

## GI SPECIAL 2#66

# Soldier Says “I Don’t Know Why We Are Still In Iraq” “Prisoners Of War, That Is What We Are”-- “Let Us Go”

Letters To The Editor  
Army Times April 26, 2004

**As of a few months ago, I was about to clear the U.S. Army — as in get out, return to sender, ETS, leave.**

**But there is an ugly two-word phrase called stop-loss.**

Stop-loss is something you never worry about until your time has come to get out. I have been in the Army for three years, eight months and 11 days. I am proud to be an American, and that’s why I decided to give this country four long years. No one forced me. It has been my dream since I was a boy.

Now that I am a man, I’ve lived my boyhood dream.

I have learned much from my time and experiences, not to mention that I’ve had the chance to meet a great bunch of guys.

Simply put, we are brothers.

If I could go back to the day I enlisted, I still would — there is no doubt in my mind. But would I sign up for four years of active duty again? I don’t think so. **That would put me right back here in Fallujah, Iraq.**

**I am no coward, and by no means am I afraid to be here. I have done my share of missions and have had my share of bullets fired at me. I also have fired back, which I would do again and again to watch out for my brothers. If I were a coward, I wouldn't have come over here.**

**I don't know why we still are in Iraq.** As a specialist in the Army, I am not at the top of anything. I only know what I am told, which always seems to change.

For example, we were told before coming over here that everyone who is getting out will be sent back to the states 90 days prior to their ETS date.

That's what we told our families. Which meant to me, to go over for eight months, do my job, fight beside my friends and come home.

I was really excited. It's the dream of every infantryman to see combat. It's what I had been training for my whole Army career. But about three months into our little trip to the sands, we were told stop-loss has been put into effect. And no one knows what to make of it.

Questions such as, "Does stop-loss affect us?" kept coming up. First, it seemed that it affected only units that had yet to be deployed.

Then it seems it was rewritten a few more times. **Now we are stuck here.** Most of the guys in my unit came in the Army the same time I did. All who had plans are now on hold. So we can sit here for an extra six months or as long as they want to keep us.

It's too bad the rest of the world won't stop and wait for us. Universities already have accepted many of us, and many had jobs waiting for them.

Many of us started getting ready for the real world so we don't get out and do nothing, and have to come back in the Army. **Some may want to come back in, but it's also our right to get out.**

### **How can they hold us?**

Our unit keeps getting new Joes, men who should be replacing soldiers, just as we replaced others when we first came in. This is how it works.

Now it seems we are receiving new guys, and none of us are leaving.

**Prisoners of war: This is what we are, held here, never knowing when we will be home. It's not right. All I ask is, send us home when we should be sent home, when we were told we would go home, nothing more. Let us go.**

Spc. Matthew Bowers Jr.  
Gloversville, N.Y.

**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/>

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS:**

# **Boat Bombers Attack Oil Facilities In Persian Gulf; Three U.S. Fatalities, 4 Wounded**

4/24/2004 By Bassem Mroue, Associated Press & AP 4.25

**BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) Attackers detonated explosive-laden boats near oil facilities in the Persian Gulf on Saturday, killing two U.S. Navy sailors and a Coast Guardsman in a new tactic against Iraq's vital oil industry.**

**It was the first such maritime attack against oil facilities since U.S. troops invaded Iraqi more than a year ago.**

In the attack, three dhows, or small boats, drew close to two major oil terminals in Gulf waters about 100 miles from Iraq's main port, Umm Qasr, and exploded when coalition craft tried to intercept them. **A U.S. Navy craft was flipped by the blast, killing the Americans and injuring four others, the U.S. military said.**

British military spokesman Hisham H. Halawi said the port at Umm Qasr, the chief southern outlet for Iraqi oil, remained open after the boat attacks.

The first blast came when a dhow was sighted near the Khawr al-Amaya oil terminal, the Bahrain-based U.S. 5th Fleet said. When an interception team tried to board, the dhow exploded, flipping the U.S. Navy craft.

About 20 minutes later, two more dhows were spotted near the al-Basra oil terminal. They, too, exploded when security teams approached, but there were no casualties among the security teams, the 5th Fleet said.

Halawi said the second dhows were trying to pull close to two tankers at the al-Basra terminal, also known as ABOT.

**Insurgents in Iraq have frequently attacked oil pipelines, repeatedly shutting down exports from northern oil fields through Turkey. Southern pipelines, running through relatively more peaceable Shiite regions, have seen fewer attacks.**

Iraq's biggest oil terminal remains closed a day after the attack but is expected to reopen tomorrow. **The country's oil minister says the country is losing nearly a million barrels a day in exports as a result.**

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## **IED Gets U.S. Convoy Near Falluja**

25 Apr 2004 FALLUJA, Iraq, (Reuters)

**A roadside bomb struck a U.S. military convoy on the outskirts of the besieged town of Falluja on Sunday, destroying one military vehicle and inflicting casualties, Iraqi witnesses said.**

**They said black smoke rose from the burning vehicle on a road just outside the bastion of Sunni Muslim insurgents, 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad.**

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## **Missing Soldier Found Dead**

April 24, 2004 United States Department of Defense News Release No. 368-04

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier previously listed as Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown who was supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sgt. Elmer C. Krause, 40, of Greensboro, N.C., has been unaccounted for since April 9, in Iraq, when his convoy came under attack by individuals using rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. On April 23 his remains were recovered. Sgt. Krause was assigned to the Army Reserve's 724<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company, Bartonville, Ill.

