

## **GI SPECIAL 2#60**

### **PAYING THE PRICE FOR IMPERIAL WAR**



#### **Bring Them All Home Now!**

**Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment of the First Infantry Division mourn after a memorial service for two comrades on a military base near Najaf, April 15. (Laszlo Balogh/Reuters)**

# **“We Told Our Officers To Get Us Out Of Here”**

April 11, 2004 Patrick Graham, The Observer

**In the areas outside Falluja, the American army controls only what it can shoot. Everything else is up for grabs.**

**In three days of traveling between Falluja and the nearby city of Ramadi, we saw more resistance fighters, often carrying several RPGs and heavy machineguns, than American soldiers. Few bothered to cover their faces.**

On Thursday, a group of 40 fighters or so pulled us over. They were angry and aggressive, hunted by helicopters and US bombers.

The thought of being near them during an American attack was terrifying. A few minutes later, it came. The resistance sped off and we followed, passing a burning humvee and the wreckage of an SUV, leaving passports and flak jackets behind.

**Last week's open rebellion in a large area around the encircled city of Falluja showed American propaganda to be just that.**

**For the past eight months, the American-led coalition has maintained that attacks against their forces were carried out by small numbers of disgruntled former regime supporters and foreign fighters.**

**But the first thing our Iraqi travelling companions yelled out when the insurgents forced guns into the car window was the name of their tribe, every sheikh they were related to and a genealogy going back generations. It was not an action that would have had much success with foreign fighters or Baathists.**

The tribes that Saddam Hussein spent much of his dictatorship trying to crush have resurfaced, in a complex web of tribal fighters controlling the land around their farms. Paranoid after months of increasingly successful US intelligence work, all foreigners are considered spies.

**Last month the Americans distributed leaflets in Falluja that showed a pair of eyes, with an Arabic inscription reminding the people of Falluja that they were being watched. They did not need to be told.**

**In the past week the area around Falluja has been turned inside out. The clandestine groups are now in charge. Our translator, who was briefly kidnapped by a resistance group outside the city, described being taken to a series of commanders working in a loose hierarchy.**

**When we drove from Baghdad to Ramadi on the back roads south of Falluja on Wednesday, the Americans appeared to have almost given up large areas of the countryside. At a small checkpoint near the edge of the desert, a group of eight or so marines looked bewildered.**

**'I've never seen anything like this,' said one. 'We told [our officers] to get us out of here. There were three mortar rounds on the first night and 12 last night. Every time we move, they are right on top of us - they are getting better.'**

We asked if it was safe down the road and the marine just raised an eyebrow. A few hundred yards further on, at a small shop, we stopped to ask directions.

'Be careful,' the shopkeeper told an Iraqi journalist. 'The Americans have many checkpoints - hide your weapons.'

**Outside Ramadi, the main highway was empty, save for small groups of cars that darted in during a lull in the shooting and occasional explosions. The Americans were claiming that the town was under control, but it didn't look that way. Heavy black smoke was billowing up from one part of the city and planes circled overhead. On one of the town's main squares, we saw an American patrol coming one way and resistance fighters spreading out down the alleys. A family opened their gate and let us inside.**

We stayed for an hour, drinking tea and listening to the gunfire as resistance fighters ran up beside the house, shot and then disappeared.

The family said the fighting had started at 10.30 that morning - for the third day. A nearby house, they said, had been bombed.

After half an hour, we heard screaming from the next house. A bullet had gone into the house and killed Mohammed. He was 13. A woman came from the back of the house and began screaming: 'May God damn the resistance, may God damn the Americans.' The men of the house tried to calm her, but soon we were told to leave.

'We have children here - maybe the Americans will hit us or the resistance,' she began yelling. 'Why don't you leave - there are taxis outside.' There were indeed taxis, but the drivers of them were hiding inside with us.

As we left, she hesitated and asked us to stay and apologised. We left without even knowing their names. Outside the door, fresh drops of blood led to the open door of a minivan where the driver had been shot a few minutes before.

Once the fighting stops, it is hard to believe that the damage of the past week can be undone.

**Perhaps the most surprising result of the fighting is the unlikely support of the poor Shias for the Sunnis.** This has always been a difficult relationship for foreigners to understand. On the one hand, there is enormous distrust; on the other, they are fellow Muslims.

Before driving to Ramadi on Wednesday, we spent the night at the home of a Shia family in Sadr City. 'There is no difference between Falluja and Sadr City,' said Nassir Salman, a barber who was working late. 'They are fighting and we are fighting. Inshallah, there will be jihad. But we are jealous of Falluja. We are waiting for our leaders to declare jihad. Now, it is worse than Saddam. He killed secretly - but the Americans kill us on the streets.'

