and void. We will not accept them and the resistance will regard them as legitimate target even if they are Iraqised.
- 5) The liberated Iraq we are fighting for is based on equal rights for all citizens, on political freedom, on a constitution decided upon by the people. It will protect the Arab-Islamic culture of Iraq.
- 6) The US occupation of Iraq is inextricably linked to the Zionist one of Palestine. There is a common imperialist-Zionist project to oppress the Arab people which the Arab nation has to defeat commonly.
- 7) The political front is open for all forces even if they decide later to join us.
- 8) The aggression and occupation of Iraq is only one part of the grand strategy of the US to erect its global empire. Therefore our struggle is an integral part to defend humanity against its greatest enemy, the US.
- 9) We will take steps to build an Arab and international front for the liberation of Palestine and Iraq and to defeat the American empire.

Who are the components of the political resistance front?

There are four main currents spread throughout the country. There is ourselves, the “Iraqi Patriotic Alliance” which I can roughly describe as anti-imperialist, Arab nationalist, striving for democracy and social justice as well as respecting and defending our Islamic heritage.

There is the Sunni “Islamic Committee” which regroups the main Islamic leaders being strongly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood which is collaborating with the enemy. They are ready to work with everybody who is resisting including Christians and Communists.

The third force are the Nasserists who are about to reorganise. And finally there are the anti-imperialist communists of the "Central Command" who are long-term friends of us who we hope to be able to convince. While the mainstream ICP was co-operating and governing with Saddam in the 70s the anti-imperialist communists and the left Baathists were put to prisons.

Furthermore there are several other parties and associations of regional character as well as a range of recognized dignitaries.

What about Shia representatives?

First of all Shi'ite people are well represented in most of the forces named, in some they are even the majority. You have to overcome the idea spread by the Americans that the Shia society is an own, fully separated entity. Most of the Shia people consider themselves Arab Iraqis and participate as such in political life. While they observe the traditional gestures of courtesy to the clerics, only a minority follow them politically. If you do not believe it, the forthcoming events will show it. The only possibility for the Shia clerics to be accepted is to support the resistance. And there is a growing number of Shia clerics and sheikhs supporting our incipient political front.

And Muqtada al Sader?

He plays an ambiguous role. On one hand his supporters from the poor classes exert considerable pressure on him to join the resistance. We are in close contacts to many leaders of his movement who honestly promised to co-operate. On the other hand there is a strong Iranian influence on him working in the other direction. You have to bear in mind that he is a boy of 24 years. In a society where seniority counts, he seems virtually to be torn apart by the different forces trying to drag him.

Anyway, we will try to keep relations with him but we cannot allow that such wavering forces speak on behalf of the political front. One day he proclaims a counter-government and to build an army and the next one he declares the Americans to be friends and that the resistance can only use peaceful means.

Is it true that al-Sader commands his own militia?

No, you cannot compare the militias of al-Badr and the one of Talabani with the forces of al-Sader. The first ones have trained personnel, a command chain and receive a pay. Concerning Al-Sader you must be aware that there are plenty of weapons around. The Americans tolerate that he surrounds himself with some armed followers but is not much more than that. In any case, there is nothing professional.

But isn't the Shia believer bound to the word of his cleric leader?

Do not underestimate the daily effect of the occupation. To capture one man the US army terrorises entire blocks or villages. If they are not able to arrest the searched for person they punish entire families by destroying their houses just imitating the Zionist terror against the Palestinians – we keep records of more than 1100 private houses deliberately destroyed for punishment. While there the olive trees are being uprooted, here they burn our palm trees as alleged hide-outs of our guerrilla. On check points

children of less than ten years are being killed because they point with a plastic gun at the invaders.

Three such cases have been reported during Ramadan, so that parents avoid to give the traditional arm toys to their boys. If they feel in danger they tend to pull the trigger indiscriminately. This is not happening only in the North but throughout the country affecting everybody. So also the Shia people will follow those who call for resistance. It will be the turn of at least a section of the clerics to follow the growing mood of resistance.

But there are also many who use the reluctant posture of the clerics as excuse. If the Ayatollahs once will call to resistance they suddenly will not obey. So it is first of all a matter of politics and not of religion. Don't forget that the Shia population has been highly politicised and the traditional social and cultural structure much less preserved than in other milieus.