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## **Four Kids Shot After Attack Kills U.S. Soldier**

Apr 25, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & AP- **Four schoolchildren were killed by U.S. gunfire in Baghdad on Sunday, shortly after a roadside bomb ripped through a U.S. military vehicle, killing a U.S. soldier witnesses said.**

**Some witnesses said the children, all aged around 12, were shot dead by U.S. troops who had opened fire randomly after the blast on Canal Street in eastern Baghdad.**

"I saw a child lying on the street with a bullet hole in his neck and another in his side," said a driver who witnessed the incident. "He had his schoolbag on his back. Some 15 minutes later his relatives came and took his body away."

**The targeted Humvee was part of a military convoy driving through the street.**

Two soldiers in the Humvee were evacuated from the scene by military medics, they said.



Iraqi youths celebrate near the burning wreckage of a U.S. Army Humvee after it was destroyed in a roadside bomb attack in Baghdad April 25, 2004. **Four children who had approached the vehicle were killed by gunfire. Witnesses said the deadly shots were fired by U.S. soldiers.** Photo by Ceerwan Aziz/Reuters

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## Two Italian Soldiers Wounded In Nasariyah

April 25, 2004. The Italian compound in Nasariyah came under mortar attack early Sunday, injuring two Italian soldiers. (AP)

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## Under Fire, Bulgaria Calls For Backup

24 April 2004 Novanite, Bulgaria

Situation in Karbala remains tense, according to a report of the Bulgarian Army.

**The unit's Kilo base was under fire once again on Saturday morning.** The mortar attack injured none of the soldiers.

**On Saturday, Bulgaria called on US and Polish forces to back up the Bulgarian unit.**

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## Eyeball To Eyeball: Bush Blinks

4.25.04 AFP

US marines besieging Fallujah were ordered not to allow residents who fled the fighting to return to their homes in the Sunni Muslim bastion, though **a new agreement between**

officials in Fallujah and the US-led coalition was reached Sunday to extend the ceasefire 'indefinitely'.(AFP/file/Patrick Baz)

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## Marines Express Respect For Resistance Troops At Fallujah



An Iraqi Sunni Muslim insurgent climbs the stairs of a burnt house in Fallujah. **US Marines were quoted by CNN April 25 as expressing respect for the resistance. "They stand and fight like soldiers."**(AFP/Patrick Baz)

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## TROOP NEWS

# Marine Corporal Murdered In Iraq By Corporate Crook From USA

(This is the report of a U.S. Marine killed by Marine snipers. All has been deleted but a key paragraph reporting the Marine had taken off his body armor just before he was shot by snipers thinking he was an Iraqi. Read why, then read a story from GI Special about defective body armor, including defects in sizing.

**Cpl. Jason D. Mielo was murdered by a corrupt union-busting thug manufacturing defective body armor.)**

April 26, 2004 By Laura Bailey, Army Times Staff Writer

After two investigations, snipers have been cleared of wrongdoing in the April 14, 2003, death of Cpl. Jason D. Mileo, according to a military investigation report released April 5 by U.S. Central Command. Mileo, 20, was an infantryman with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, at Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Fellow Marines on the patrol described Mileo as a stellar Marine and did not know why he took off his protective gear.

The report suggested that because Mileo had been issued an extra-small flak jacket and extra large armor-plate inserts, it may have been difficult for the corporal to lie in the prone position comfortably while wearing the armor. The plates would have ridden up to his face and chin, making it difficult to employ his weapon, the report states.

## Now Read The Scandal About Mis-Matched Body Armor Plates And Vests

(GI Special 2#47 4.3.04 reported that the corporation with the monopoly contract to supply body armor was run by a self-admitted securities fraud crook and union buster.

(Now we learn this corporation, DBH Industries, has been caught *supplying defective body armor to the New York City Police Department!*)

(Not only have the soldier-killers who run the U.S. government failed to supply all U.S. troops in Iraq with body armor by November 15, 2003 as they promised, because they gave only one corporation the contract----now we find that the one defense contractor supplies worthless shit.)

Prison Legal News, March 2004

DBH Industries' subsidiary Point Blank Body Armor Co. has settled a dispute with the New York Police Department

The dispute started when a NYPD officer noticed weakening of his vest at the folds. **Tests then showed penetration of some of the vests by .357 Magnum rounds. Initially, 1,000 vests were believed defective.**

Later figures were as high as 5,000 defective vests.

Former Point Blank employees have also alleged that they were ordered to place updated labels on out-of-date body armor, vest sizes were mislabeled, and vest shells were mismatched with their ballistic liners. Each of these defects could compromise its effectiveness.