This appeared to be a common sentiment in Sadr City. At the home of our hosts, 20-year-old Abbas returned from Kufa, the stronghold of Muqtada al-Sadr, the radical Shia cleric, where he had gone to defend his leader. As he sits down in the family's small room, explosions can be heard from a close neighbourhood.

'If the Americans arrest our Sayyid Muqtada, I will die for him,' says Abbas quietly.

**A year ago it would have been hard for a foreigner to believe Sadr City and Falluja could make common cause against the Americans, but by Friday Shias and Sunnis were praying together and sending convoys of food and medication.**

**As we drive back to Baghdad, men line the road handing out water, food and medicine to the refugees fleeing from Falluja. Boys direct traffic through a maze of country roads, indicating which roads are safe. Small groups of resistance fighters lounge in the ditches.**

# Get Us Out Of Here!



(Ammar Awad/Reuters)

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

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

### **Two Soldiers Wounded At Tal Afar**

4.16.04 Combined Joint Task Force 7: Release #040416f

Two Coalition soldiers were wounded when attackers fired seven mortar rounds and a rocket-propelled grenade at a Coalition compound near Tall Afar around 8:44 pm. Iraqi police assisted with the evacuation of civilians to local treatment centers. Neither soldier was seriously injured.

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### **U.S. Businessman Kidnapped From Basra Hotel**

April 16, 2004 Star Publications (Malaysia) Bhd

BASRA, Iraq: An U.S. businessman was abducted from his hotel in the southern city of Basra by kidnappers disguised as policemen, Basra police chief said Friday.

Col. Khalaf al-Maleki said the abduction of the American, who was of Jordanian origin, took place Thursday night. He had no further details.

It was not immediately clear if the businessman's abduction was by insurgents or by criminals seeking ransom. For months, there have been many kidnappings of Iraqi citizens, especially wealthy ones, for extortion purposes.

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## Ohio Soldier Captured In Iraq

4.16.04 nbc4columbus.com, The Associated Press contributed to this report.

A captive on a videotape delivered from Al-Jazeera television to the U.S. Embassy in Qatar Friday identified himself as an Ohio soldier.

"My name is Keith Matthew Maupin. I am a soldier from the 1st Division," the soldier is heard saying in the video. "I am married with a 10-month-old child. I came to liberate Iraq, but I did not come willingly because I wanted to stay with my child."

The footage shows the soldier sitting on floor with masked resistance soldiers, their faces covered by keffiyeh scarves, behind him. A spokesman for Central Command, Cmdr. Dan Gage, said U.S. authorities are attempting to verify that the man is Maupin.

Maupin, known as "Matt," looked scared and glanced downward occasionally during the tape. **On the tape, one of the guards was heard saying: "We are keeping him to be exchanged for some of the prisoners captured by the occupation forces."**

**"Some of our groups managed to capture one of the American soldiers, and he is one of many others. He is being treated according to the treatment of prisoners in the Islamic religion and he is in good health," the resistance soldier said.**

Friends and loved ones gathered for a candlelight vigil at the high school Thursday night, Cincinnati station WLWT reported. Another vigil is planned for Friday at 7 p.m. at the Clermont County Courthouse.

Maupin, 20, a member of the 724th Transportation Company, has been missing since April 9, when the resistance used rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons to attack his convoy, the Pentagon said.

Maupin's friends expressed relief Friday afternoon. Maupin's close friend, Eric Key, told WLWT in a telephone interview Friday that he was with Maupin the day before his deployment.

"I can't even begin to describe how happy I was to see him," Key said about the Al-Jazeera videotape. "At the same time, I'm still a little sad, and I'm praying he makes it home OK."

**Maupin has a younger brother, Kent Micah Maupin, in the Marines, who's come home on emergency leave, WLWT reported.**

"They both have the same mentality," Key said. "They're outlook is always positive. They're hard-working guys."

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## **Coalition Of The Fucked Up: US Command Tactics Condemned By British Officers; “Confrontation” Between U.S. & British Forces Reported**

4.11.04 news.telegraph.com.uk, By Sean Rayment, Defence Correspondent

**Senior British commanders have condemned American military tactics in Iraq as heavy-handed and disproportionate.**

**One senior Army officer told The Telegraph that America's aggressive methods were causing friction among allied commanders and that there was a growing sense of "unease and frustration" among the British high command.**

Speaking from his base in southern Iraq, the officer said: "My view and the view of the British chain of command is that the Americans' use of violence is not proportionate and is over-responsive to the threat they are facing. They don't see the Iraqi people the way we see them. They view them as untermenschen. They are not concerned about the Iraqi loss of life in the way the British are. Their attitude towards the Iraqis is tragic, it's awful.

The phrase untermenschen - literally "under-people" - was brought to prominence by Adolf Hitler in his book Mein Kampf, published in 1925. He used the term to describe those he regarded as racially inferior: Jews, Slaves and gipsies.

Although no formal complaints have as yet been made to their American counterparts, the officer said the British Government was aware of its commanders' "concerns and fears".