“We Will Spread The Fire”



Demonstrators in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul burn a U.S. flag while protesting against the U.S. Occupation and the killing in Gaza of Hamas founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin March 22, 2004. (Namir Noor-Eldeen/Reuters)

Democratic Constituent Assembly

What you think of the demand for a Democratic Constituent Assembly?

If I travel Iraq and speak to the ordinary people of democracy they will hit me with their shoes. What does democracy mean? They know that the embargo against them was

imposed in order to establish democracy, the war against them was waged in order to bring democracy upon them and now we are being occupied for the sake of democracy. The democracy they mean is a weapon against our people because we do not want to subordinate to the Western world.

But any liberation struggle, any revolution overturning the oppressor's regime must rely on the popular masses?

Certainly, however, you have to consider that we do not have such a tradition of a popular assembly. We cannot go against the traditional social habits and networks even more as they are largely resisting the occupation. We have to combine those elements with the popular movement on the political base of the struggle against the occupation. We will organise national assemblies of representatives of the resisting workers, peasants, students and the popular masses in general combined for example with mass demonstrations. All that will de-legitimise the Governing Council installed by the US or any such puppet institution.

According to which principles a counter power will be organised?

It will be based on the sovereignty of the Iraqi people that means on our own democracy following the interests of our people and not of imperialism. We are striving for a new democratic constitution decided upon by the people exerting their right to self-determination. It will be based on equal rights for every citizen regardless of religion or nationality, on the right to form political parties and to elect them. A free Iraq will defend our Islamic-Arab culture.

United Nations

Many say that only under the control of the UN free elections can take place?

How can any sane person believe that the Iraqi people would trust in the UN? The UN imposed an embargo on us claiming the lives of nearly 2 million people and devastating a formerly rich country. The UN justified the aggression against Iraq in 1991 and did not dare to say a single word on the permanent violation of international law by the US and the UK. The UN is nothing else as a puppet of American imperialism.

International law apparently does not apply neither for them nor for us. They violate it with impunity and we are denied it. Zionism for example does nothing else than to break any international regulation without any punishment. International law is a bad joke. **We will not allow any country to occupy us whether it is under the guise of the UN or any other body.** If we hold elections we are ready to invite international observers but we will exclude any country which served the US occupation.

They claim that without the UN civil war will break out?

This is what they try to instigate. They like to set Sunni against Shia, the Kurds with the Shia against the Sunni, the Muslims against the Christians and so on. What they wish to destroy is our Arab-Islamic identity which unifies us. Therefore

only the resistance can unite the entire Iraqi people. Only unified we will be able to get rid of the occupation and you will see that also among the Kurds, whose current leadership of Barzani and Talabani are intensely collaborating with the US, the resistance will grow adopting Islam as the common band with the Arabs.

How you think to be able to win against the entire world claiming to be unified in the UN?

We can only spit on the so-called international community and the democratic, civilized world who participated at any possible crime committed against our people. Who took our side when we were starved to death and bombed relentlessly? We don't care for all of that when it is only designed to oppress us. What kind of civilization is this which provides us only with destruction?

Therefore we are enemies of this imperialist world order. In fact Iraq is a decisive battle ground for the fate of the US empire. The Iraqi people will show the world what the empire is vincible provided that several factors come together . First of all the resistance inflicts increasing losses on the occupants not only in a military sense but also politically and morally on a level they will not stand. The longer it takes the better for the resistance.

On the other hand the resistance will spread the fire outside the Iraqi borders as the occupation of Iraq and Palestine is directed against the entire Arab and Muslim world and therefore a concern for all of them. All the puppet regimes of the US will be attacked to finally liberate our lands from imperialism and Zionism. So it is a struggle for humanity and therefore we depend also on the support of all movements and peoples fighting for their liberation from US imperialism.

The situation of all day life

How is the situation of the ordinary people evolving?

I already described the brutality and arbitrariness by which the occupants antagonize the population. There are many things to be added. For example about 2.000 rapes by US soldiers as well as more than 500 children sexually abused. Nobody speaks of the civilian victims of the occupation. Every day about 40 to 50 people get killed alone in the area of Baghdad. The doctors report that about 20 of them show wounds caused by ammunition only in use by the US troops. As a reaction the Governing Council has banned any statistics indicating the type of bullet having inflicted injury.

