

GI SPECIAL 2#59



Falluja: “We Definitely Stumbled Into The Wasp Nest” Resistance Attacking U.S. Forces “With Increasing Sophistication”

April 15, 2004 By JASON KEYSER and LOURDES NAVARRO, Associated Press Writers

FALUJAH, Iraq (AP) - U.S. warplanes strafed gunmen in Falujah on Wednesday, and more than 100 guerrillas with rocket-propelled grenades pounded a lone Marine armored vehicle lost in the streets - a sign of heavy battles ahead if Marines resume a full assault on this besieged city.

In Falujah, Marines and insurgents were fortifying their positions in preparation for more fighting.

In abandoned homes a few blocks into the city, Marines punched bricks out of walls to make holes through which to fire, and knocked down walls between rooftop terraces to allow movement from house to house without descending to the street. They spread shards of glass across doorsteps to hear the boot of an approaching insurgent.

Insurgents were also organizing. Soldiers were believed to be digging tunnels under the houses they hold to allow them to move without being targeted by Marine snipers, Marines said.

A 4-day-old truce was crumbling amid nightly battles in which resistance troops in larger groups have been attacking U.S. troops with increasing sophistication.

Wednesday night the fighting began again, with AC-130 gunships over the city battering targets below.

Tuesday night, insurgents launched near simultaneous attacks on several positions of a company of Marines controlling a few blocks in the city's northeast. In one attack, the gunmen sent up flares to light up the American position, then unleashed heavy, continuous gunfire, Marines said.

In a five-hour battle the same night, one of two armored vehicles sent to resupply a front-line Marine position got lost during an ambush and ended up nearly half a mile inside the southern part of city.

The vehicle, with 20 Marines inside, came under an even larger ambush. At least 100 gunmen opened fire with rocket-propelled grenades, hitting it at least 10 times, knocking out its communications and its engine and paralyzing it.

“They've been preparing for this the whole time. ... **We definitely stumbled into the wasp nest,**” said Captain Jason Smith, who was at the position meant to be resupplied. The Marines in the armored vehicle fled into a nearby building, where they waited to be rescued. They threw back grenades that insurgents tossed over the wall and listened to gunmen whisper outside.

A rescue force, backed by four tanks, wandered the streets in search of the beleaguered vehicle, finding it by following black smoke. “We were firing in a 360-degree radius,” said Lt. Joshua Glover, part of the team that reached the vehicle. While F-15 warplanes strafed the area for cover, the stricken armored vehicle was hooked to a tank and dragged away.

Elsewhere in the city, gunmen wore police flak jackets looted from Iraqi police stores.

“We fought for every one of these streets,” Col. B.P. McCoy, 41, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment said during a dangerous, zigzagging trot through a northern neighborhood to inspect Marine positions. The streets were empty. A few scorched cars littered roads.

The U.N. envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, criticized the U.S. military operation in Fallujah.

“Collective punishment is certainly unacceptable and the siege of the city is absolutely unacceptable,” he said.

Insurgents Escalating Tactical Sophistication Of Attacks; “A Troubling Development” -- Campaign Leaves Bridges Heavily Damaged, Hampering Occupation Military Movements

April 14, 2004 By Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Staff Writer

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq, April 13 -- Insurgents fighting the U.S.-led occupation force have sharply increased the sophistication, coordination and aggressiveness of their tactics over the past week, Army officers and soldiers involved in combat here said.

Most dramatically, as several thousand U.S. troops pushed south this week from the Baghdad area to this new base in central Iraq, one highway bridge on their planned route was destroyed and two others were so heavily damaged that they could not be used by heavy Army trucks and armored vehicles.

Those attacks on convoy routes, which U.S. forces were using for the first time, revealed a previously unseen degree of coordination among insurgent groups, said Army Col. Dana J.H. Pittard, the commander of a brigade-size task force now assembling for possible combat operations against the forces of radical Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada Sadr in or near the holy city of Najaf.

"The dropping of the bridges was very interesting, because it showed a regional or even a national level of organization," Pittard said in an interview. He said insurgents appeared to be sending information southward, communicating about routes being taken by U.S. forces and then getting sufficient amounts of explosives to key bridges ahead of the convoys.

With occupation forces battling Sadr's Shiite militiamen south and east of Baghdad and Sunni Muslim insurgents to the north and west, the timing of the Iraqis' tactical development is nearly as troubling for U.S. forces as its effect. But the explanation for the change is not yet clear, military commanders said.

Here in southern Iraq, which is overwhelmingly Shiite, U.S. officers say the best guess is that former soldiers who served under President Saddam Hussein have decided to lend their expertise and coordinating abilities to the untrained Shiite militiamen.

Maj. Gen. John R. Batiste, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, said in a brief interview here at FOB Duke, where he was reviewing combat preparations said of Faluja "You could staff a division with the Iraqi officers living there."