The officer explained that, under British military rules of war, **British troops would never be given clearance to carry out attacks similar to those being conducted by the US military, in which helicopter gunships have been used to fire on targets in urban areas.**

**British rules of engagement only allow troops to open fire when attacked, using the minimum force necessary and only at identified targets.**

**The American approach was markedly different: "When US troops are attacked with mortars in Baghdad, they use mortar-locating radar to find the firing point and then attack the general area with artillery, even though the area they are attacking may be in the middle of a densely populated residential area.**

"They may well kill the terrorists in the barrage but they will also kill and maim innocent civilians. That has been their response on a number of occasions. It is trite, but American troops do shoot first and ask questions later.

**They are very concerned about taking casualties and have even trained their guns on British troops, which has led to some confrontations between soldiers.**

The officer believed that America had now lost the military initiative in Iraq, and it could only be regained with carefully planned, precision attacks against the "terrorists".

"The US will have to abandon the sledgehammer-to-crack-a-nut approach - it has failed," he said. "They need to stop viewing every Iraqi, every Arab as the enemy and attempt to win the hearts and minds of the people.

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## **US Holding Prisoner 200 Iraqi Troops Who Mutinied; Kurdish Soldiers Joined In Defying Occupation Orders To Attack Fallujah**

By Khaled Yacoub Oweis 4.15.04 Reuters

BAGHDAD: U.S. forces have detained around 200 Iraqi paramilitary soldiers who refused to take part in a U.S. offensive against the Sunni Muslim city of Falluja, their former comrades said Friday.

The U.S. military declined to confirm whether the men were being held.

The soldiers are from the Baghdad-based 36th Security Brigade, part of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps

**"They told us to attack the city and we were astonished. How could an Iraqi fight an Iraqi like this? This meant that nothing had changed from the Saddam Hussein days. We refused en masse," said Ali al-Shamari.**

**After the brigade refused to fight, he said, soldiers were stripped of their badges and confined to tents in a U.S. base on the outskirts of Falluja. Their rations were restricted to one meal per day.**

**"I escaped, but around 200 of our comrades remain there. We demand their release," Shamari said.**

The 36th brigade, according to four of its members, comprises 340 soldiers from the former Iraqi army **and the Peshmerga, the Kurdish militia that once fought Saddam's forces.**

Ali Hussein, a Shi'ite private, said the brigade's mission since its formation had been security tasks such as conducting searches and guarding buildings.

**"Suddenly we were asked to take part in a huge offensive," Hussein said, adding that he felt sympathy for Falluja residents although they were from the Sunni minority who had dominated the Shi'ites for decades.**

**Bukhtiar Saleh, a Kurdish soldier, said U.S. heavy-handedness had discouraged him from fighting.**

**"They were bombing the city with warplanes and using cluster bombs. I could not be a part of this," he said.**

## **TROOP NEWS**

# **Government Attacks Vets Benefits, Feeds Money To The Rich; Secret Deals "Border On Treason"**

By Ralf W. Zimmerman, Back Talk column, Army Times, 3.8.04

**After committing \$87 billion to military operations and the rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan, and after overpaying Halliburton for oil and gasoline frauds, the administration and certain Pentagon henchmen are looking to save a few bucks at home.**

While salaries for corporate CEOs, contractors and senior administrators are on the rise, Washington bureaucrats are targeting a patriotic but politically disjointed segment of American society for cuts — military retirees and veterans.

The benefits squeeze includes not only base closings and the reintroduction of proposals to cut critical commissary services, but also dramatic increases in prescription drug benefits.

**I've yet to see freezes or cutbacks in benefits and salaries for our Washington elite.**



**In contrast, the scheming behind the Defense Department's curtains and in a few congressional committees borders on outright treason.**

**While we're resurrecting Iraq with better schools, improved medical care and access to more consumer goods, a few political bureaucrats plan to wreck the benefits of former troops.**

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## **MP Rapist Gets A Pass**

April 12, 2004 Miles Mofeit, Denver Post Staff Writer

U.S. soldiers accused of rape and other sex crimes while serving in Iraq routinely dodged prosecution during the past year with the help of commanders who gave them light punishments such as reprimands and pay cuts, according to military records released to The Denver Post.

**Although evidence was gathered to prosecute a military police officer on one of two rape allegations, reports show his commanders merely dropped him in rank and discharged him at his request.**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Two Iraqi Police Killed In Karbala**

16 April 2004 Novinite Ltd.

Unidentified gunmen killed two Iraqi policemen near a mosque in the holy city of Karbala. The area is in a region controlled by Iraq's rebel Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's militia.