Sources *DBH Industries news release; Law Enforcement News*

### GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance -

whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

## **36% (Or 44%) Want Immediate Withdrawal From Iraq; 51% Say War “Not Worth It”**

April 23, 2004 By Guy Dinmore in Washington Financial Times

Opinion polls reflect complicated sentiments. **A survey this month by the Pew Research Center showed 57 per cent of Americans believed the decision to invade Iraq was correct.**

**But the numbers calling for an immediate return of troops had risen to 44 per cent, from 32 per cent six months earlier.** Half said troops should stay until a stable government was established.

**The University of Pennsylvania found this month that a slim majority - 51 per cent - believed it had not been worth going to war, while 43 per cent said it was.**

**That poll showed 36 per cent wanted the troops home as soon as possible; 57 per cent said that they should wait for a stable government.**

**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.**

## **Betrayed Again: No Home, Sweet Home For 20,000 Soldiers Stuck In Iraq; Some Ordered Back From Germany**



April 26, 2004 By Vince Crawley, Army Times Staff Writer

**In postponing the departure of 20,000 soldiers who thought they were going home after a deadly year in the combat zone, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld conceded he did not anticipate the spike in violence in Iraq.**

**Under a timetable outlined by Bush, U.S. forces will remain committed to Iraq for at least another 18 months.**

“Our commitment to the success and security of Iraq will not end on June 30,” Bush said. “On July 1, and beyond, our reconstruction assistance will continue, and our military commitment will continue.”

**The combat-zone demand for troops also has resulted in some 1st AD soldiers who already had returned to their home stations in Germany being ordered back to Iraq.**

**Several hundred active-duty soldiers from Fort Bragg, N.C., Fort Drum, N.Y., and Fort Lewis, Wash., have had their homecomings delayed.**

**The postponement order also affects more than 2,800 National Guard and Reserve members in Iraq. Another 1,600 Guard and Reserve members will remain in Kuwait beyond their planned rotation dates.**

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## **Army Families Hit Hard; “Bush Said The War Is Over, But It’s Not Over For Us;” “Our World Is Shattered In A Day” “I Thought I Had Done My Time, I Thought That Was Enough,” Warrant Officer Says**

April 26, 2004 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times Staff Writer

**A wave of disbelief and stoic resolve has descended upon families of the 20,000 troops ordered to stay in the Iraq war zone for up to 120 days beyond their one-year deployments.**

**Among the soldiers who got the news, some hadn’t left Iraq yet and just stayed there. Some had made it as far as Kuwait and made a quick U-turn to Baghdad. Others made it home to their families only to find out they’d return within days.**

**“I’m not looking forward to going back. I thought I had done my time. I thought that was enough,” said a 1st AD Apache helicopter pilot based in Hanau, Germany, a chief warrant officer 4 who did not want to be identified.**

**He flew home from Baghdad April 5, and though news of troop extensions had not been reported yet, he said, there was an eerie silence among soldiers on the plane.**

**“Usually everybody hoots and cheers, but there was none. Nobody really believed we were actually out of Iraq,” said the warrant officer, who on April 16, when he talked with Army Times, was due to board a plane back to the war zone within a day or so. “Maybe there was a feeling of, ‘This is not really over.’”**

Spouses interviewed by Army Times said they found out about the extension through friends or their Family Readiness Groups, and the news is hitting home hard.

**“President Bush said the war is over, but it’s not over for us. [The extension] is unbelievable. It just came out of left field,” said Hollie Mitchell, whose husband, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Joseph Mitchell, is an Apache attack helicopter pilot for 1st Battalion, 501st Aviation, 1st AD.**

Hollie Mitchell, who became pregnant four months ago during her husband’s mid-tour leave, said his unit arrived in Kuwait April 4, and by April 10 they were back in Baghdad. She heard about the extension April 8 from another wife at a vehicle checkpoint on the way into post in Hanau.

**“She said she had gotten a call that they had been extended 120 days,” she recalled the woman saying. “I just broke down and started crying right there.”**

“I had seen [the news of the extension] in the paper, but I disregarded it because [Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld stated that troops would be on the ground for 365 days, no longer,” said Webb. **“You put your belief and hope in what Rumsfeld and [President] Bush say. Our world was shattered in a day. It’s devastating.”**

“We’re all depressed about it, but we’re all learning to live with it,” said Jamie Smith, whose husband, promotable Sgt. 1st Class Joe Smith, is a medical platoon sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2nd ACR. “We’ve got another nine years in the military. I knew sooner or later he’d go back.”

