

## GI SPECIAL 2#67

**BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



US special forces carry a body bag following an attack on US military Humvees in Baghdad that blew up four US military vehicles. (AFP/Marwan Naamani)

# Call To Organize From Iraq Vet: “Together We Can End This Occupation”

From: <http://www.bringthemhomenow.com/> Posted 4.24.04

### **To My Fellow Troops in the Iraq War**

Being in today's military can be a very tough thing, a feeling that is even worse when you don't believe in what you are fighting for.

I was in that situation a year ago when I was in Iraq with the 1st Marine Division.

**I knew the war I was fighting in was wrong but I didn't see myself as having much choice. I knew that as soon as I left the Middle East I would make my feelings known and that is something I have done.**

The greatest surprise to me since then is that people have actually listened to me.

People really want to hear what I have to say about the war. Average people want to hear my thoughts and experiences, both good and bad.

The country isn't divided like we see in the news. Not everyone is for or against the war. Many people still don't know how they feel about what is going on in Iraq. The voice of someone who has served there carries more weight then you could ever imagine.

I've changed someone's perspective on the war any number of times simply sitting on a barstool next to them and talking about what I know.

So now you might be asking how you can actually make your voice heard. I know for those of you in the service sounding off is much harder then for the recent veterans like myself, but you can still speak out.

All of us, veterans, reservists, National Guard and active duty, can side with Military Families Speak Out, Veterans For Peace, and other folks standing up to stop the senseless killing of Americans and Iraqis. Those of us with direct experience in this disastrous occupation need to make our voices heard. Active duty troops don't even have to "speak" yourselves. Just letting those of us who are now out know that you side with us lends weight to our cause and speaks volumes.

**Imagine walking up to George Bush and saying that there are 100, 200, 300, 1000, 5000 or more participants from his "War on Terror" who oppose the US occupation in Iraq.**

**That's the kind of force that can end this war, just like it did in Vietnam. Together we can end this occupation and save the lives of our fellow American servicemen and women.**

Michael Hoffman

Veteran, USMC 2nd Marine division, Artillery

Served with 1st Marine Division in 2003 invasion of Iraq

Contact Michael at [iraqvvet@mail.com](mailto:iraqvvet@mail.com) with questions or to join the cause.

**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:

# Two U.S. Soldiers Dead, Four Humvees Blown Up In Baghdad Resistance Trap



**Burned U.S. Army military vehicles at the scene of a blast in Baghdad on Monday.**

Apr 26 BAGHDAD (AFP) & (AP) & Reuters

**A powerful blast blew up four US military Humvees** and caused a house to collapse in Baghdad, an AFP photographer at the scene said.

**Two soldiers were killed and five wounded, and a cheering mob of Iraqis looted their wrecked Humvees, taking away weapons, a helmet and a bandolier.**

**Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt did not say what sort of chemical munitions were believed to be produced at the site. *After the blast, there was no sign in the area of precautions against chemicals.***

"Chemical munitions could mean any number of things," including smoke grenades, he said. **(It could also mean the smoke Kimmitt blows out his ass.)**

Kimmit said the cause of the blast was being investigated, but added, **"it had quite an amount of explosives there."** (Obviously, to everybody but Kimmit, a trap had been set, very effectively, and snapped shut on the troops.)

***The Baghdad explosion occurred as U.S. troops broke into the building in the northern Waziriya district.*** The front half of the one-story building was leveled, setting ablaze four Humvees parked outside.

Some residents said the building was a perfume factory, while others said it had once been a scrap metal workshop that repaired weapons **and recycled old ammunition.**



***Asked about reports that the raid team included members of the Iraq Survey Group — the U.S. team searching for weapons of mass destruction in the country — Kimmitt said only: "The inspection was by a number of coalition forces."***

**Residents have shown a Reuters reporter at the scene identity cards belonging to members of the ISG.** The residents say they found the cards after US soldiers evacuated their casualties.

He said the owner of the site was "suspected of supplying chemical agents" to Iraqi insurgents, but did not elaborate.

**A U.S. soldier was seen taken away on a stretcher, her chest and face severely burned. Witnesses reported other U.S. casualties removed in ambulances.** Several Iraqis were pulled from the wreckage, including a woman who wept as she was carried over a man's shoulder. **US troops could be seen removing two bodies in body bags.**

Afterward, dozens of cheering teenagers started to smash the abandoned Humvees. One child climbed on a hood and beat it with a stick.