One of Pittard's combat engineers noted that several hundred pounds of explosive material and a fair degree of expertise were required to destroy a span on a major highway bridge. *Several Army convoys moving south to this base -- the task force commanded by Pittard includes elements of the 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Infantry Division and 25th Infantry Division -- were delayed by more than 12 hours by the operations against the bridges, which Pittard called "irritating" but not a major problem. (Waiting 12 hours for reinforcements is merely "irritating!" General Custer would have loved this guy.)*

The bridge demolitions are not the only evidence of the insurgents' increasing sophistication.

"When we first got here, it was just IEDs," the roadside bombs known as improvised explosive devices, "and mortars," said Sgt. James Amyett, a scout with the 1st Infantry Division who arrived in Iraq just over a month ago. "Then all of a sudden, it's full-scale ambushes."

He was speaking in the predawn hours Tuesday while his convoy recovered from a roadside attack just west of the Euphrates River that began with a bomb and was followed by bursts of red tracer fire from a machine gun and several volleys of rocket-propelled grenades. One U.S. soldier was mortally wounded in the attack; another soldier and a civilian contractor were less seriously injured.

In a separate ambush east of Najaf, a group of fighters suspected to be part of Sadr's militia let a group of six U.S. armored vehicles pass their position, then placed obstacles across the highway behind them, cutting off their line of retreat. The armored vehicles were forced to move forward across a bridge. While they were on the bridge approaching a police checkpoint, Iraqi fighters, some of them wearing police uniforms, began firing on them. No U.S. troops were hurt in the incident.

In another departure being studied by U.S. military intelligence, groups of fighters launched synchronized attacks Friday on several U.S. and Iraqi installations in Baqubah, a provincial capital north of Baghdad. By simultaneously striking U.S. troops at the police station, the provincial governors' office and a U.S. military office, the insurgents displayed not only a considerable amount of planning and positioning but also a level of aggressiveness far beyond the roadside bombings and firing of rocket-propelled grenades that occur daily in Iraq.

"This ain't just 15-year-old kids with RPGs," said a combat engineer in the 1st Infantry Division.

The new assertiveness of the anti-U.S. fighters was displayed further later that day on the outskirts of Baqubah, where dozens of RPG-toting fighters confronted a platoon of four Bradley Fighting Vehicles, according to a 1st Infantry Division after-action report. "The platoon was literally surrounded by the enemy," the

report said. **One U.S. soldier and about 20 Iraqis were killed in the encounter, the report said.**

"More and more, they're starting to stand and shoot," said Sgt. Maj. John Fourhman, the top enlisted soldier in the 1st Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade. "Before, they just ran."

In addition, Iraqi fighters have begun dynamiting highway overpasses in Baghdad. Though they did not destroy the spans, they succeeded in slowing traffic, depriving U.S. supply convoys of their best defense against ambushes -- speed. It is far easier to use roadside bombs and rocket-propelled grenades against a truck mired in traffic than it is to hit one moving at 60 mph.

The evolution of the insurgents' tactics is particularly surprising, military analysts say, because many such moves had been expected but did not occur during the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq last spring.

Attacks on bridges were widely expected within the Army because it was clear that the U.S. troops heading for Baghdad would have to cross the Euphrates. **Also, while much of the Iraqi military, including its armored units and air force, was believed to have deteriorated badly after a decade of crippling economic sanctions, Iraqi military engineers, who would have overseen the destruction of bridges, were judged to be extremely competent.** As it happened, not one bridge was detonated to block the path of the invasion force.

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT THE NEW 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/>

Soldier Killed In Samarra Attack, Five Wounded

2004-04-15 Middle East Online

BAGHDAD - A US soldier has been killed and five wounded in two separate roadside bombing attacks near the city of Samarra, north of Baghdad, the military said Thursday.

Will The Fools In Command Take The Bait?

April 15, 2004 By JASON KEYSER and LOURDES NAVARRO, Associated Press Writers

In the south, the country's top cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, persuaded radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr to drop defiant negotiating demands - including that U.S. troops withdraw from all Iraqi cities. An Iranian envoy was also getting involved in the mediation with al-Sadr, an aide to the cleric said.

Still, al-Sadr militiamen appeared to be preparing for a fight, moving into buildings and onto rooftops on Najaf's outskirts, said Col. Dana J.H. Pittard, head of the 2,500 U.S. troops amassed outside the city, ready to move in against al-Sadr.

``Najaf is a holy place," said Kaysal Hazali, spokesman for al-Sadr. ``If they attack it, God knows the results: It is not going to be good for the occupation."

Task Force Olympia Soldier Dies

4.14.04 Combined Joint Task Force 7 Release #040415c

MOSUL, Iraq - A Task Force Olympia Soldier died April 14 from an acute cardiac event. The name of the Soldier is withheld pending notification of next of kin.