**What scares Smith the most, she said, is that she doesn’t know where he is and communications are not as good as they were a few months ago.**

**“They said three to four months, with six months being the worst,” Yates said. “I’m preparing for the worst.”**

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## **Iraqi Resistance Forces Long Tours, Short Turnarounds;**

# 3<sup>rd</sup> ID Fucked Again; Has Only Ready Brigade In The Army

April 26, 2004 By Matthew Cox, Army Times staff writer

**There is a good chance that the decision to delay the homecoming of 20,000 soldiers will mean many more troops will be returning to Iraq sooner than they thought.**

**Commanders in Iraq have ordered the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and elements of the 1st Armored Division to remain in theater for up to an additional three months.** Both units have already served one-year tours in Iraq. The move to quell the recent surge in violence inside the Sunni Triangle will keep the U.S. troop strength in Iraq at 135,000.

**Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld conceded at an April 15 press conference that he would hold those troops in the war zone beyond the 90-day extension if necessary.**

**A senior Army planner said maintaining a force of this size in Iraq beyond the 90-day extension will complicate rotation plans and mean less time at home for overworked combat units.**

**“We didn’t plan for the amount of violence we have right now,” said the senior planner, who spoke on the condition that he not be identified.** “We were planning on a more peaceful transition heading up to June 30.”

**The 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) is an obvious pick for hurry-up orders to Iraq, the senior planner said.** The 3rd ID has been home the longest, having returned from Iraq in late summer, and is well along in resetting equipment.

**The division was alerted weeks ago to expect to go back to Iraq in November as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom III, but may find itself headed back to the war zone this summer to replace the extended units.**

**Currently, the unit’s 3rd Brigade Combat Team is the Division Ready Brigade for the entire Army, meaning it’s the only brigade ready to launch at a moment’s notice.**

The 82nd Airborne Division’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team, which returned from Iraq in February, is preparing to assume DRB status in May. **If things in Iraq deteriorate further, soldiers in that unit could find themselves turning around to deploy within just a few months of coming home.**

As for the National Guard, there are three infantry brigades in Iraq. Four other Guard combat units have been notified of a pending mobilization.

**As of March 1, the 42nd Infantry Division from New York, the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment from Tennessee, the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) from Louisiana and the 116th Cavalry Brigade from Idaho were alerted to expect an upcoming mobilization.**

**Moving the 3rd ID into rotation months ahead of schedule, would mean that another unit will have to deploy to Iraq four months sooner than planned when it comes time to relieve the 3rd ID, the senior planner pointed out.**

Which unit that would be is not yet clear.

Ultimately, the Army could handle the need for additional forces, the senior planner said, but it will result in a shorter turnaround time for units between homecomings and future deployment dates.

**“You would end up with a ripple ... what you are doing is reducing the time they are back in the states,” the senior planner said. “We could clearly surge the number of troops on the short term, but that would cause a problem in the long term.”**

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## **More “Coalition” Soldiers Getting Out And Going Home**

April 23, 2004 KARBALA, Iraq (AFP)

**The multinational coalition has come under strain with the announced departure of troops from Spain, Honduras and the Dominican Republic within the next few weeks.**

**Thailand is also reviewing its situation, with Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra saying Friday he hoped the United States would understand if his country's 451 soldiers were withdrawn.**

In Sofia, five Bulgarian MPs put forward a motion in parliament for the country's 450 troops to leave Iraq by July 10 but both the government and opposition have already said they want the soldiers to stay.

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## **Pentagon Incompetents Killing Soldiers**

April 22, 2004 By Amy Klamper, CongressDailyAM

House Armed Services Chairman Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., took on the Pentagon's cumbersome acquisition system Wednesday, criticizing it for **leaving soldiers in the**

**field without armor kits for their Humvees and trucks, and asserting that steel used to build them had been sitting at a U.S. mill for months while vehicles were being blown up by improvised explosive devices in Iraq.**

"We've got an acquisition system that doesn't work," Hunter told a panel of Pentagon acquisition officials at a committee hearing on troop protection in Iraq. **He added that "it takes months and months and months" for the United States to respond with something as simple as a piece of steel.**

Hunter praised the innovation of troops in Iraq who circumvented the Pentagon's bureaucratic red tape by purchasing local steel to harden their vehicles. **"The guys in the field get a faster reaction out of a machine shop in Tikrit" than from the Pentagon, he said.**

**Hunter also took a hands-on approach to the armor kit problem, paying a recent visit to a machine shop at Quantico, Va., where he and a retired Marine general cut and assembled a steel double-hull box that could be used to harden a truck. Hunter said the military requires three months to build such a kit.**

**"After three months, we built as many kits as one retired Marine general could put together himself in two hours," he said.**

The simplicity of Hunter's armor-kit instructions stood in sharp contrast to the explanations provided by Pentagon officials who described the shortcomings of the Defense Department's ponderous requirements and acquisition process, in testimony before the committee.

But after "going through this litany of how we develop this whole process," Hunter said the acquisition system needs to be fixed.

**"We've got a couple of steel mills that make this stuff," Hunter said. "Let's get them moving. Let's make a bunch of it. What do you think?"**

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## **1950s-Era Chinooks Broken Down Death Traps; "We Are Flying With A Big Bull's-Eye On Us"**

April 26, 2004 By David Wood, Newhouse News Service

The news is bad enough here at Bravo Company of the Army's 159th Aviation Regiment and its modest fleet of CH-47 Chinooks.