**Iraqis stripped the vehicles of equipment, one carrying a heavy machine gun, another waving a U.S. helmet. One man sported military headphones.**

**"This is for the madman Bush, for the madman Bremer!" said one youth, waving a rifle.**

An Abrams tank and a Bradley armoured vehicle were also at the scene as fire trucks rushed to the area where several chemical plants are located.



Iraqi Celebrates: U.S. Humvee on fire. (Muhammed Muheisen, AP)

**Residents said they saw rocket propelled grenades being fired into the Humvees as they passed by.**

**An Iraqi policeman, who refused to give his name, said he saw "three US soldiers wounded or killed in each vehicle."**

Earlier, heavy black smoke could be seen rising from the area as a US helicopter hovered overhead.

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## **Marine Killed In Fallujah; 10 Wounded As U.S. Troops “Vastly Outnumbered”-- Traacherous Marine Lt. Col. Babbles About How Happy He Is**

4/26/2004 (AP) & (CNN) & Nick Simeone, Washington VOA & By Fadel Badran, (Reuters)

**In Fallujah, U.S. troops and insurgents battled around a mosque in fighting that killed one Marine and eight militants.** The area shook with heavy explosions a day after U.S. officials announced a fragile cease-fire in the besieged city was being extended.

U.S. officials in Washington said President Bush had asked commanders at Falluja to keep up negotiations. **But they may start probing patrols into the city of 300,000 as early as Tuesday, risking serious confrontations.**

Monday's fighting in Fallujah sent two columns of heavy black smoke over the northern Jolan district, a poor neighborhood thought to have a large concentration of Sunni insurgents. Explosions rang out, along with the sound of mortars and heavy machine guns.

**The Americans were pinned down by fire and called in support from helicopter gunships in the ensuing gunbattle. "Insurgent gunmen opened fire on the Marine platoon with rockets, with mortars and with automatic weapons fire," a reporter said. "Mortar rounds were exploding all around that building. The Marines held on in those buildings, fighting back and firing back."**

The fighting came a day after U.S. officials announced a fragile cease-fire would be extended for two days and that political efforts at a resolution would continue, backing off warnings that U.S. Marines could launch a full-fledged offensive in the city within days.

As part of the extended cease-fire, Marines are to begin joint patrols in Fallujah with Iraqi security forces — **a measure aimed at showing some degree of control without launching a new assault.** Marines began training Iraqi security forces to join them on patrols, due to start by Thursday.

Marine Lt. Col. Brennan Byrne said patrols coming under fire wouldn't necessarily spark a renewal of a general U.S. offensive.

**"We're perfectly happy to move down the street, destroy a bad guy over here and just continue on with the patrol," he said. (Next, read what really happened, as distinct from what babbling Byrne boasts. By the way, since Byrne blathers about "we" moving down the street, was Byrne moving down the street? Or was Byrne safely out of the way? If safely out of the way, which is an occupational objective of Lt. Col's, why does he talk about how "we" moved down the street? Was he there personally next to them when ten of his "vastly outnumbered" soldiers were wounded, "four of them pretty seriously"? Scum like Byrne want experience in a war zone to move up in rank--even if their experience consists of moving their mouth while others do the fighting and dying-- so they come to Iraq to "get their ticket punched." It's high time Lt. Col. Byrne got his ticket punched---by the resistance.)**

**Ten Marines were wounded, four of them "pretty seriously," said Capt. Douglas Zembiec, a Marine company commander in Fallujah.**

**A Marine commander said he believed his forces were vastly outnumbered and credited them with fighting "like lions."**

A statement from the 1st Marine Division said its forces returned fire after being shot at from a mosque. One attacker was killed, **the other resistance soldiers withdrew, then returned later and opened fire on the Marines again before tanks destroyed the minaret.**

The Marines called in close air support, including helicopter gunships and fighter jets, during the battle. Tank fire destroyed the minaret of a nearby mosque the Marines said was being used as a sniper position.