French reporters say the policemen were killed by men who went out of the Al-Muhayam mosque, near the location of Sadr headquarters in Karbala.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **They Both Got It Right**

**“We’re training a lot harder for this than we ever did for Kosovo. Bullets are flying. This is a real war.”** Staff Sgt. Albert Harris, medic, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Vilsek, Germany. (Army Times 3.8.04)

Ron Kovic, the paralyzed Vietnam veteran who became a symbol of protest with his book "Born on the Fourth of July." said, **"There is potential here for the most powerful anti-war movement in the history of the United States and the world."**

And he grimly added, **"We have no sense of history and we are hurling headlong into a major disaster that will kill countless more American soldiers and countless innocent civilians."** (Los Angeles, Reuters, April 15, Arthur Spiegelman)

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## **All's Well In Iraq -- Just Ask The Dead**

09 April 2004 By Steve Lopez, The Los Angeles Times

**Everything's OK.**

**Honest.**

**Shell-shocked wives of soldiers are racing home from Oceanside beauty salons to see if their husbands are among the latest casualties in Iraq. But there's nothing to worry about.**

**The Shiite uprising appears to be throwing the entire country into bloody chaos, and weary American soldiers are being ordered to extend their tours of duty. But you have some good moments and some less good moments in these kinds of enterprises, as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said.**

**If things were spinning out of control, would President Bush be on Easter holiday at the ranch in Texas, where he was visited Thursday by members of the National Rifle Assn., Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever?**

**Twelve Camp Pendleton Marines have been killed in the last week, most of them in one horrific battle Tuesday. But there's no "major combat" in Iraq, the president's flack assured us even as several cities were under fire and up for grabs. It's just that a "relatively small number of extremist elements" are being pesky little insurgents.**

**Can you really even call it a war?**

### **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/>

# Imperial Collapse?

By Tom Engelhardt, April 14, 2004 Mother Jones

## Quotes of the day:

***"[A] year after the fall of Saddam, the US faces the task of reconquering the country....Pan-Islam and Sunni-Shiite unity in the face of encroaching Western powers have been a political dream since the time of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in the 19th century, but have usually proven futile. Donald Rumsfeld has finally made al-Afghani's dream come true."*** (Juan Cole, [Informed Comment](#))

The *Toronto Sun's* Eric Margolis comments in his latest column, [Bush's Boy Blunder](#):  
**"Any junior imperialist knows the first thing you do when you conquer someone's country is to buy the loyalty of its existing armed forces, government and police. Otherwise you will have armies of angry, unemployed potential rebels roaming the streets -- Iraq today being Exhibit A."**

Here's how Robert Fisk of the *Independent* sizes up the present "military" situation ([The War's One Simple Truth](#)):

**"And with each new collapse, we are told of new hope. Yesterday, General Sanchez was still talking about his 'total confidence' in his troops who were 'clear in their purpose,' how they were making 'progress' in Fallujah and how--these are his actual words, 'a new dawn is approaching.'**

**"Which is exactly what US commanders were saying exactly a year ago today."**

Juan Cole, [Informed Comment website](#), sums up our stated decision to take in or take out the young radical Islamist cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and his forces:

**"Al-Hayat reports that US Viceroy in Iraq, Paul Bremer, rejects such negotiations [between Muqtada and members of the Governing Council], saying that Muqtada faces three possibilities: He can surrender, he can be arrested by US troops, or he can be killed resisting that arrest. I'd just suggest to Jerry that he be careful what he wishes for. Muqtada's family has been standing up to that kind of bullying talk for decades, when it issued from the Baath, and they are not the surrendering kind."**

**If the US arrests Muqtada, it can only do so by desecrating among the most sacred shrines in Islam. If you want to see waves of attacks on American interests from Beirut to Tehran and from Kabul to Manama, just go ahead. And once the US has Muqtada, that will simply provoke daily demonstrations in all the**

southern cities demanding his release. If the US kills Muqtada, his followers will likely go underground and wage a long-term guerrilla war against the US, of the sort Mr. Bremer has failed to put down in the Sunni Arab areas after a year of trying.

**And here's a question nobody's bothering to ask: What exactly happens once we take Fallujah, or Kut, or Najaf, or Karbala? Excuse my Vietnam analogies, but won't these just be another set of Hamburger Hills? We don't really have enough troops to garrison the country, so if we stay in Fallujah, there will simply be another place we can't be. If we leave, on the other hand, what we leave behind is not a city, but a thoroughly inflamed, resistant, and ever more embittered and oppositional populace.**

**Like the Hamburger Hills of Vietnam, we don't actually want Fallujah, or Kut, or Kufa, or for that matter the holy city of Najaf. There's nothing there of value to us. What we want is to stop a mindset for which tanks, gunships, and Apache helicopters are blunt instruments indeed. This is the nature of -- dare I name the obvious -- national liberation struggles once they begin against occupiers in our resistant world.**

Here's an excerpt from a piece Naomi Klein wrote for [the Nation magazine](#) just before the recent upsurge of resistance and violence which catches something of this -- of the divide between our words and our deeds.