Va. Man Working As Driver Killed In Ambush

(Note well, he was making \$120,000 a year. So how do you feel about your shitty Army or Marine Corps pay? Or maybe if you're serving in Iraq, it's not dangerous enough to be paid enough to support your family? Or maybe your life isn't worth shit to your real enemies, the people running the U.S. government, who started this war for nothing more than Imperial dreams?)

April 14, 2004, By the Associated Press

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. -- A 43-year-old Virginia Beach man working as a driver for Halliburton Co. in Iraq was shot to death last Friday when his convoy was ambushed in Abu Graib, near Fallujah.

Steven Scott Fisher had signed on with KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton, in November.

Fisher, Hampton Roads' first civilian casualty in the Iraq conflict, leaves behind a wife, Ingrid, and three children.

Fisher, a former Marine, resigned from his job with a waste management company in Chesapeake to take a one-year assignment in Iraq with Halliburton.

Bard Ramsey, operations manager for Browning-Ferris Industries Waste Services, said the prospect that Fisher could receive considerably more money by working in Iraq also was a draw. Halliburton offers starting workers \$80,000 tax-free for working in Iraq for a year, or up to \$120,000 with overtime.

Fisher's remains have been returned home. A funeral service will be Saturday in Virginia Beach.

Bulgarian Troops Considering Withdrawal

12 April 2004 Sofia (Bulgaria) Morning News

Under continuously tensing pressure on Bulgarian troops by Iraqi militant groups, the government has started contemplating options of withdrawal. Voices have risen that the security of the unit deployed in Karbala is not guaranteed.

Bulgarian troops can be withdrawn from Iraq should it becomes impossible to strain the situation under control.

The National Security Council held a crisis meeting on Sunday to discuss the continuously escalating tension in the Bulgarian area of patrolling in Karbala and to outline measures for guaranteeing the security of the some 500-strong unit.

The members of the Council have specified a number of scenarios, varying from complete calming down till utmost risk.

All discussed and approved measures will be included in a special report, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Lyubomir Ivanov announced following the meeting.

As a result of the frequented cases of violence in Iraq, families and relatives of the Bulgarian troops initiated a subscription calling for their safe return and guarantees of their security.

Later on Monday, they are expected to arrive at the Presidency demanding to talk to Bulgaria's head of state.

The War Comes To Durango, Colorado:

DHS Alumnus Tim Smith Is Casualty; 30 Other Halliburton Workers Killed So Far

April 14, 2004 By Ann Butler, Special to the Durango Herald

When Timothy H. Smith was at Durango High School, he didn't have time to participate in clubs or sports. He spent most time outside of school at work, helping to support his family. He was still working to support his family 23 years later, when he was killed in Iraq.

Smith, who grew up in Redmesa and graduated from DHS in 1981, was killed near Baghdad on Wednesday, April 7.

The 40-year-old Aztec resident was killed while driving a truck for Kellogg, Brown and Root engineering and construction group, a division of Halliburton.

His wife, Sally Hood, said she was inundated by telephone calls from the media after the notification of his death. Between the calls and the uncertainty of when her husband's remains would be returned to the United States, the grieving process, she said, has been difficult.

Smith's project team was part of the U.S. Army Material Command Logistical Civil Augmentation Program. The program frees soldiers for fighting by using civilians to perform jobs that do not require the use of weapons, jobs such as food service, construction and fuel delivery.

Smith is one of 30 Halliburton employees who have been killed in the Kuwait-Iraq theater. The corporation and its subsidiaries employ 25,000 civilian workers in the Middle East. Smith began working in Iraq in December.

He was born in Butte, Mont., on July 16, 1963, to Richard Ellis and Maude Smith. **The family moved to the Hesperus area in 1965, where his mother was the cook at Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary School and his father was a welder.**

The family enjoyed the outdoors, including hiking, hunting and fishing. Smith, along with his brother Glen, owned two hunting dogs, Snoopy and Casey. They were the boys' pride. One year, they found an orphaned fawn. They named him George and nursed him with a bottle until he was old enough to survive on his own.

As a teenager, Smith told his wife, he was "the ornery kid." Sue Ullom, a family friend, remembered the two Smith boys, accompanied by her brother, Pete Butler, held an annual ritual: They would jump into the icy waters of the Fort Lewis Mesa Reservoir from the big rocks when there was still snow on the La Plata Mountains.

Kipp Shreiner, now a counselor at DHS, knew Smith as a student who liked a good laugh. "He had a great sense of humor, and it was fun to joke around with him. He was very active in Future Farmers of America and took a lot of vocational classes."

Classmate Rena Bacus was saddened by her friend's death. Her memories were of a young man who was happy, goodhearted and comfortable with himself. She said he "would never say anything bad about someone else."