(And as if Byrnes' bullshit isn't bad enough, next we get the master of all incoherent boasting, Kimmitt himself, grabbing for some media exposure with more of his trademark pompous chest-beating. Until the resistance overruns Occupation Hq, the most serious wound this PR hack is likely to get is a paper cut. But he sure is brave in uttering his daily empty threats. Bush gets an unfair rap for saying *once* "Bring 'Em On." Assholes like Byrne and Kimmitt make their living doing it 24/7.)

Army Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, the U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad, said coalition representatives will conduct patrols with Iraqi police into areas not currently under the Marines' control, calling it a step toward stabilizing the town and restoring Iraqi civil authority there. During those patrols, anyone armed without authorization "will be considered hostile," Kimmitt said. "He will be considered a threat, and appropriate action will be taken."

(The resistance announced today that "anyone entering Faluja armed without authorization will be considered hostile. He will be considered a threat, and appropriate action will be taken.")

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## **Eight US Soldiers Wounded In Separate Attacks**

Apr 26 BAGHDAD (AFP)

Eight US soldiers were wounded as the result of four separate attacks in central Iraq, the US-led coalition said in a statement. It said all eight were wounded in attacks on Sunday.

Five soldiers were injured when they were fired upon near Taji, and another was wounded by a roadside bomb near Samarra. Both towns are north of Baghdad.

South of the capital, one soldier was wounded by a roadside bomb near Diwaniyah and another was wounded in a similar attack near Iskandariyah.

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## **Najaf Fighting Brings On Contemptible Hypocrite Of The Year For 2004, So Far**

4/26/2004 (AP) & (CNN) & Nick Simeone, Washington VOA & By Fadel Badran, (Reuters)

***U.S. helicopter gunships attacked Mehdi Army positions in the Najaf area in an effort to contain those forces Monday***, a Coalition Provisional Authority source in Baghdad said.

Phil Kosnett, of the U.S.-led coalition authorities in Najaf, said ***"We continue to be mortared every night ... talk of a cease-fire is ludicrous."***

Late Monday, U.S. forces clashed with Sadr's militiamen outside Najaf, south of Baghdad, leaving several Iraqi vehicles burning, witnesses said. There were no reports on casualties.

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## **Insurgents Attack Bulgarian President**

4/26/2004 (AP)

**Insurgents in Karbala fired at Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov's motorcade Sunday as he made a brief visit to Iraq.** The president's security detail fired back, the attackers fled and no one in the motorcade was hurt.

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## **British Supply Convoy Ambushed; One Soldier Wounded**

Apr 26 BAGHDAD (AFP)

**Monday a British soldier was injured in a roadside bomb blast targeting a convoy in Basra, a coalition spokesman said.**

The soldier was part of a six-vehicle supply convoy that was targeted in the southeast of the British-controlled city, the scene of suicide bomb attacks that killed 74 last week.

"There has been an explosion at about 0745 (0345 GMT) this morning on a six-vehicle convoy resulting in one coalition force injury," said Squadron Leader Jon Arnold, a British military spokesman in Basra. "The injuries are not life-threatening."

Witnesses and police in Basra said the injured soldier was evacuated by helicopter.

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## **Another Lie; Oil Terminal Was Trashed**

**(For two days every report on the resistance naval attack on the Basra area oil terminals admitted U.S. occupation forces had been killed, but kept repeating over and over and over that there was no damage to the oil terminal itself. Lie.)**



Wall St. Journal, April 26, 2004, By Chip Cunningham and Hassan Hafidh

At a news conference yesterday in Baghdad, Iraq's occupation oil minister, Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum, said exports already had resumed at one of the terminals, called Khor al Amaya.

**Loading was expected to restart by today at nearby Basra oil terminal, which loads most of Iraq's oil exports, the oil minister said. The Basra terminal suffered damage to power units, laboratories, water- processing units and staff accommodations in the attack, he said.**

The attack on the oil platforms hit one of the bright spots for the U.S-led occupation.

### **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/>**

### **Mission Ridiculous**



**US soldiers ordered to guard a burnt car in the city of Mosul, north of Baghdad..(AFP/Mujahed Mohammed)**

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## **Resistance Cuts Supply Lines To Occupation Troops;**

# “It’s A Wasteland Here”

**BAGHDAD -- At a sprawling desert camp in southern Iraq, U.S. soldiers sleep in trucks and Humvees because Iraqi merchants are afraid to deliver tents to them.**

**On a key road through the Sunni Triangle, masked men with Kalashnikov assault rifles occupy the concrete-block checkpoints the U.S. military once used.**

**And at Baghdad's airport, goods are piling up because Iraqi truckers refuse to brave the main highway to the capital or transport the material to other U.S. bases.**

In Baghdad's central market, Iraqi shippers and merchants fret that business is drying up.