Then there is the incredible theft the US and its Iraqi henchmen are committing. **Where is the income from the more than 2 million barrel of crude oil they sell per day? Why water, electricity, telephone and other basic services are still not restored while US enterprises are reported to make fantastic fortunes with our money.** They have dismissed millions of state employees under the pretext that they would be Baathists. Their posts are now occupied by completely incompetent collaborators whose families often have a record of collaboration already with the British for example like Chalabi or Pachachi.

They all bring their relatives with the only aim to steal as much as possible in a time as short as possible. At the same time huge industrial equipments have been dismantled in

the period right after the war and transferred to Iran. If you now enter factories or industrial plants you will find only empty halls. Eventually we have been completely de-industrialised. Concerning the supply for basic consumer goods the UN programme "Oil for Food" was stopped but many of the contracts have been delayed due to the war. So for some months the basic livelihood will still be provided but after the people will starve. Only these rations still mute the rising inflation. But then it will skyrocket.

Already now the prices for hydrocarbon products have multiplied. In one of the oil richest countries of the world people have to queue for fuel. Not to speak of the complete lack of public security. People and especially women are frightened to leave the house as the Americans do not care about criminal activities.

What about the prison camps?

There are currently about 42.000 Iraqis illegally detained in four prisons compounds admitted by the occupants. We have reason to assume that in fact there are another 20.000 in unknown detention camps. The treatment of all these prisoners is in violation of any international regulation. Often inmates are not even told why they have been imprisoned.

There is neither legal procedure nor any trials. The occupation authorities do not consider themselves accountable to give information to relatives or lawyers. People are released as arbitrarily as they are detained, often on condition of collaboration. They do not get enough food, the sanitary standards are subhuman, torture is common. Some hundred died from mistreatment and even more result permanently disabled. There are even some hundred children and women incarcerated. About 6.000 have been kidnapped of half of which the dead corpses have been found.

But isn't the recent release of about 500 prisoners a step to a relaxation of the situation?

No, this means nothing. Since the beginning of the occupation a total of 182.000 peoples have been put behind bars of which the majority have been released again. In this sense the bombastically declared release is just routine.

The US announced that they have brought the free press to Iraq?

This is completely ridiculous. Only media working with the occupation are allowed. To speak or to write against the occupation has been declared a crime. All the newspapers siding with the resistance have been banned. The last free media outlet was closed in October. The newspaper was called "al-Raia" (The flag). You also know that the US force upon the big Arab satellite networks like al-Jazira or al-Arabiyya not to overstep a certain limit. For example a resistance cell sent them a video of three captured US officers but they refrained from broadcasting it. Having experienced their expulsion from Iraq and bearing the open menaces from the US in mind, they perform a kind of auto-censorship.

The military resistance

Who is carrying the military resistance?

It is estimate that the by now between 70.000 and 100.000 fighters joined the ranks of the resistance carrying out 45-70 attacks per day all over the country. The resistance is neither strictly centralised nor rigidly controlled by a leadership from above. Young men join it regardless whether Islamic or Baathist forces command. The allegiances simply mix up depending on the most experiences commanders – often dismissed soldiers – in a certain area. In one resistance cell you can find fighters who consider themselves as Nationalists, Baathists, Islamists or even Communists. But they have all in common that they want to defend the Arab-Islamic homeland.

How one can legitimise attacks on the occupants claiming a much higher number of civilian dead?

There is a lot of propaganda around this issue. Who is interested in showing to the world that the resistance is allegedly killing Iraqi civilians? Certainly the occupation. So there have been several bomb blasts with a high number of civilian dead for which the guerrilla is not responsible and one can only suspect the US or Israeli intelligence behind it. You have also to acknowledge that the US army is deliberately using Iraqi civilians as human shields.

They always try to have civilian cars around their convoys and to stay in the crowd as much as possible to make attacks hurt also civilians. During the Ramadan when people are all at home after sunset there was also a much lower presence of the occupants in the streets. Nevertheless, while eating you could hear the freedom fighters attack the enemy in an increased frequency. The resistance tries to avoid civilian casualties as much as possible.

Maybe the Wahabbi forces like al-Qaeda are behind such attacks?

No, this is ridiculous! The corporate media is trying to reduce the resistance to so-called Saddam-loyalists and al-Qaeda. We have already explained that most of the people join the resistance despite the fact that they did not agree to his rule.