Since high school, Smith held a variety of jobs, working as an independent truck driver for the last 11 years. He had logged countless miles across the United States and Canada.

Smith loved to travel. Perhaps the biggest adventure of his life, his wife said, was a hunting trip to Alaska with buddies a few years ago.

The 40-year-old Aztec resident was devoted to his 10-year-old daughter, Brandi Gelle Smith, and the two took many trips together. Her favorites included Yellowstone National Park, the Denver Zoo and a two-week expedition to Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

He is survived by his wife and daughter; stepchildren Montadelle Hood, Amy Budd and John Hood from the Aztec area; five step-grandchildren, all from the Aztec area; sisters Margaret James of Kentucky, Mary Lou Johnson of Farmington and Rose McCloud of Illinois; brother Mike Smith of Oregon; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Two Nepalese Mercenaries Die In Road Blast

Kathmandu, Apr 14 (IANS)

Two former Gorkha soldiers from Nepal died in Iraq after the vehicle in which they were travelling hit a mine, a daily reported Wednesday.

Shiva Prasad Lawati and Ram Bahadur Gurung, two ex-army men, had been working as security guards in the oil-rich country for about nine months, the Kathmandu Post reported.

They had been recruited by a manpower agency called Global Risk Strategies Hong Kong Ltd. While returning from work in northern Iraq on Friday, their vehicle hit a mine, killing both.

One of the victims' families was informed about the death Sunday.

Recently, a manpower agency based in New Delhi had advertised in Nepal for Gorkha ex-servicemen for recruitment in Iraq.

Italian Mercenary Executed

Iraqi militants executed one of four Italian hostages, Italy confirmed. The captors issued demands including the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq and threatened to kill the three others, according to the Arab TV network Al-Jazeera, which said it received a videotape of the murder.

The killing of the Italian, a security guard, is the first known execution of a foreign hostage in Iraq and **could further dissuade international aid workers, contractors and journalists**, some of whom are already restricting their activities in the country. Earlier Wednesday, Russia announced it will evacuate its citizens. **(Hopefully it will certainly “dissuade” the Occupations’ mercenary hired killers. “Security guards”?! Note the cute way the media make them sound like your friendly night watchman or somebody keeping an eye on things at the mall.)**

With 22 foreigners currently held captive and at least 87 U.S. troops killed halfway into April, the unprecedented violence has largely eclipsed the political process.

Honduras Confirms Attacks On Its Military Base

MANAGUA, April 14 (Xinhuanet) -- The military leader of Honduran troops in Iraq confirmed Wednesday that the Tegucigalpa Military Base in Najaf came under six mortar attacks, reports reaching here said.

In a phone conversation, Col. Wilfredo Calderon, commander of the Honduran troops deployed in Iraq, told the press in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, that in the past several days, the military base in Najaf sustained six attacks by 60 millimeter mortar grenades.

He said the latest attack was staged on Wednesday but no one was killed.

The only casualty in the troops was a lieutenant wounded in an attack against a mobile patrol heading for Najaf on April 4.

Honduran troops are stationed in Najaf, south of Baghdad, as part of the Spanish-led Plus Ultra Brigade.

Four Killed As Indonesian Ambulance Hit By U.S. Missile

April 15, 2004 The Jakarta Post

JAKARTA (JP): An ambulance of the Medical Emergency Rescue Committee (Mer-C) donated by Indonesia was shot by a missile launched from a U.S. jet fighter in Fallujah, Iraq, killing four people, news reports said on Wednesday.

"The ambulance's driver and three patients who had been evacuated were killed as a missile launched from the U.S. jet fighter hit them. The ambulance was blasted to pieces," Joserizal Jurnal, the chairman of the Mer-C, told *Republika* on Tuesday.

Joserizal said the incident occurred last Friday at noon after Abu Ibrahim, the driver who was a Jordanian volunteer for Merc-C, had just evacuated the three victims.

He said that the organization would lodge a strong protest against the U.S. government via the U.S. Embassy in Indonesia.

Rocket Hits Sheraton Hotel

April 14, 2004 Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- A rocket hit the Sheraton Hotel on Wednesday, breaking glass but causing no casualties in the building where many foreign contractors and journalists stay.

A second rocket failed to fire and remained lying in the street outside.

The rocket hit the Sheraton's 12th floor, causing an echoing explosion. It punched a small hole in the hotel's wall, and falling debris broke windows in the atrium below.

The attack took place just as U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi was holding a news conference across the Tigris River in the U.S.-led coalition headquarters.

A rocket that resembled a Katyusha shell that apparently failed to fire lay in a nearby street that had a clear line of fire to the Sheraton, but not the convention center across the river where Brahimi was speaking.

US Soldiers In Iraq Told Their Duty Is To Pray For Bush

ABC News Online March 30, 2003.