Of all the sudden changes in Iraq during the last month, control of the roads is among the most striking. **The U.S.-led coalition has been unable to hold on to all of its supply and communication lines on vital routes leading from the capital. Insurgents have blown up key bridges, rocketed fuel convoys and seized hostages.** Though there are no serious shortages, the perilous state of Iraq's roads adds to a sense of chaos in much of the country.

Over the weekend, the military announced it would close two of the country's biggest arteries to civilian traffic in an effort to get the fighting under control, cutting into Iraqi commercial life and raising fears of an economic slowdown.

"It's a good measure of how the coalition is doing when you can get in a car and drive to the Jordanian border and down to Najaf without worrying about it," said Charles Heyman, a senior analyst at Jane's Consulting Group, citing two of the routes that are occasionally under insurgent control. The fact that one cannot take those roads, he said, "is not a good sign."

**American military officials acknowledge that there have been some supply shortages as a result of stepped-up insurgent activity on the routes. They are flying in more material from Kuwait and altering convoy routes and schedules.**

Said Maj. Richard Spiegel of the 13th Corps Support Command, which is in charge of logistics in Iraq. "Example: Are some mess halls serving less variety of food? Yes, they are . but there is still plenty of fresh food."

**Still, Heyman said, insurgents only need to dent the supply lines to have a serious impact on the military's ability to maneuver.**

**"It looks like the opposition has gotten its act together," he said. "It is reducing the ability of the coalition to operate where they want to."**

At many times of day and in many places, Iraq's roads appear relatively normal. Beat-up cars and rickety trucks loaded with goods rattle across the country. Military convoys hum through unimpeded. But for Majid Hussein Kadhum, who owns a major bus and trucking company in Baghdad, the mundane appearance belies a new volatility.

His drivers used to know which stretches of highway held which perils -- roadside bombs, twitchy American convoys and robbers.

"Now, every day things change," Kadhum said. "You don't know what you'll face in the next kilometer."

**The changes began two weeks ago near the city of Falluja. Since then, heavy fighting between insurgents and Marines have demonstrated the new and quickly shifting dynamic on Iraq's roads.**

**Marines moved into Falluja on April 5. They closed a section of the highway from Baghdad that runs through the city and on to the Jordanian border.**

**Insurgents responded by seizing a secondary route that parallels the highway.**

**Masked gunmen occupied former U.S. military checkpoints along the route and began roving other back roads.** Several Westerners who crossed the area to or from Jordan have been detained or killed.

Most Iraqi companies that transport passengers to and from Jordan will no longer make the trip with Westerners, and are even wary about taking Iraqis.

Last week, Ayad Abdul Kareem was driving four Iraqis from Jordan to Baghdad when he stumbled onto an insurgent checkpoint. The guards demanded the passengers' passports. When the insurgents saw they were Iraqis, they were not satisfied. The gunmen focused on a fair-haired passenger and asked him if he really was Iraqi.

The man replied that he was from a prominent tribe in the northern city of Mosul, home to many lighter-skinned Iraqis. The gunmen then quizzed him on prominent tribes in other areas before allowing the car through.

**Insurgents also staged ambushes on the main highway to Baghdad, rolling rocks across the road to set up impromptu checkpoints, and regularly attacked convoys.**

On April 9, the attackers destroyed a fuel convoy. Insurgents also briefly held eight truckers from Turkey, India and Pakistan before releasing them on condition they never drive for the Americans again.

**Next was the airport highway.**

Baghdad's international airport is perched on the western edge of Baghdad, near the Falluja road. **The airport road has long been the site of ambushes of U.S. convoys, but insurgents last week increased the number of assaults on trucks and convoys, and began handing out leaflets in the neighborhood warning of even more attacks.**

**That was enough for Qassim Kadhum. Until Saturday, the 43-year-old trucker had continued to pick up goods at the airport. But after passing several burned-out cars that day, he said he understood why crates were piling up at the terminals.**

**Kadhun decided he would join other Iraqis who had stopped hauling supplies from the airport.**

"We are worried we'll be targets," he said. "We are not only worried about our safety, but the future of our families."