**Hydraulic lines and rubber gaskets, both relics of a former age, leak fluid. Spare parts such as vertical hinge pins are handcrafted because production lines are long dead.**

When this unit goes to war, it takes almost twice as many mechanics as flight crew. The helos fly dawn to dusk. Then **people like Sgt. Trisha McCulloch, a 22-year-old from Shawnee, Kan., and Sgt. John Conrad, 28, of Patten, Maine, work frantically through the night to patch them up.**

"These kids perform miraculously," said Capt. Guy Bass, company executive officer and pilot. In Iraq, Conrad once did a maintenance overhaul — normally a 45-day job — in six days. "And that was working in the dirt," Bass said.

**Yet out there on the battlefield, the lumbering Chinooks, unlike faster and stealthier helicopters, have been easy prey. In one incident alone — a CH-47 shot down in Iraq in November — 16 soldiers were killed.**

"We are flying with a big bull's-eye on us," Bass said.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **The Warning Has Been Given: "The Whole Of Iraq Will Become Fallujah"**

April 23, 2004 KARBALA, Iraq (AFP)

A Sunni leader warned that a new attack on the city, besieged by US troops since four American contractors were slain and their bodies mutilated in early April, would trigger a rebellion.

"I have an urgent message for US forces. **You have overstepped the red line. Make sure you do not strike Fallujah again,**" Sheikh Ahmad Abdel Ghafur Samarrai said during Friday prayers at a Baghdad mosque.

"We will not allow the shedding of Iraqi blood. **If you strike again, the whole of Iraq, from north to south, from east to west, will become Fallujah.**"

<p><b>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></b></p>
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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

# “Our Ruling Class No Longer Puts Its Money Where Its Mouth Is”

April 22, 2004 From PBS Newshour Transcript:

Guest essayist Frank Schaeffer, whose latest book is " Faith of Our Sons: A Father's Wartime Diary" offers some thoughts about those who send troops to war.

FRANK SCHAEFFER: The military records of the presidential candidates are hot topics. But as the father of a member of our military, I'm less interested in the candidate's past service than in asking "Where are their children?"

From March through December of 2003, my son, a corporal in the United States Marine corps, was facing roadside bombs and random bullets in Afghanistan. I was proud of John's service, and terrified. What our political leaders said about "supporting our troops" didn't comfort me. In one crucial respect, they and I had nothing in common. *Almost none of their children were in harm's way.*

At one time, many of our leaders were also military parents.

Roosevelt's most influential advisor, Harry Hopkins, also had children who volunteered. His youngest son, Stephen, was killed in the Pacific. Many members of Congress had sons or daughters serving. Some were wounded, and others killed. A lot has changed since our political elites were encouraging, even expected, their children to volunteer.

According to an article by Tom Ford in the "Minneapolis-St. Paul star tribune" wherein he cited two experts on trends in military service, only 30 percent of the 535 members of congress have a military background. This number is down from 1969 when more than two-thirds had served. And only six representatives and one senator are known to have children serving.

I never served in the military, and I was dismayed when my son volunteered. And I don't mean to single out individuals, but several examples illustrate a serious dilemma:

<p><b>When it comes to service, our ruling class no longer puts its money where its mouth is.</b></p>
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President Bush refers to the U.S. Military as our finest young men and women; his daughters did not volunteer. As First Lady, Senator Hilary Clinton often said that she looked to Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt as role models. But there is no evidence Senator Clinton is "very much upset" by the fact that her service-age daughter did not volunteer to fight in the war that Senator Clinton voted for and

**Senator Kerry's children did not volunteer. Yet the fact that he did not inspire his children to serve is not seen as a disqualification for his seeking the office of commander- and, in these days of the all-volunteer military, recruiter-in-chief.**

Leaders on the right talk about the need to project American power. Where is their practical patriotism? Where are their children? Leaders on the left talk about fairness to working people. Where is their practical solidarity with the working people defending them? Where are their children?

In Pericles' funeral oration, he says, "for a man's counsel cannot have equal weight or worth when he alone has no children to risk in the general danger."

**To me, this summarizes a serious moral problem: The unfairness of being led by a class that only sends the sons and daughters of others to defend us.**

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## **Doings In Faluja**

**(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B's comments in boldface)**

4.21.04 By LOURDES NAVARRO and JASON KEYSER, Associated Press Writers

**US FINDS OUT IRAQIS AREN'T MORONS:** U.S. Marine commanders said no guerrillas have come forward so far to turn in their heavy weapons, a key tenet of an agreement reached by negotiators that began being implemented on Tuesday. The Marines, in response, halted a key commitment on their side in the deal, the return of Fallujah residents to the city.

By noon Wednesday, Marine Lt. Co. Brennan Byrne said no weapons had been turned in. "These may be early indications that the insurgents may not be living up to the requirements of the agreement," Byrne said.