"US occupation chief Paul Bremer... is... tackling the rise of anti-Americanism with his usual foresight. Baghdad is blanketed with inept psy-ops organs like Baghdad Now, filled with fawning articles about how Americans are teaching Iraqis about press freedom. 'I never thought before that the Coalition could do a great thing for the Iraqi people,' one trainee is quoted saying. 'Now I can see it on my eyes what they are doing good things for my country and the accomplishment they made. I wish my people can see that, the way I see it.' Unfortunately, the Iraqi people recently saw another version of press freedom when Bremer ordered US troops to shut down a newspaper run by supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr."

**In the meantime, the imperial dreams of the Bush administration are quite literally going up in smoke. On this, much of Washington is still in a remarkable state of denial (see below),**

You have what [James Fallows in the latest Atlantic](#) calls "the hollow army." He does the math and it's well worth reading.

**"It's a slight exaggeration to say that the entire U.S. military is either in Iraq, returning from Iraq, or getting ready to go. But only slight. The basic problem is that an ever leaner, numerically smaller military is being asked to patrol an ever larger part of the world.**

**"Unanticipated U.S. ground force requirements in postwar Iraq,' a report for the Army War College noted late last year, 'have stressed the U.S. Army to the breaking point,' with more than a third of the Army's total 'end strength' committed in and around Iraq."**

In essence, right now we have nothing more to send to Iraq which is why the Pentagon is dealing with the problem via "'stop loss' policies, which prevent members of the military from retiring or resigning, and amount to a form of forced labor for those who have already chosen to serve." We are, that is, drafting volunteer soldiers into further duty, a form of servitude which, in the long run, will undoubtedly hurt reenlistment rates.

Karl Vick and Sewell Chan recently wrote in the Washington Post ([U.S. Troops Battle to Retake Cities](#))

"Delays and questions about the training and equipping of Iraqi police and other security forces now appear secondary to basic questions of loyalty... **Iraqi police fought beside [the] Mahdi Army near Najaf earlier in the week, and were cooperating with the militia in Najaf and Kut. Several checkpoints along a main highway through southern Iraq were deserted Friday, with pictures of Sadr plastered on an empty pillbox.**"

*Perhaps more ominously, in terms of Iraqi infiltration of the Coalition Provisional Authority itself, Vick and Chan write:*

*"And in an incident that underscored the danger that a broad-based popular insurrection might pose to the occupation, military officials said they had discovered a roadside bomb buried inside the Green Zone, the tightly protected Baghdad compound where the U.S.-led occupation authority is based. The bomb was found at 12:30 p.m. Thursday in front of the Baghdad convention center, planted in an area where only government and military vehicles are allowed. It was safely detonated by ordnance experts while the top U.S. field commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, gave a news conference inside, according to a senior military official."*

[Alissa J. Rubin of the Los Angeles Times](#) recently quoted Marina Ottaway, a "democracy expert" with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace as saying, "The Governing Council is falling apart, so the hope of the Bush administration to have even a symbolic transition looks remote, especially because they won't have anybody to whom to transfer sovereignty."

Juan Cole has vividly described the process this way:

**"Not only has what many Iraqis call 'the puppet council' taken a stand against Bush administration tactics in Iraq, but individual members are peeling off.** Shiite Marsh Arab leader Abdul Karim al-Muhammadawi suspended his membership in the council on Friday. A Sunni member, Ghazi al-Yawir, has threatened to resign if a negotiated settlement of the Fallujah conflict cannot be found.

**Old-time Sunni nationalist leader Adnan Pachachi thundered on al-Arabiya television, 'It was not right to punish all the people of Fallujah, and we consider these operations by the Americans unacceptable and illegal.'** For him to go on an Arab satellite station much hated by Donald Rumsfeld and denounce the very people who appointed him to the IGC is a clear act of defiance. There are rumors that many of the 25 Governing Council members have fled abroad, fearful of

**assassination because of their association with the Americans. The ones who are left appear on the verge of resigning.**

**"This looks to me like an incipient collapse of the US government of Iraq.** Beyond the IGC, the bureaucracy is protesting. **Many government workers in the ministries are on strike and refusing to show up for work, according to ash-Sharq al-Awsat.** Without Iraqis willing to serve in the Iraqi government, the US would be forced to rule the country militarily and by main force. Its legitimacy appears to be dwindling fast. Part of what caused this incipient collapse of the US-appointed Iraqi government is that the US military decided to besiege the entire city of Fallujah to get at insurgents who killed 4 US Blackwater mercenaries last week, even though reports indicated that the guerrillas left the city after the killings."

Meanwhile back in Washington the fear seems to be growing that, thanks to some version of the Tet Effect, the media and the public may be slowly beginning to peel away.