They may be the ones facing danger on the battlefield, but US soldiers in Iraq are being asked to pray for President George W Bush.

Thousands of marines have been given a pamphlet called "A Christian's Duty," a mini prayer book which includes a tear-out section to be mailed to the White House pledging the soldier who sends it in has been praying for Bush.

The pamphlet, produced by a group called In Touch Ministries, offers a daily prayer to be made for the US president, a born-again Christian who likes to invoke his God in speeches.

Sunday's is "Pray that the President and his advisers will seek God and his wisdom daily and not rely on their own understanding".

Monday's reads "Pray that the President and his advisers will be strong and courageous to do what is right regardless of critics".

TROOP NEWS

There Are No Fresh U.S. Troops To Send To Iraq

April 11, 2004 Time Magazine, By Barry McCaffrey

There are no more U.S. troops to send to Iraq.

The key question is, if you've got 70% of your combat battalions in the U.S. Army deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq, South Korea and elsewhere, can you maintain this kind of muscular presence in that many places? The answer is no.

(For a stunning condemnation of the invasion and occupation of Iraq by a U.S. Marine who participated in the capture of Baghdad, see the centerfold interview with Mike Hoffman at www.socialistworker.org.)

Nominees For Deluded Loudmouth-Of-The-Year Award For 2004

(Now that Odious Odierno, the self-proclaimed pacifier of Mosul and Tikrit, is safely back at the Pentagon kissing ass, a replacement is needed.)

(THANKS TO JOE WHO E-MAILED THIS IN:)

"Given the virulent nature of the enemy, the prospect of some city father walking in and getting Joe Jihadi to give himself up is pretty slim .That's fine, because they'll get whipped up, come out fighting again and get mowed down ... Their only choices are to submit or die"

---Lt. Col. Brennan Byrne, 5th Marine Battalion in Fallujah, Iraq
(Washington Post, April 11, 2004)

"We will always be humanitarian in our efforts. We will fight him on our terms. May God help them when we're done with them."

---Maj Gen James N. Hattis, First Marine Division commander, email quoted in New York Times (April 11, 2004)

Army Buys Memorial From Anti-Occupation Artist

By Yochi J. Dreazen, Wall St. Journal, 3.8.04

Tikrit, Iraq:

The Fourth Infantry Division missed most major combat operations in last year's war, but it has suffered near-daily casualties in the violent insurgency that has followed. All told, 84 soldiers from the division and units that fought alongside it as part of the Army's Task Force Ironhorse have been killed in combat or accidents. Hundreds more have been wounded.

The division has had its share of successes—its soldiers helped collar Saddam Hussein in December—but the deaths are its only sustained losses since Vietnam.

After the unit suffered its first significant fatalities last summer, senior officers began searching for a way to commemorate the dead. Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Fuss, the division's top enlisted officer, spearheaded the project. He initially envisioned a grieving soldier kneeling before the traditional battlefield helmet-rifle-and-boots memorial.

Searching for a talented local sculptor to carry out Sgt. Fuss's vision, the Americans asked an Iraqi contractor if he knew any. The contractor recommended Khalid Alussy, a thin 27-year-old with a quick laugh.

During an interview, he admitted that he was on a team of several artisans commissioned by the Hussein government to make the statues of Saddam. He said he took the job because he needed the money and was afraid of the consequence of saying no.

The officers didn't question Mr. Alussy further about his political views. Had they pressed him, they might have learned that he's harshly critical of the U.S. and bitter over an American rocket attack during the war that killed his uncle. In an interview, he says he thinks the war was fought for oil and holds the U.S. responsible for the violence and unemployment that have plagued Iraq since.

"I made the statues of Saddam—even though I didn't want to—because I needed money for my family and to finish my education," he says, reclining in a room decorated with several of his paintings. "And I decided to make statues for the Americans for the exact same reasons."

Fearful that Mr. Alussy's neighbors might not take kindly to him working for the Americans, soldiers covered their cargo [of metal for him] with tarps in civilian trucks and drove them to Mr. Alussy's house, where he set up a workshop on the second floor to keep the project secret.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraqis Increasingly Sympathize With Rebels; “I Am 100% With The Resistance Now. They Are Giving Their Lives To Free Our Country” General Strike Shuts Down Baghdad

By FARNAZ FASSIHI Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL April 12, 2004

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Salman Daoud has done good business since the Americans arrived in Iraq, importing foods such as turkey and cranberry sauce for Thanksgiving. **But on Saturday, the 43-year-old owner of a Baghdad gourmet supermarket closed his shop in response to a call by a Sunni cleric for a three-day general strike in solidarity with insurgents fighting U.S. troops in several cities.**

Reflecting a growing sentiment among ordinary Iraqis, Mr. Daoud, a moderate Sunni Muslim who caters mostly to foreign clients, has found himself increasingly sympathizing with the Sunni insurgents battling the U.S. in the north and the firebrand cleric leading a Shiite Muslim rebellion in the south.