There might be some who are also personally loyal to Saddam. **Concerning the Wahabbis you must know that the Iraqi people have been in opposition to them since 200 years. Sunni and Shia fought entire wars to defend Iraq against them. Why Iraqis should become Wahabbis now? There might be some foreign fighters here but there is no significant Iraqi supporters for al-Qaeda or similar Wahabbi groups. People want the foreign fighters to go back to their countries to fight the US puppet regimes there.**

Does the resistance already show effects on the morale of the soldiers?

Indeed. More than 3000 soldiers who deserted their duty have been registered. **They sell their weapons and for about 400 USD they get Arabic clothes and are helped to escape to Turkey or Jordan.** About 1.700 became crazy, many mutilated themselves to be returned and 56 suicides have been counted. **The occupation troops really fear the resistance and their energy is bound in protecting themselves.**

Governing Council

Can you exclude that the US imposed Governing Council might be able to stabilize the situation?

This is definitely impossible. Day by day they are more isolated. Those directly participating in the Governing Council must be protected by the occupation forces as they are targets of the resistance. But also their parties and all collaborating with them are being expelled from the social tissue.

To give you an example. In Falluja the resistance is putting up lists in the streets of collaborators who are to be outlawed. Many of them have received delegations of the resistance giving them a casket which they have to open in front of their families. Inside there are the traditional women clothes and a lipstick. In a society where virility is an important value to be designated as a woman is the maximum humiliation. The lipstick means that he is a prostitute of the enemy. For such a Sheikh and his family it would be more honourable to be killed. Also after three generations his family will not get rid of that stigma.

Another sign is that the armed militias in collaboration with the US who used to operate in the South and in the East cannot any more appear in public. **Today one can hit a militiaman belonging to al-Hakim's al-Badr or to al-Dawa with his shoe and he will not dare to react. Otherwise he risks to get killed.** The Kurdish peshmergas of Talabani dare to appear in Arab areas only together with the Americans. To come alone, as they did it in the first months of the occupation, would be too dangerous for them. But also the collaborating Muslim Brotherhood and the connected parties are in great troubles. And the fact that some clerics, among them some high ranking ones, openly spoke against the occupation is a sign of the pressure from the people.

But with the oil revenue they might be able to buy a significant section of a completely impoverished people?

To do so you need a network, a social pyramid to distribute the wealth. But for the time being the Americans seem to simply steal our oil. That which might be left goes right into the pocket of a tiny layer of collaborators. The incredible greed of both of them on the other hand helps the resistance as it radicalises the people.

Are the Americans trying to re-instate the landlord Sheikhs in the South as the British once did?

In the last decades Iraq has undergone irreversible changes. **First of all it has become a highly urbanised country and the land reform broke the power of the landlord Sheikhs.** But it is clear that the radical economic liberalism imposed by the occupants will have its effects.

Without protection by the state the peasants will not be able to carry on, the spiral of debt and land concentration will get in motion. They will surely try to make us slaves again but I doubt that the Sheikhs are able to regain their old role and provide a significant pillar for a neo-colonial regime.

The Kurdish question

Are the Americans still welcome in Kurdistan?

Unfortunately it is true that the collaborators with the strongest roots are the Kurdish leaders Barzani and Talabani. They used the situation to take control of Kirkuk, which is by majority a Turkmen town, and other places. Many Arabs have been expelled, their houses confiscated and resettled with Kurdish all under the excuse that the affected would be Saddam-loyalists.

But also there the situation is changing. On one hand in the mountains of Kurdistan an extremist Islamist movement is growing, refusing any collaboration with the US. Today they still hold on to such ideas that TV sets are not allowed. But one can be sure that with the time, with their increasing popular support they will and must adopt more realistic views. On the other hand in the area of Kirkuk and Mosul where the population is completely mixed consisting of Arabs, Turkmen, Kurdish, Chaldeans and others, a moderate Islamic party is emerging comprising also Kurdish people. We hope that they will work with the political resistance front or even be part of it.

Can you elaborate on the situation in Kirkuk?

The population of Kirkuk will not accept the Kurdish rule over the town. It is consisting of many nationalities and they can only live together in equality in a free Iraq granting them their rights. It is for example not acceptable that most of the Arabic signs and inscriptions have been removed, also many of the Turkmen ones. The Americans have installed a completely disproportional system of "ethnic representation" as they call it consigning power de facto to the Kurdish factions. Kurdish, Arabs, Turkmen and Chaldeans have the same number of seats.