**The insurgents also struck on a key road heading south.**

That highway, from Baghdad to the Shiite part of the country, had been relatively calm. But a militia loyal to an anti-American cleric launched a series of assaults across the region two weeks ago. **When 2,500 American troops swung south from Baghdad to confront the militia, it responded with ambushes that left at least one soldier dead and destroyed bridges over Iraq's wide rivers.**

**The new troops arrived to Forward Operating Base Duke, an empty swath of desert outside the holy city of Najaf, to find a logistical nightmare.**

**Military buyers had signed contracts with local vendors to supply everything from water to portable tents. But the contractors were balking at delivering the goods.**

"When the security situation gets bad, they don't want to deliver, and that's what's happening now," said Army Capt. Ron Talarico, who is helping coordinate supplies.

**A temporary water shortage was remedied, but the camp still has only six portable toilets for the 2,500 troops because the company that provides them is reluctant to travel the highway.**

**There are no showers or laundry facilities. A shortage of tents forces soldiers to sleep in their vehicles in 100-degree weather and blistering sandstorms.**

**"It's a wasteland here," said 1st Lt. Matt Nethers, 24, of Los Alamitos. "The Army logistical system isn't what it could be."**

The military dispatched its Stryker Brigade, including 80 state-of-the-art combat vehicles, to try to secure the main roads and watch over KBR's convoys.

**Other U.S. forces unsuccessfully tried to dislodge militia members from bridges and traffic circles in the key city of Kufa.**

Finally, on Saturday, military officials announced they would close the highway running from near Najaf past Baghdad and to the city of Balad to restore order on the roads.

On Monday, they said the closures would be irregular, depending on military and repair needs.

The changes were slowly seeping into Baghdad's commercial world Monday.

"I used to go to the south at least three times a week, but now I'm jobless because of the situation there," said trucker Hussain Abed Ali, 32.

Sahib Ahmed Shemiryi, the owner of Al Fajeer Transportation in Baghdad's central market, said that his clients had been beseeching him to pick up their wares, but that he dared not send his trucks.

Saad Mohammed Khalid was less worried. The 30-year-old gas station owner has a month's worth of fuel in underground tanks, just in case tankers are blocked from the capital.

But Khalid predicted that the road disruptions would have a profound effect on a country that is increasingly disenchanted with the coalition.

"Workers cannot move from one place to another, nor can goods," Khalid said. "This will have a big impact on Iraqis' lives. They will get very upset, very angry."

--Riccardi reported from Baghdad and Sanders from near Kufa. Times staff writer Tony Perry in Falluja, and Suheil Ahmed and Ammar Mohammed Fadhil of The Times' Baghdad Bureau, contributed to this report.

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## **Yemeni President Calls For "Immediate" US Pullout From Iraq**

**(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: This guy is to the left of Nader. And he's the President of a country!)**

4.25.04 SANAA (AFP)

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh called for the "immediate" pullout of US-led coalition troops from Iraq and warned Washington it was earning the Muslims' hatred by backing Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

**"We want an immediate withdrawal of occupation forces. We do not want to see blood being shed" in Iraq, Saleh said of the escalating violence in the country.**

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## **TROOP NEWS**

**Soldiers Smacked With Extended Tours;  
"The Families Weren't Happy. No One's  
Happy"  
"It's Nothing But A Sea Of Sand Here"**

By Edmund Sanders, L.A. Times Staff Writer, 4.21.04

**NAJAF, Iraq — Spc. Jesse Riley figured he'd be in Las Vegas right about now, lounging by a pool, downing cold beers and hitting the poker tables.**

**Instead, the 23-year-old New Jersey native was crouched in front of a Humvee with eight other soldiers in the middle of the Iraqi desert, playing spades, sipping warm soda and trying — without much success — to prevent the cards from blowing away in the hot breeze.**

**Last week, Riley and about 21,000 other U.S. soldiers had one foot out of the country. They'd completed a year of service in Iraq and were days away from flying home.**

Then they got word that their tours would be extended at least three months.

**"How does it feel?" Riley asked. "You know when you're really cold and your fingers start to freeze and sting? But then after a while you lose the feeling and it's not so bad. That's what this is like. Comfortably numb. Comfortably numb."**

Soldiers were reacting with a combination of disappointment, resignation and a sense of duty.