**IDIOT SEES LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL – DOESN'T SEE THAT IT'S HIS HQ ON FIRE:** Capt. Matt Watt, of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines regiment, said: I think its one last surge by the Mujahedeen and criminal type elements in the city to get one last attack in before the political situation snuffs them out, Watt said. They see that the end is near and they are making one last push.

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# **Worlds Cities Have Become “The Weakest Link In The American Empire”**

**Comment:**



**Forty years ago, the perceived danger came from peasant-based insurgencies led by nationalist intellectuals. This story indicates some in the U.S. military leadership have a clue as to the new problem for maintaining capitalist class rule. Today the world is dominated by huge cities, concentrating the working classes of various nations, including the USA, and shifting the balance of power to them.**

**Despite promises and strategies to the contrary articulated here, this new problem for the capitalists and their governments is insoluble.**

**1. It assumes that the United States ruling class has the human and financial resource capability to send American soldiers to impose its will everywhere necessary on the face of the earth. We see now how hopeless that silly fantasy is.**

**2. It assumes that the troops will remain loyal to imperial dreams.**

**3. It is silent on the key question: what do the troops do with rebellion at home? In Indonesia, Serbia, and this month in Iraq, troops refused to serve hated governments and open fire when their own people rose up in insurrection.**

April 19, 2004 By Mike Davis, TomDispatch.com

The Mogadishu debacle of 1993, when neighborhood militias inflicted 60% casualties on elite Army Rangers, forced U.S. strategists to rethink what is known in Pentagonese as MOUT: "Militarized Operations on Urbanized Terrain." Ultimately, a National Defense Panel review in December 1997 castigated the Army as unprepared for protracted combat in the near impassable, maze-like streets of the poverty-stricken cities of the Third World.

**"The future of warfare," the journal of the Army War College declared, "lies in the streets, sewers, high-rise buildings, and sprawl of houses that form the broken cities of the world."**

Military theorists are now deeply involved in imagining how the evolving capacity of high-tech warfare can contain, if not destroy, chronic "terrorist" insurgencies rooted in the desperation of growing megaslums.

To help develop a geopolitical framework for urban war-fighting, military planners turned in the 1990s to the RAND Corporation

One of the most important RAND projects, initiated in the early 1990s, has been a major study of "how demographic changes will affect future conflict." **The bottom line, RAND finds, is that the urbanization of world poverty has produced "the urbanization of insurgency" (the title, in fact, of their report).**

**"Insurgents are following their followers into the cities," RAND warns, "setting up 'liberated zones' in urban shantytowns. Neither U.S. doctrine, nor training, nor equipment is designed for urban counterinsurgency." As a result, the slum has become the weakest link in the American empire.**

The RAND researchers reflect on the example of El Salvador where the local military, despite massive U.S. support, was unable to stop FMLN guerrillas from opening an urban front. **Indeed, "had the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front rebels effectively operated within the cities earlier in the insurgency, it is questionable how much the United States could have done to help maintain even the stalemate between the government and the insurgents."**

More recently, a leading Air Force theorist has made similar points in the Aerospace Power Journal. **"Rapid urbanization in developing countries," writes Captain Troy Thomas in the spring 2002 issue, "results in a battlespace environment that is decreasingly knowable since it is increasingly unplanned."**

The sprawling slum peripheries of the Third World are organized by "informal, decentralized subsystems, "where no blueprints exist, and points of leverage in the system are not readily discernable."

**Using the "sea of urban squalor" that surrounds Pakistan's Karachi as an example, Thomas portrays the staggering challenge of "asymmetric combat" within "non-nodal, non-hierarchical" urban terrains against "clan-based" militias propelled by "desperation and anger."** He cites the sprawling slums of Lagos, Nigeria, and Kinshasa in the Congo as other potential nightmare battlefields.

However Captain Thomas (whose article is provocatively entitled "Slumlords: Aerospace Power in Urban Fights"), like RAND, is brazenly confident that the Pentagon's massive new investments in MOU technology and training will surmount all the fractal complexities of slum warfare. **(Dream on.)**

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

### **Kerry Confronted By Anti-War Activist In New York**

April 15, 2004 NEW YORK (CNN) & Steve Malzberg Apr. 19, 2004

Sen. John Kerry said the United States cannot leave behind a "failed Iraq."

**At a question-and-answer session at City College campus in Harlem, semi-retired math teacher Walter Daum accused Kerry -- a onetime anti-war activist -- of supporting an "imperialist war" in Iraq.**

Said the 64-year-old Daum, "Senator Kerry you have to talk about Iraq. There is an uprising there that's going on now. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal have pointed out that it's an increasingly popular uprising. And the United States, in my view, is on the wrong side. They have ... justice is on the side of the uprising. You have said stay the course. George Bush calls the people there thugs, you call them

extremists. But they hated Saddam Hussein and now they hate us. They wanted Saddam Hussein out and now they want the United States out. And you say, stay the course.