But how can the Chaldeans with 2 or 3% have the same weight as the Turkmen with more than 50%? Furthermore neither the Turkmen nor the Arabs accept their representatives. The recent demonstrations against American-Kurdish rule in Kirkuk are only the first sign.

But isn't there a reason for their pro-American stance?

Nothing can justify such a collaboration and in the long run the Kurdish and the communists will heavily pay for it – even if it is wrong to condemn an entire people. But many Arabs think in this way when they are checked and searched by Kurdish soldier under US command. On the other hand it is true that also the Arab side committed mistakes in the past. We did not succeed in granting them de facto equal citizen rights allowing them to fully identify with Iraq and to consider themselves as loyal Iraqis of Kurdish nationality.

The communist tragedy

What you mean when you said the communists will pay for their collaboration?

We have to bear in mind that the Iraqi Communist Party was once by far the strongest party of Iraq and formed part of our best national tradition. In the first months of the

occupation many people wanted to return to the party and had high hopes. They did not know which process of degeneration the ICP had undergone in so many years in exile.

They claimed to be against the occupation. For most of their local supporters it was a shock to see them participating in the Governing Council. Nobody can deny that fact. Their office is within the green zone in Baghdad guarded by the Americans. Today they are nothing more than a tiny group of returned intellectuals who build what they call "civil society" for the occupants. In a certain sense they are even worse than the occupants. The Americans are foreigners, they understand nothing of our society. They are cheated even by those people they pay.

But the communists have once been Iraqis, they know our people and are able to betray them. They led the hysteric campaign against all what they call Baathist which is actually directed against the entire resistance. In the same way they now try to uproot the resistance, they later will be uprooted by the victorious people. Nobody will cry if a collaborator will be killed even if he calls himself a communist.

What are the reasons for that betrayal?

The party was always depending on the USSR. They did not dare to take their own decisions. In the time of Quassem they would have been able to take power within two minutes. But Moscow said no so they kept quiet. When Saddam took power they fully co-operated with him against the left Baathists and the anti-imperialist communists which both were put to prison or killed.

They accommodated to the life style of the ruling class going from one congress to the next and residing in five star hotels. It is not by accident that their straight collaboration dates as far back as in 1991 when they supported the aggression led by the US. As soon as the USSR collapsed they looked for the remaining power, the USA. **They just exchanged the KGB by the CIA.**

But there are opposition currents inside the party.

Yes, but they have the habit of waiting. Since 1991 we urge them to take action also against the party. However, they are running behind a miracle that they will be able to take over the party again. What other proof do they need to see that the party has definitely passed over to imperialism? Can there be something worse than the support of two wars, the embargo and the occupation? I fear that they are going to wait forever.

What about the ICP (Central Command)?

They are the only ones who can save the big tradition of the Communist Party. Already in the 60s they opposed the line imposed by Moscow to form a Socialist Unity Party with the Nasserist president Arif according to the Egypt model. They took up arms in 1967 and the majority of the party membership followed them while the majority of the Central Committee later created the National Front together with Saddam. At that time we met in the prisons.

Both of us the anti-imperialist communists and us left Baathists lost our struggle. But since then we appreciate each other and they have taken the same position in the main questions. They defended the homeland in 1991 and 2003, they fought against the

embargo and now they resist the US occupants. Although they have been very much weakened they will soon outnumber the official ICP. We hope that they will be able to gather the real communists.

What you think of the Workers' Communist Party (WCP)?

They are fully backed by the US and the Zionists. They are not a real Iraqi party. This strange sect is only comparable to the protestant missionaries following the US army.

They completely violate our cultural heritage. They declared that English should become the official language of the country. They attack and want to destroy the history and culture of the people in a situation where Islam serves as identity to fight a foreign invader. **Western people must understand one thing: If the Iraqi women turn back to wear en masse the veil, it is not for conservative or reactionary reason. Recently I met a female engineer with whom I used to study forty years ago and who never wore the Hijab but now did so. I asked her why and she simply replied as a sign of resistance.**

Furthermore the WCP seems to have plenty of money. They run a broadcasting service and in the South even a local TV station. Rumours say that they pay their group leaders and activists and provide them with prestigious accessories like satellite phones and cars. For them the resistance is the main enemy. Although communism is a part of our history – and not the worst one – they have been sent to destroy the remnants of this heritage at least that part which could not yet be destroyed by the ICP (Central Committee).