"The past few weeks have proved to me that Americans are occupiers and liars," says Mr. Daoud, who spends much of his day monitoring Arab-language television reports. **"They are killing innocent Iraqis, women and children. I am 100% with the resistance group now, both Sunni and Shiites. They are giving their lives to free our country."**

(He's absolutely right. That is exactly what Iraqis are fighting for, to free their country from a foreign Imperial occupation by the worlds' leading terrorist thug, George W. Bush. They are right to do so. Their valor and fighting spirit have earned the support of decent people everywhere in the world. The government in Washington D.C. sent U.S. soldiers to war for nothing more than corporate greed and Imperial dreams, and now they're dying for nothing more than corporate greed and Imperial dreams. Enough is enough.)

Mr. Daoud's changing view underscores one of the biggest challenges the U.S. faces in Iraq: how to move aggressively into areas dominated by enemy fighters without alienating and infuriating a vast swath of Iraqis who have largely sat on the sidelines during the occupation so far. The challenge promises to become even more difficult if the U.S. military carries through with plans to move forcefully into southern cities such as Najaf and Karbala, which many Iraqis view as especially sensitive holy sites.

At least four members of Iraq's U.S.-appointed Governing Council have resigned in recent days in protest of U.S. tactics in Fallujah.

Signs that the new fighting is convincing some Iraqis to reassess their view of the insurgency are increasingly easy to find. Long lines have formed for blood drives and charity drop-offs to aid the besieged residents of Fallujah. Residents in many Baghdad neighborhoods signed up to host displaced families from Fallujah and banners and signs are posted at every corner declaring that the Sunni and Shiite forces are now unified. A cigarette seller in Baghdad said yesterday he has decided to collect tax from customers and contribute the money toward any militia that is fighting the Americans.

American officials say the insurgency remains limited to a relatively small number of hard-core U.S. opponents determined to undermine the transition to Iraqi rule. President Bush, speaking yesterday to reporters in Texas, blamed the increased violence on "people trying to stop progress toward democracy," adding that "the violence was thrust upon innocent Iraqis." Of the U.S. troops, he said, "Their job is to make Iraq more secure so that a peaceful Iraq can emerge." **(British officials say the American insurgency remains limited to a relatively small number of hard-core U.S. opponents determined to undermine British rule in the United States. "A few Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin remnants and terrorists are all we have to worry about," said Lord North, British Prime Minister, as he announced a decision to send more British soldiers to Massachusetts and Virginia, under the command of Lord Cornwallis. "Their job is to make America more secure so that a peaceful America can emerge.")**

American officials in Baghdad attribute the widening gap of perception between Americans and Iraqis to Arab satellite news channels like Qatar-based al Jazeera or Abu Dhabi's al Arabiya.

Still, the broadcasts are striking a chord. **If the American public and its news media are raising questions about Iraq becoming another Vietnam for its troops, the Iraqis and the Arab media have already started drawing a parallel between Iraqis and the Palestinians.**

Despite U.S. officials' claims that the uprisings have no grass-roots support, the public's adherence to a cleric's call for a general strike demonstrates just how much the relationship between Americans and Iraqis has deteriorated in the past few weeks. The streets of Baghdad were largely empty over the weekend, with the majority of businesses closed. Schools, universities and government buildings also shut down.

"It is a very delicate problem any time you try to impose a cease-fire on hostilities," said L. Paul Bremer, the U.S.'s top administrator in Iraq, to Fox News channel last night. "And we are very mindful of the need not to have the result be that the insurgents become stronger." **(Lots of luck, asshole.)**

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/>

Baghdad Organizes To Support Faluja Resistance; “We Will Defeat You, God Willing”



Volunteers at a mosque in Baghdad load bags of flour, grains and other staples into trucks for delivery to Fallujah. (Dana Smillie For The Washington Post)

(THANKS TO PG WHO E-MAILED THIS IN. PG writes: "This article has a condescending tone, but reports more bad news for the US.")

April 13, 2004 By Karl Vick and Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, April 12 -- The U.S. Marine siege of Fallujah, designed to isolate and pursue a handful of extremists in a restive town, has produced a powerful backlash in the capital. Urged on by leaflets, sermons and freshly sprayed graffiti calling for jihad, young men are leaving Baghdad to join a fight that residents say has less to do with battlefield success than with a cause infused with righteousness and sacrifice.

The resistance also recently acquired a logo. Two fingers form a victory sign over an image of Iraq on posters that appeared in Baghdad on Monday. The words "No to the occupation" appear over the date Baghdad fell: April 9, 2003. Sadr makes the same gesture in a poster of his own.