**“What the United States is doing is bombing hospitals, bombing mosques, sniping at civilians, killing hundreds of civilians, wounding thousands of civilians. And you say, stay the course. Is that the criminal course that you want to stay?”**

**“This is an imperialist country. It's fighting an imperialist war. At one time you opposed an imperialist war. I am old enough to have done that myself. And now you're supporting, you say, stay the course of this imperialist war.**

**And you say you're a stark difference from George Bush? People hate George Bush. By the end of your presidency, people will hate you for the same thing. You may fool some of the Americans, that you are different from George Bush on this war. But you're not fooling most of the world and you're not going to fool Iraqis.”**

**Kerry voted for the congressional resolution that gave Bush the authorization to invade Iraq, but he said Bush "made a terrible mistake to take us to war the way that he did.”**

**A banner hanging at the campus forum demanded a U.S. withdrawal, but Kerry said that would leave "the potential for civil war.”**



(For more, see the article “John Kerry Tries To Out-Bush Bush” at [www.socialistworker.org](http://www.socialistworker.org).)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Afghan Border Hills, Valleys Bring Same Frustration “That Irked Soldiers During Vietnam”**

April 26, 2004 By Christian Lowe, Army Times Staff Writer, April 26, 2004

ALONG THE PAKISTAN BORDER, Afghanistan

**During a recent ambush, a team of about 20 anti-coalition members — former Mujahedeen as well as remnants of Taliban and al-Qaeda forces — was able to set an intricate ruse. They laid two improvised explosive devices on a dry riverbed inside Afghanistan and built three hiding spots on a mountain slope above. The attackers triggered one IED to lure the U.S. soldiers in, then fired rockets and AK-47 rifles in a classic “L”-shaped ambush.**

All this within plain sight of a Pakistani border outpost armed with a heavy-caliber weapon — in broad daylight. Worse yet, the attackers simply ran over the ridge that forms the border and loaded into several trucks waiting on the Pakistan side.

**No U.S. or Afghan forces were hurt in the engagement, but the same frustration that irked soldiers during Vietnam — who saw their enemy slip easily across the Cambodian frontier — boils these troops’ blood.**

**“They probably went over the hill already,” said Sgt. Shane Jennings with a roll of his eyes.**

**For U.S. and Afghan troops it’s a frustrating game of cat-and-mouse: the terrorists attack, coalition troops hit back, they slip away seemingly unscathed. Then it all starts over again — at a time the Taliban choose.**

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## **Received:**

# **Meet The Buyers! The Iraq “Free Trade” Traveling Circus Hits London!**

From: Ewa Jasiewicz

Monday April 24, 2004: 26th Wake-up Call To The Buyers - The Occupation Kills. Stop the massacres against the Iraqi people.

**Between Monday April 26th and Wednesday the 28th London plays host to the “Iraq Procurement Conference - Meet the Buyers”, a three day expo which will see contract-hungry British companies compete for their slice of the privatisation pie of the century - post war Iraq. The multinational corporate shindig is sponsored by companies with glowing human rights records such as Shell, Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, arms dealers Raytheon, security company Erinys (employing former South African apartheid murderers and Colombian paramilitary trainers), and pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and Oxy.**

Iraqi people, having suffered enough through centuries of empire and colonialism and occupations including the Ottoman, British and internal Baathist, are now enduring further collective punishment under the year-old and entrenched political and economic US-UK-Polish occupation.

**Little known to many, Poland controls a third of Iraq and commands 19 multinational divisional forces, while former Finance Minister and architect of the US pushed Free Market Shock Therapy programmes of the early 90s Marek Belka is now priming Iraq for the same treatment based on his wealth of experience, and turning a blind eye to the poverty of its results. A fifth of Poland' population is unemployed.**

***13 years of genocidal sanctions primed Iraq for a full free-market take-over by leveling the country into an infrastructural ground zero. Every sector from the docks to the oil to the electricity and agricultural needs reconstruction. Enter the occupation and its sale of the century contract proffering conferences such as Iraq Procurement 2004.***

Sessions at the conference will cover financial issues and risks, construction, agriculture, electricity, oil and gas, communications, and the ambiguously titled "cultural strategies" bringing western "expertise" and "innovation" to a country which invented mathematics, engineering, the alphabet, and at one point printed more books than any other country in the world.

**Iraqi industry also ran for 13 years of the US-UK-UN genocidal sanctions regime on little more than the inventiveness, ingenuity and accumulated skill of ordinary Iraqi engineers and workers, keeping their war-smashed industries turning over without spare parts or essential machinery. Some workers have repeated the process, due to the incompetence of foreign companies and also to preserve their honor, dignity and pride as workers and "sons of Iraq".**

**Southern Oil Company workers reconstructed parts of every location in the company using spare parts from the local market, black market and those finally offered, 6 months on into the occupation by KBR. They also barred all foreign workers, including all KBR employees from entering their locations. Despite the need for reconstruction, Iraqi workers have proved that they can do this themselves with the right equipment, a little more training and the autonomy to do so, exposing the racist global capitalist myths of west knows best and Multinational elite expertise, and corporate capital being responsible for anything more than supervising, managing and shifting profit, while ordinary working class people, as usual, make everything run.**

**Conference literature states that, "most importantly, the event is designed for one-to-one meetings, contract signing and forming buyer-supplier relationships". David J Nash - Director of the Iraq Program Management Office of the Occupation Government aka The Coalition Provisional Authority plus representatives from the US installed Governing Council - an array of 23 un-elected, widely rejected, ridiculed and resented talking heads who form what is known colloquially as the "Majester al Jawazees" - the Council of Collaborators.**

GC members need mass armed protection wherever they go, one has already been assassinated and there are two armed resistance groups - The Jihad Brigades of Imam Ali bin Abi-Taleb (Shi'ite) and Seraya Al Jihad (Sunni) - which have vowed to kill every single last one of the GC.