Some expected the switch, but thousands of others had to scramble to alter plans.

**At a new base near Najaf, where Riley and other troops had been sent to keep Sadr's forces in check, soldiers rattled off a litany of canceled vacations. Mexico. Skiing in the Swiss Alps. California. Several had arranged to treat their wives to a limo ride and a formal night on the town.**

"Disneyland was definitely in the works," said Sgt. Shaun Harris, 25.

**There were a lot of tearful phone calls to anxious family members.**

**"The families weren't happy. No one's happy," said Maj. Tom Isom, 39, of Miami, a member of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.**

**Isom said he didn't have to cancel any plans because he didn't make any. "I know better," he said. "I've been in the Army too long."**

Lt. David Humphreys, 26, of Plano, Texas, was kicking himself for giving away much of his stuff. From Top Ramen noodles to portable DVD players, departing soldiers had been shedding belongings to lighten the load for the expected flight home.

**"The worst part is that we are going to have to live through another summer here," said Humphreys, part of the 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment.**

**Already, temperatures in the Najaf area have been in the high 90s. By July they should reach 120 degrees.**

**Many of the U.S. soldiers now at the base near Najaf came from Baghdad, where they had been in the so-called Green Zone. As the headquarters for the U.S.-led occupation administration, it's one of the most comfortable military environments in Iraq. Soldiers from the 2nd Armored Cavalry had been assigned to guard occupation officials.**

**Now, the soldiers were building a new camp from virtually nothing. Toilets and tents were scarce, in part because violence on the highways had delayed supply convoys. There were no showers or laundry facilities. Hundreds of soldiers were still sleeping in their vehicles. "It's nothing but a sea of sand here," Riley said.**

Others were taking the extension in stride.

"We're professionals," said Sgt. Christopher Shriver, 29, of Ohio. "We go from sitting around playing poker to doing the mission we have to do. It's a switch you have to be able to turn."

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## **Chicago Military Families Speak-Out Kicked Ass**

Forwarded from Vietnam Veterans Against the War National Coordinator Barry Romo  
April 22, 2004 <http://www.vvaw.org>

A press conference followed by a packed forum at a nearby church. MFSSO cofounders Nancy Lessin and Charley Richardson came in from Boston.

Their son is a Marine Arab linguist who had just completed a tour in Iraq, but still has reserve and call-up time. They set the tone by talking about the lies and who dies.

Barbara Porchia, whose only son Spc. Jonathan, age 19, was killed in Iraq, spoke of her initial support for the war. But Bush's lies made her realize how wrong it was. **She also spoke about how her son died because the military sent his unit over to work from vehicles without reinforced doors, in fact no doors at all. It was a side mine that killed her son; doors would have saved him.**

Staci Paeth has two sons in the service, one just extended by Bush for 90 days after completing his tour. **On top of this, he had been injured in an ambush, had a leg cast, and they were still sending him out on missions in a humvee.**

Connie Cominsky had voted Republican all her life and supported the war, but was now ashamed after all of Bush's lies. She has a brother and a nephew in Iraq.

And many more. One man, who had three---that's right, three---relatives, a son, daughter and an in-law, was called unpatriotic. He reminded the heckler that he had three times the number of loved ones in Iraq as the Senate, the House and the Bush Administration put together. And more.

Flowers and petals for the American and Iraqi dead at the end.

VVAW was treated with utmost respect. We were the only other group with speakers at the press conference; the only group with recognition at the forum.

Families showed up from as far away as Madison and Rockford. One father, from the South Side, grabbed people's hearts as he begged forgiveness for speaking off the top of his head. But, his son had just been extended, and he knew he wasn't making sense (but he was). He didn't want his son to die.

Afterward, we went to dinner and people paid some more respect to VVAW with statements like "you started it all," and/or "our heroes." Plus complete respect for our opinions.

**I haven't seen this sort of solidarity, well, since us. Also Iraq vets are joining VVAW.**

Love,  
Barry

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **Iraqi Group Threatens To Execute Italian Mercenaries; Father Says "Let's Bring These Boys Home"**

26 Apr 2004 By Samia Nakhoul, DUBAI, April 26 (Reuters)

A group holding three Italians hostage in Iraq has threatened to kill them in five days unless Italians take to the street to publicly denounce their country's involvement in the U.S.-led occupation.