“We Will Spread The Fire”



Youths hurl rocks at British soldiers during demonstration by unemployed youths in Basra March 22, 2004. Two explosions in Basra wounded 13 British soldiers in an attack that followed. (Atef Hassan/Reuters)

Anti-globalisation movement

What you think of the movement against the war?

Which movement against the war? The war is over, now there is occupation and resistance. If they would be serious they did not hesitate to take side with the resistance. But we know that in Europe Zionism has become wide-spread not only within the governing powers but also within the left. For them Israel and America are sacrosanct. What we need today is a movement against the US, an Anti-American movement.

But the European opposition against the war, which was due also to the public opinion against the war, is still a factor complicating the situation for the US, isn't it?

There is a big game going on behind our backs. Because of the aggressive posture of the US they are unable to convince some wavering forces of the resistance to join their puppet regime. Eventually they will need some European operation to cut a deal and to buy a fraction of the resistance.

We have no doubt that the European powers will betray us. So we depend only on our own forces and refuse any negotiations. Concerning the movements I want to give just as an example of an Iraqi who spoke at the recent Cairo conference as well as on the ESF in Paris and the WSF in Mumbai. He claimed to oppose the occupation but we know that he was in Japan meeting the prime minister and welcoming the Japanese soldiers who are hardly camouflaged as humanitarian aides. Such a ridiculousness.

The organisers must have been well aware of his ambiguous role. And furthermore why did the street mobilisation stop exactly when the war started? Their task would be to fight their governments and finally to topple them and not to accept their subordination to the US war drive.

Nevertheless you spoke of an international front you want to found?

Yes, we know that your struggle is an international one regarding the fate of entire humanity. We call upon all forces in the world to join hands in a common front to liberate Iraq and Palestine and to destroy the American Empire. We will be ready to work with everybody who supports the liberation struggle against imperialism and Zionism. When the resistance will have been stabilized, we will sponsor an international conference to build such an Anti-Zionist, Anti-American and anti-imperialist front.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

A Few Detainees Released From Occupation Prison; “I Just Came Out Of Hell”

By Hamza Hendawi, March 23, 2004, Associated Press

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq — The U.S. military released 272 security detainees Tuesday from Abu Ghraib prison, once Saddam Hussein's most notorious lockup. Many smiled or flashed V-for-victory signs, while others shouted angry complaints.

In a carefully choreographed event, the prisoners were brought out in groups from inside the prison.

Reporters taken by the military to witness the event were not allowed to interview the men being release.

To the dismay of U.S. troops, some detainees, who mostly wore Arab robes or tracksuits, shouted a few words to the waiting reporters. Most refused to give their names or say which part of Iraq they came from or why they were detained.

“I just came out of hell,” screamed one.

All those who spoke claimed innocence. “I never knew what I was accused of,” said Yasser al-Badri.

Tuesday's event followed the release of 168 prisoners on Sunday without any publicity, **and the disclosure that six American soldiers face charges of abusing prisoners at Abu Ghraib, used by Saddam to detain political foes along with common criminals.**

Iraqis say many arrests were arbitrary and based on tips from informers with ulterior motives, like settling old scores.

Many Iraqis complain they are unable to locate detained relatives and friends. Recently, the coalition has posted the names of detainees on the Internet, but most Iraqis have no access to the World Wide Web.

Those who succeed in tracking down detainees often complain they cannot visit them. Lt. Col. Craig Essick, the Army officer in charge of the 5,500-6,000 security detainees at Abu Ghraib, told reporters Tuesday that a visitation center at Abu Ghraib was being set up, but acknowledged some inmates could go for long periods without a visitor.

Many former detainees claim to have been tortured and ill-treated by coalition troops during interrogation.

Methods often reported, it said, included prolonged sleep deprivation, beatings, exposure to loud music and prolonged hooding.

“Relatives of those held inside still wait outside (Abu Ghraib prison) for news of their loved ones, and lawyers are still turned away,” the rights group said.

“It’s good for us, because it reduces our population,” Essick, of the 16th Military Police Brigade out of Fort Bragg, N.C., said of the detainees released Tuesday. “They are no longer a threat to the security of coalition forces.” **(Of course not. They are sooo grateful to the U.S. for invading and occupying their country and throwing them in a fucking dungeon they will never lift a finger in the struggle to regain their national independence.)**

Some detainees were elderly. Some looked bitter, even angry, others were silent.

One detainee with a silver beard claimed to have been beaten, but refused to give his name.

<p style="text-align: center;">OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

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