Over half of the Governing Council are ex-pats and have no standing in Iraq communities. Many of the parties have their own intelligence and surveillance apparatuses, and armed militias, aping their predecessors, The Ba'ath, in terms of authoritarianism, hierarchy and corruption. **Already party members have managed to secure reconstruction contracts through their cozy connections with the CPA and are ransoming ordinary people into their parties by offering them jobs for membership. In a country where unemployment stands at a staggering 70%, more and more people are being tempted by mafia work and aid-stealing rackets.**

Both were in evidence in Baghdad' squatted government buildings-turned-slums for the homeless and Al Awda Palestinian refugee camp, as well as Basra where foreign contractors were receiving death-threats from Islamic part reps. The hand-over of power on June the 30th is dismissed by many as nothing but a cosmetic shift in responsibility for oppression.

As in occupied Afghanistan, the ruling elite was installed by the US to serve as a guard-dog and scapegoat for the occupation to hide-behind and carry on its budget forming, security planning (i.e. attacks, sieges, searches and ultimatums) and resource stealing. Iraq will be no different in its "ethnic and religious tension" blamed turmoil. Democracy is delivered - an Iraqi government - and they become the occupation with an Iraqi face. 14 permanent military bases are being re-enforced right now in Iraq. Bremer himself admitted in an interview with the Wall Street Journal that post June, the only thing that will change with the CPA will be the name. Iraqis must also defer all decisions a Security Adviser, Iraq's own American version of Condoleeza Rice.

Despite the seemingly logical and natural nature of the Conference event, it is technically illegal given that the Occupation Orders - de-facto Iraqi National laws, of which over 70 have already been passed and signed by former Contra cultivating anti-Terrorism chief Paul Bremer III, acting President of Iraq with veto power over all GC decisions - actually break international law.

An Occupation force does not have the right to re-write fundamental laws of a country relating to its resources and economy. Order 39 on Foreign Investment - the Order underpinning Iraq Procurement 2004 - has thrown open the door for 100% foreign corporate privatisation of everything above ground level in Iraq and constitutes "Pillage" under the Hague Regulations 1907.

Furthermore, under the Hague regulations, Occupying powers "shall be regarded only as administrator and usufructuary of public buildings, real estate, forests and agricultural estates belonging to the hostile state, and situated in the occupied country. It must safeguard the capital of these properties, and administer them in accordance with the rules of usufruct." Naomi Klein hits the nail on the head when she asks, "what could more substantially alter "the substance" of a public asset than to turn it into a private one?"

And this is what the Occupation Administration is busily doing and institutionalising with the help of events like Iraq Procurement 2004.

This is the Free Market Fundamentalist pathology of the bomb and build industry laid bare.

All of the above points to one conclusion: the crony companies of the Bush regime and their employees are carrying out their privatization projects with maximum profit returns, Iraq gains nothing! Corporate parasites make a killing tax free.

The icing on the pie is the Occupation's Order 30 on Employment and Salaries.

This sets the wages for all public sector workers in Iraq - i.e. 90% of the Iraqi workforce.

Order 30 contains an arbitrary 13-level wage table incoherent with fluctuating fuel prices (a canister of cooking gas rose from 500 ID (30 cents) to 12,000 ID \$7) in the space of 4 months.

Rents have been soaring due to competition from refugees returning from Iran and leaving the country for the cities in search of work. The average rent is 40,000 ID per month (\$30). The national minimum wage set by the Occupation is 69,000 ID (\$45) per month. Less than half the recommended monthly wages of a sweatshop worker in neighboring Iran.

**We have a responsibility to support those struggling for self determination and the freedom to chose their representatives, and economic and social policies in Iraq - and these are ordinary people, working class people, the intifada is generalised and popular, the culmination of daily protests by the unemployed, students, pensioners, women, former soldiers and former prisoners all over Iraq, with political organisations playing catch-up to an unpredictable and increasingly militant popular movement.**

**We have a responsibility to join the millions in Iraq and the world over in calling for an end to the brutal and fundamentally racist Occupation of Iraq. We have a responsibility to Meet The Buyers in London on April 27th and confront them with what their money really buys - more bombs, bloodshed, destruction, and death.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO! Form affinity groups, book coaches, get your local Stop The War Coalition groups to support, and just COME!

Full action details available at

<http://www.theirpayday.org>

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