The kidnappings have added to pressure from some opposition groups for the immediate withdrawal of the almost 3,000 troops that Italy has sent to support the U.S. occupation force.

**The hostages, captured outside Baghdad, were all working for a private U.S. security firm.**

**The father of Salvatore Stefio called on Italians to help rescue the hostages. "We are in the hands of all Italians. We are putting our faith in you. Let's bring these boys home," Angelo Stefio told journalists.**



The captors' statement accused Berlusconi of ignoring the hostages' plight to please the United States and Britain.

"Once again we call on you to take responsibility for your citizens after it became clear that the man who leads you takes orders from his (U.S. and British) masters," it said.

**"We tell you that those we are holding are war criminals and special security forces who have been used by Berlusconi to safeguard the security of his masters, and he has not lifted a finger to try to free them."**

The statement added: **"We will continue to hunt down all those who harm us, to punish them. And we are capable of doing that, especially to those Italian spies we are holding."** (Additional reporting by Antonella Cinelli in Rome)

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## **Puppet “Governing” Council Member Snaps At His Masters’ Heel**

4.26.04 CNN

In Washington, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council said Sunday that it does not support offensive raids by U.S. and coalition military forces to capture the cleric al-Sadr, who leads the Madhi Army holding Najaf and Karbala.

Ibrahim Al Jafari said the unrest linked with al-Sadr's supporters is "an Iraqi problem" and should be dealt with by Iraqis.

"We do not support mobilizing toward al-Sadr in Najaf, and in Fallujah as well," he said.

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

**Falluja: The Forging Of A New Iraq;  
For The Occupation The Trap Has  
Closed**

04.19.2004 by Walden BELLO

**A defiant slogan repeated by residents of Falluja over the last year was that their city would be "the graveyard of the Americans. " The last two weeks has seen that chant become a reality, with most of the 88 US combat deaths falling in the intense combat around Falluja. But there is a bigger sense in which the slogan is true : Falluja has become the graveyard of US policy in Iraq.**

**The battle for the city is not yet over, but the Iraqi resistance has already won it. Irregular fighters fueled mainly by spirit and courage were able to fight the elite of America's colonial legions--the US Marines--to a standstill on the outer neighborhoods of Falluja.**

Moreover, so frustrated were the Americans that, in their trademark fashion of technology-intensive warfare, they unleashed firepower indiscriminately, leading to the deaths of some 600 people, mainly women and children, according to eyewitness accounts. **Captured graphically by Arab television, these two developments have created both inspiration and deep anger that is likely to be translated into hundreds of thou sands of new recruits for the already burgeoning resistance.**

**The Americans are now confronted with an unenviable dilemma: they stick to the ceasefire and admit they can't handle Falluja, or they go in and take it at a terrible cost both to the civilian population and to themselves.**

As if one battlefield blunder did not suffice, the US sent a 2500-man force to Najaf to arrest the radical cleric Muqtad al-Sadr. Again, even before the battle has begun, they have created a fine mess for themselves. The threat of an American assault has merely brought over more Shiites, including the widely respected Ayatollah Sistani to the defense of al-Sadr.

**If the Americans do not attack, they will be seen by the Iraqis as being scared of taking on al-Sadr. If they attack, then they will have to engage in the same sort of high-casualty, close-quarters combat cum indiscriminate firepower that can only deliver the same outcome as an assault on Falluja: tactical victory, strategic defeat.**

The last few days have left us with indelible images that will forever underline the quicksand that is US policy in Iraq.

**There are the marines blaring speakers at Falluja insurgents taunting them for hiding behind women and children, when the reality is that women and children are part of the Iraqi resistance.**

There is Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld cursing telecasts by Al Arabiya and Al Jezeerah claiming there are 600 women and children dead when even CNN has admitted that a high proportion of the dead and wounded in Falluja were indeed women and children. Then there is George W. Bush vowing not to "cut and run" but not offering any way out of the impasse except the application of more of the military force with which the Americans have ruled Iraq in the last year.

To some analysts, the problem lies in the miscalculations of Rumsfeld. The man, in this view, simply underestimated what it would take to have a successful military occupation of Iraq. The result, according to James Fallows in the latest issue of the Atlantic, is that "it is only a slight exaggeration to say that today the entire US military is either in Iraq, returning from Iraq, or getting ready to go."