**Senator Joseph Biden, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, commented that "Bush is 'absolutely' losing the public at a quickening pace. He said people are flooding him with pleas 'to get us out of there.'" Clinton National Security Advisor Sandy Berger added, "We have too much at stake in Iraq to lose the American people." And Republican Senator Chuck Hagel said, "In both parties, members are concerned. There's not abject panic, but there's deep concern, and there should be."**

**The members of both parties in Washington, with rare exceptions like Senator Robert Byrd, are still in essential denial over what's happening in Iraq. They remain if not eager at least determined to "stay the course" -- with Democrats like Senator Biden and evidently John Kerry as well calling for more American troops to be sent in (though who knows where they would scrounge up such forces).**

**All you have to do is watch the various officials and former officials, generals and former generals, journalists and pundits parading onto *Charlie Rose*, CNN, *Nightline*, the *Lehrer News Hour* and every other show around, to realize just how out of touch official Washington still is with the Great Delamination that Iraq is becoming.**

Everyone is for being militarily "firm" but -- naturally -- "judicious" and "precise" in our military actions, since you don't want to appear "weak," but you also don't want to turn more Iraqis against us. (Easy for them to say.) **I keep thinking, what "course" exactly is it we're "staying"? Whatever's going on in Iraq, it isn't, I suspect, a "course" at all and the people who will be "staying" are exactly the people who have made such a mess of things. Why should we expect better now?**

According to the *Washington Post* report quoted above, "What administration officials must avoid, according to members of both parties, is that a continuation of chaos and resistance in Iraq leads to a reassessment of the direction of U.S. policy in Iraq by the public -- as happened during the Vietnam War. If that happens, it could undermine overall confidence in the president on the issue of terrorism."

Oh gosh and golly, and that would be a shame.

**Here's a confidence report on our War President facing the worst crisis of his administration.**

**On Thursday, soon after his national security advisor testified before the 9/11 commission, while the bitter fighting continued in Fallujah and elsewhere in Iraq, he took representatives of organizations like Quail Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and the National Rifle Association on a tour of his ranch in a bid to win the war on birds (and the votes of hunters).**

Friday, he headed for the water, where, while being filmed with the host of the Outdoor Life Network program [Fishing with Roland Martin](#), he caught an impressive 4 pound bass. ("The president was very relaxed," Martin said... 'He didn't really talk about politics at all. He was just relieved to have a minute to fish.")

Saturday -- give the guy credit -- he took one for the team and cancelled his next fishing outing with Martin. ("I've been busy. All these crises.").

[Dana Milbank and Robin Wright of the Washington Post](#) offered the following summary of our President in war and peace:

**"This is Bush's 33rd visit to his ranch since becoming president. He has spent all or part of 233 days on his Texas ranch since taking office, according to a tally by CBS News. Adding his 78 visits to Camp David and his five visits to Kennebunkport, Maine, Bush has spent all or part of 500 days in office at one of his three retreats, or more than 40 percent of his presidency."**

You know, maybe things would be different if we took a tip from our President's life, withdrew our forces from Iraq and put a hunk of that \$18.4 billion in reconstruction funds (startling percentages of which are now going directly into "security" for those doing the reconstructing) into fishing tackle. **The Iraqis already have plenty of advanced equipment which would allow them to join Pheasants for Never and Quails Distinctly Limited.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></b></p>
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## **Traitors Control The Government: Wake Up America!**

4-13-2004, By Dr. Robert Bowman, USAF Ret., Veterans For Peace

**I am a member of Veterans For Peace, an organization of thousands of combat veterans.**

All of us have put our life on the line for this country. Most of us opposed the recent invasion of Iraq.

I've been severely criticized for speaking out in opposition to this war. So have you, probably. We're told that we're aiding and abetting the enemy. We're told that we should support the president no matter what. We're told that patriotism demands that we support the war. They say that we're abusing the freedoms that our troops are in the Middle East defending. They say we should be ashamed to be protesting while the troops are in the desert protecting our right to do so.

Well I say, Hogwash!

I feel an affinity for the troops over there in Iraq. They are my comrades in arms. I admire their sense of honor and sacrifice.

**It is we, here at home, who are the foot soldiers battling to preserve our cherished freedoms by exercising them, in spite of opposition and ridicule. It is we who protect our civil rights through speaking out. We are the Minutemen sounding the alarm against tyranny. We are upholding the spirit of the American Revolution. We are preserving the freedoms that the troops in the desert have a right to come back to. The troops getting shot at in Iraq are not protecting us. We are protecting them, and their honor and their freedoms.**

**Here is the truth that we proclaim. This war has nothing to do with national security or freedom or democracy or human rights or protecting our allies or weapons of mass destruction or defeating terrorism or disarming Iraq. It has to do with money. It has to do with oil. And it has to do with raw imperial power. It is based on a pack of lies. And it is wrong. Those who forced this war on an unwilling world are guilty of flagrantly violating the U.S. Constitution, the UN Charter, and international law. What they have done is illegal, immoral, unconstitutional and TREASON.**

**It's been said that somewhere in Texas there is a village looking for their idiot. Now that may be funny, but it misses the point. George W. Bush is not an imbecile. He is a TRAITOR.**

Before this war started...we knew it would make our beloved country feared and hated, an outcast from the world community, a pariah among the peoples, and the number one rogue nation on earth. And it has. It has done so based on a pack of lies. My sisters and brothers, that is not stupidity. That is **TREASON**.