"I don't think any honorable Iraqi could stand by and do nothing when he sees women and children killed," said Abu Ali, a merchant in the once avowedly pro-Hussein neighborhood of Karrada. "An Iraqi must either fight or leave the country. It is better for him to be hosted by the graves than just watching and doing nothing."

How many Iraqis are volunteering to fight in Fallujah cannot be easily determined. The Baghdad man who quit the Civil Defense Corps because of Fallujah said he could name 30 friends who have joined the fight.

"It's natural that many fighters from Baghdad want to go to Fallujah and fight," said Abdulqadir Mohammad Ali, prayer leader at the modest Great Mosque in Baghdad's Washash neighborhood. A Sunni mosque in a mixed neighborhood, it displayed a Sadr poster on one wall.

Ali's office smelled like a bakery, so fresh were the cookies young men poured into the dozen bulging bags that crowded the room, more food for Fallujah. The imam spoke over the din of the Koranic verses that have been booming out of the mosque's loudspeakers since the siege began more than a week ago. On a bench beside a window, an elderly man read a battered copy of the holy book and occasionally sobbed. Abdullah Hussein Othman, a 70-year-old ethnic Kurd, explained he had two daughters in Fallujah.

"The exact image I want to give you is the young men heading to fight in Fallujah are more than the refugees coming out of Fallujah," Ali said. "We cannot control the feelings of the young."

The fighters, he added, reject the label "fedayeen," the name for deposed president Saddam Hussein's most zealous fighters, who, like the new insurgents, favor black attire. "We say 'mujaheddin,' " he said, Arabic for sacred combatants.

Slang has also evolved. Many Shiites recall a slogan they saw written on the barrel of an Iraqi tank dispatched to crush a 1991 Shiite uprising: "No more Shiites after today." In the tumultuous aftermath of Hussein's fall a year ago, new slogans went up across cities in Shiite-dominated southern Iraq: "No Baathists after today."

Monday, in the Sunni neighborhood of Adhamiya, there was another variation: "No occupation after today."

"There is no number to count the army that will fight the Americans," Ahmed said. "It's so big, it's limitless."

Abu Idris said some Fallujah natives insisted that they did not need help, leaving many volunteers to roam the region between the city and the capital. The area has become a no-go zone in recent days, with several journalists kidnapped and convoys attacked.

"Mujaheddin are just killing the agents who are supplying the Americans," said a teenager who gave his name as Abu Hanifa. He smiled, then scampered into the back of a blue truck with the other volunteers.

Calling out for a photograph, they laughed and held up two fingers in a victory sign.

"We Will Defeat You, God Willing"

THE VICTORY SIGN



An Iraqi youth flashes a victory sign near a burning U.S. Army truck, after it came under attack on Baghdad's airport highway April 14, 2004. (Ali Jasim/Reuters)

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Cheney Shocker



Dick Cheney, visiting Fudan University in Shanghai, April 15, admitted today that he is in fact a vampire. Reporters pressed the Vice President until he made the startling revelation after this photo appeared in the Chinese press, showing protruding fangs on each side of his upper jaw.

Cheney hastened to reassure average Americans that they have nothing to fear, however, because he subsists entirely on oil and the blood of dead and dying American soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, and other occupied territories.

Chinese governmental authorities, who welcomed Cheneys' visit, indicated they were not troubled by the revelation, since they have been sucking the blood of ordinary Chinese working people to support their lavish lifestyles, fat bank accounts, and corporate business investments for over 40 years. Said one top leader of the Chinese Communist Party, "We understand each other perfectly. He does the "democracy"

scam, we do the “socialism” and “communism” scam, and we both grab the cash for ourselves.” (Pool via Reuters)

GREAT MOMENTS IN HOMELAND SECURITY

from UNDERNEWS: <http://www.prorev.com/indexa.htm>

BRITISH NOVELIST IAN McEwan, who was denied entry to the US for 36 hours and underwent three interrogations, was asked by one keen-witted Homeland Security official: "What kind of novels do you write: fiction or nonfiction?"



Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld checks his hair for IEDs after the White House accused Iraqi terrorists and Saddam Hussein remnants of tunneling under the Pentagon, releasing a soporific gas in the area housing Command offices inducing disorientation and grandiosity, and planting IEDs in the hair of the unconscious Secretary and other key personnel. The Secretary said this proves only evildoers oppose the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

In Faluja, Iraq, a spokesperson for the Iraqi resistance council denied the reports as one more Bush regime lie. “Why would we do that? This fool is one of the most effective assets our movement against the occupation has!” (Jonathan Ernst/Reuters)

Kerry Unfairly Criticized!

Comment:

Democratic Party candidate John Kerry has been roughly criticized by Republicans for “flip-flopping” about Iraq.

Soldiers need to know this is a lie.

Kerry voted to send you to Iraq to die for oil and empire.

Kerry promises to keep you there to die for oil and empire.