We knew this sadistic corporate war would incense the Arab world, provide thousands of new Osama bin Ladens, and enormously increase the terrorist threat. And it has. That is not stupidity, it is **TREASON**.

**As one who has devoted his life to the security of this country, I will not stand by and watch an appointed president send our sons and daughters around the world to kill Arabs for the oil companies without calling it by its right name. It is TREASON.**



I joined the Air Force to protect our borders and our people, not the financial interests of Folgers, Chiquita Banana, and Exxon. We've had enough corporate wars. No more Iraqs. No more El Salvadors. No more Kosovos. No more Colombias. These are not isolated incidents of stupidity. They are part of a long, bloody history of foreign policy being conducted for the financial benefit of the wealthy few. It is a new colonialism. It violates our Constitution. It endangers our people. And it is TREASON.

As a pilot who flew 101 combat missions in Vietnam, I can tell you that the best thing our government can do for its combat veterans is to quit making more of them....a preemptive war is immoral, illegal, unconstitutional, a war crime, and **TREASON**.

I swore to uphold the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic. That includes a renegade president. Wake up, America! It is time for George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and the whole oil mafia to be removed from office and indicted for **TREASON**.

The whole world is with us. Never allow anyone to intimidate you into silence. Wake up, America! It's time to speak truth to power. God bless America, and God save us from the traitors in our government.

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**SOLDIER-KILLER:  
CORNERED RAT:  
CRIMINAL WHO SENT THE ARMED FORCES TO  
WAR FOR PRIVATE PROFIT**



**UNFIT FOR COMMAND**

(Larry Downing/Reuters)

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

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

# **The 'Secret' Mercenary War In Iraq; Chileans Want To Go Home Now!**

**(THANKS TO C WHO WROTE AND E-MAILED THIS IN. There is some very fresh information here about the mercenary situation.)**

On freelance South Africans, N.I. Brits, Chileans, Yanks (the usual suspects) & Iraqi tribal chiefs.

By C: 4.14.04

"It is estimated that 90 private 'security' firms operate globally with a turnover of around \$100 billion (\$100,000,000,000), a quantity that could DOUBLE by 2010"! (from 'Corporate Warrior, The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry', by P.W. Singer).

Today in Iraq it is estimated that between 10K (Washington Post) to 15K mercenaries are operating in Iraq on behalf of various bidding companies. That is equivalent to about 1 mercenary for every 10 'coalition' forces! (see Sinfo Fernandez article on [http://www.nodo50.org/csca/agenda2004/iraq/sinfo\\_7-03-04.html](http://www.nodo50.org/csca/agenda2004/iraq/sinfo_7-03-04.html)).

Currently 134 Chilean soldiers are 'serving' in Iraq. They are stationed in Karbala, Dinwaniya, Samawiya and Al Hillah according to Chilean press reports. They were recruited through the Chilean armed forces but the Defense Minister, a woman by the name of Bachelet, explicitly advised and instructed them not to go (the Chilean government, who currently hold the presidency of the UN Security Council, was vehemently opposed to the invasion, despite constant bribes and pressure from the US government). Chilean mercenaries earn between \$3,200 to \$4,000 dollars per month (though an initial newspaper ad in El Mercurio, a spreadsheet, offered \$18,000 for a contract of six months) i.e. considerably more than a National Guard GI who gets about \$1,000 (?) and very few perks.

**Chile has so far been the only Latin American country private contractors have recruited from. The reason? These soldiers (many of those who answered the**

**original newspaper ad were active reserve units) were trained by US officers during the Pinochet regime and therefore are considered 'trustworthy'.**

Now, you may ask, whom do they work for? Well, the answer is Blackwater nonetheless, yes, the very same security firm whose 4 very well armed 'American' employees were ambushed, dragged out of their cars, shot and burnt before being dragged through the streets of Fallujah and finally hanged over the Euphrates river. **One of them was in fact Puerto Rican.**

**Blackwater was set up by ex Marines and Green Berets. Their motto? 'In support of Freedom and Democracy everywhere'. Now, remember this is what started the siege of Fallujah, and the British press by and large reported that the 4 were 'civilians', and I bet many still believe that propaganda.**

What are the Chilean mercenaries saying now? Well, Chilean soldiers have a feel, a precedent, for a situation like the one engulfing Iraq now. Sadr city, for example, resembles and will remind them of Penalolen and La Florida back home, the shanty towns in Santiago that were the strongholds of resistance during the Pinochet years.

**And the Chileans are writing in their emails to friends and family that the situation is 'fea' i.e. nasty, that they want 'to abandon this hell' (reported by La Tercera, a Chilean tabloid) and are hoping to travel out of Iraq beginning of next month. MANY OF THEM WANT TO GET OUT! (and some are claiming that their employers have broken their contract by not providing all the facilities or kit that had been agreed on).**

For more info on the Chilean mercenaries story (some juicy bits of info here) go to <http://www.ipsnoticias.net/interna.asp?idnews=27795>

Another firm operating in Iraq is Dyncorp, apparently a business started up by ex LAPD officers. Yes, emanating from the same cradle as those involved in the beating to death of Rodney King that sparked the 1992 LA riots and complicit in the deaths of Biggie and Tupac Shakur (the latter son of a former Black Panther activist).

Dyncorp themselves are notorious for being accused of raping and trafficking girls under 11 years old in Bosnia and training right-wing paramilitary guerrillas in Colombia. Dyncorp currently hold the contract that provides security for president Kazei in Afghanistan, a deal said to be worth \$130,000 per year (though this figure could be much higher).

Indymedia in Spain believe that up to 1,500 former South African soldiers are now active in Iraq. According to The Nation, it has been revealed that Francois Strydom, the South African mercenary killed in January this year, was working for Erinys (the company that holds the contract for protecting main oil lines, which for months now have been getting blown up on a weekly basis) and had been a former member of the notorious Koevoet, implicated in several political assassinations in Namibia in the eighties. For more on the story of South African mercenaries go to <http://colombia.indymedia.org/mail.php?id=11902>

And the British presence? CorpWatch has reported the story of Derek William Adgey, ex British marine who is now working for Armor Group in Iraq. Adgey was imprisoned for 4 years for his collaboration with the Ulster Freedom Fighters, UFF (Protestant paramilitaries implicated in numerous atrocities against Catholics in the North of Ireland).

Recently I heard an interview on the radio in Britain with someone talking on behalf of a British 'security' firm currently operating in Iraq. Sorry, I didn't catch the name of the company but it could well have been the one mentioned above.

**He basically claimed the recent upheaval in 'insurgency' was being carried out by just a bunch of individuals. Then, almost straight after in answer to a different question, he said that the British press are not really reporting the situation on the ground as it currently is, that it is far worse, that they are getting shot at all the time i.e. we only get to hear of the 'highlights' or 'high profile cases' and that if the press was to report every incident then 'they would have to broadcast a continuous running commentary'.**

**He never explained how he could reconcile his assessment that there were only a FEW 'insurgent' elements with the fact that they were getting shot at ALL the time. He said none of his employees had asked to be pulled out (but by that time I had lost faith that he was actually telling the truth) but stressed that all mercenaries are there 'voluntarily' and can get out anytime of their choosing.**

**In contrast, Channel 4 evening news on Wednesday night (14/4/04) showed an interview with a serving GI in Baghdad who told the reporter to camera that he walked into his Commanding Officer's office to plead with him to be taken out of frontline duties as he was on the verge of suicide. His CO told him from behind his desk to get lost! The GI claimed about 60% of his comrades was smoking marijuana and 30% were on cocaine.**

**Post-data (my own personal comments):**

**What I don't get is why the British media insist in calling these freelancers 'security guards' instead of mercenaries. Why do these guys don't just come out and say they are mercenaries and then everyone knows where they stand. Who is being misled and deluded here and WHY?**

**May be these guys aren't actually going out on raids and laying siege to entire towns, arguably the more risky of offensive operations on the ground, and yet they get paid tons more than your average soldier (and American mercenaries get paid a lot more than Chilean ones by the way).**

Yet, at the end of the day and objectively speaking, they are mercenaries and I would have thought some of these guys would be proud, rightly or wrongly, of their chosen career.

**(Additional Information received 4.16.04 from C:)**

Radio programme I referred to in the write up was transmitted by Talksport radio in London, afternoon on 13/4/04.

Chilean government has launched a non-public enquiry to see whether any laws were broken in the recruiting of mercenaries. The allegations are centered on the possibility that army premises and resources were used in the process. And like I said in the write up some of those who answered the original job ad are active reservists. Blackwater's representatives in Chile (I think they are called Red Tactica) are claimed to be former CIA agents.

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A member of Shiite Army of Mehdi guards his position in Baghdad's Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City. (AFP/Ahmad Al-Rubaye)

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## OCCUPATION PALESTINE

### TERRORISTS 'R US



Terrorist President George W. Bush welcomes terrorist Israeli Prime Minister Sharon of Israel to the White House, April 14, 2004. (Eric Draper/The White House via Reuters)

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

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