On keeping the war going in Iraq, the man is a rock of consistency.

From: A Strategy for Iraq, By John F. Kerry, The Washington Post, April 12, 2004

"While we may have differed on how we went to war, Americans of all political persuasions are united in our determination to succeed. The extremists attacking our forces should know they will not succeed in dividing America, or in sapping American resolve, or in forcing the premature withdrawal of U.S. troops.

"No matter who is elected president in November, we will persevere in that mission.

"If our military commanders request more troops, we should deploy them."

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.

GEORGE BUSH: POLITICAL GENIUS

The Commander-in-Chief Speaks

(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES:

The Bush Press Conference

He said such things as:

"He was a threat because he funded suiciders" [He = Saddam Hussein; as for what a suicider is, I don't know]

"He was a danger. And so we dealt with him.

And what else was part the question? Oh, oil revenues. Well, the oil revenues, they're bigger than we thought they would be at this point in time. I mean, one year after the liberation of Iraq, the revenues of the oil stream is pretty darn significant.

One of the things I was concerned about, prior to going into Iraq, was that the oil fields would be destroyed, but they weren't. They're now up and running. And that money is -- it will benefit the Iraqi people. It's their oil, and they'll use it to reconstruct the country."

[The question was: “Mr. President, before the war, you and members of your administration made several claims about Iraq: that U.S. troops would be greeted as liberators with sweets and flowers; that Iraqi oil revenue would pay for most of the reconstruction; and that Iraq not only had weapons of mass destruction but, as Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said, we know where they are.

How do you explain to Americans how you got that so wrong? And how do you answer your opponents who say that you took this nation to war on the basis of what have turned out to be a series of false premises?”

[IRAQ'S OIL IS ALWAYS ON HIS MIND]

"Finally, the attitude of the Iraqis toward the American people -- it's an interesting question. They're really pleased we got rid of Saddam Hussein, and you can understand why. This guy was a torturer, a killer, a maimer. There's mass graves. ... And they were happy -- they're not happy they're occupied. I wouldn't be happy if I were occupied either."

[OK, SO BUSH SUPPORTS THE RIGHT TO RESIST]

"The people know where I stand, I mean, in terms of Iraq. I was very clear about what I believed. And, of course, I want to know why we haven't found a weapon yet. But I still know Saddam Hussein was a threat. And the world is better off without Saddam Hussein. I don't think anybody can -- maybe people can argue that. I know the Iraqi people don't believe that, that they're better off with Saddam Hussein -- would be better off with Saddam Hussein in power."

[BUNGLING TO STAND BY THE WAR IN IRAQ]

The transcript is here: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9488-2004Apr13_3.html

The Kerry Campaign Vs. Reality

By Mark Taibbi, Rolling Stone, April 29, 2004

WHEN PEOPLE READ CAMPAIGN coverage, they should be aware that man-on-the-street interviews almost never take place on the actual street. They take place at the campaign events, which are attended only by people who care enough to come see the candidate.

Take New Orleans, where Kerry's speech was held on the river downtown, near the French Quarter. To get out of the area, I had to walk through five blocks of tourist shops full of plastic voodoo-skeleton souvenirs and aprons bearing messages such as NEW ORLEANS: DON'T FUCK WITH THE CHEF!

Then the shops melted away into bars and daiquiri stands, and then into warehouses—and finally, just past a French cemetery, right behind a Winn-Dixie, I came to a stark dirt

lot full of low-rise brick buildings. This used to be Storyville, the birthplace of jazz. Now it's the Iberville housing projects, one of the roughest parts of New Orleans.

Going door-to-door, it took a while before I found anyone who actually plans on voting in the election. The approval rating of politicians in places like this hovers somewhere between Stalin and athlete's foot. I finally found Lethia Guchard, a sixty-year-old resident of the projects.

"I don't like to use the word *hate* — hate is a bad word," she told me. "But sometimes that's how I feel about politicians. I don't believe a word they say. A stray dog deserves better than what we've got. Look at what we have to live-with, there used to be a bleach factory right behind here. A lot of folks in this neighborhood got real sick. There'd be sludge from the factory running into the street, and the kids would have to walk through it to get to school. We tried to get them to do something, but every time I went to City Hall, they'd just send out a different person to tell me they were busy. Now they're going to close this place up and we're all going to be moved somewhere else."

"Excuse me," I said, looking at my watch. "I hate to interrupt, but I've got to go."

"What?" Guchard said.

"Look, this is all very interesting," I said, "but I'm working, you understand? And I've got to get back right away. I might miss John Kerry playing Frisbee.'

She stared in shock. 'Playing what?'

"Actually, he prefers football," I said. "And he's pretty good at it. You should see it, he throws a really nice ball."

She nodded. "Oh," she said. "OK. Well, nice talking to you."

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