To many it now seems that the estimates of military professionals like Gen. Anthony Zinni, who said that it would take 500,000 troops to secure Iraq, were more on the mark. **But even Zinni's figure--the high-water mark of the US troop presence in Vietnam--may now be outstripped by the wildfire speed of the insurgency racing through rural and urban Iraq.**

Inept, Rumsfeld and Bremer have certainly been, but their military and political blunders were inevitable consequences of the collective delusion of George Bush and the reigning neoconservatives at the White House.

One element of this delusion was the belief that the Iraqis hated Saddam so much that they would tolerate an indefinite political and military occupation that had the license to blunder at will.

A second element was persisting in the illusion that that it was mainly "remnants" of the Saddam Hussein regime that were behind the spreading insurgency when everybody else in Baghdad realized the resistance had grassroots backing.

**A third was that the Shiite-Sunni divide was so deep that their coming together for a common enterprise against the US on a nationalist and religious platform was impossible. In other words, it was the Americans themselves who spun their own web of false fundamental assumptions that entrapped them.**

#### **Nationalism and Islam: Fuel of the Resistance**

The truth is, the neoconservative scenario of quick invasion, pacification of the population with chocolates and cash, installation of a puppet "democracy" dominated by Washington's protégés, then withdrawal to distant military bastions while an American-trained army and police force took over security in the cities was dead on arrival. **For all its many fractures, the cross-ethnic appeal of nationalism and Islam is strong in Iraq.**

This was brought home to me by when I visited Iraq along with a parliamentary delegation shortly before the American bombing. **When we asked a class at Baghdad University what they thought of the coming invasion, a young woman answered firmly that had George Bush studied his history, he would have known that the Americans would face the same fate as the countless armies that had invaded and pillaged Mesopotamia for the last 4,000 years. Leaving Baghdad, we were convinced that the young men and women we talked to were not the kind that would submit easily to foreign occupation.**

**Famously, Scott Ritter, the former UN arms inspector, said that the Americans would be forced to exit Iraq like Napoleon from Russia, their ranks harried by partisans.**

**Our mistake lay in underestimating the time it would take to transform the population from an unorganized, submissive mass under Saddam to a force empowered by nationalism and Islam. Bush and Bremer constantly talk about their dream of a "new Iraq." Ironically, the new post-Saddam Iraq is being forged in a common struggle against a hated occupation.**

### **Steep Learning Curve**

The Americans thought they could coerce and buy the Iraqis into submission. They failed to reckon with one thing: spirit. Of course, spirit is not enough, and what we have seen over the last year is a movement traveling on a steep learning curve from clumsy and amateurish acts of resistance to a sophisticated repertoire combining the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), hit-and-run tactics, stand-your-ground firefights, and ground missile attacks.

### **The Loyal Opposition Problem**

The Iraq war has developed into a multi-front war, with the struggle for public opinion in the United States being one of the key battles. Here, there has been no decisive break so far. **The liberals are hopeless. At a time that they should be calling for a fundamental reexamination of US policy and pushing withdrawal as an option, their line, as the liberal Financial Times columnist Gerard Baker, expresses it, is, "Whether or not you believe Iraq was a real threat under Saddam Hussein, you cannot deny that a US defeat there will make it one now." It does not help to point out to Baker and others that this is a non-sequitur. For the liberals are not responding to logic but to baiting from the same frothing right wing that, three decades ago, predicted chaos, massacre, and civil war should the US withdraw from Vietnam.**

**For presidential contender John Kerry and the Democrats, the alternative is stabilization via greater participation by the United Nations and the US' European allies, which, of course, hardly distinguishes them from George Bush, who is desperate to bring in the UN and more troops from the Coalition of the Willing to relieve US troops in frontline positions.**

One of the reasons Democratic leaders do not call for withdrawal is their fear that this could harm them in the November elections--despite the fact that, according to the Pew Research Center, 44 per cent of Americans now say that troops should be brought home as soon as possible, up from 32 per cent last September. **But an even more fundamental reason is that they agree with Baker's position that while the invasion of Iraq may not have been justified, a unilateral withdrawal cannot be allowed since this would strike an incalculable blow to American prestige and leadership.**

**Paradoxically enough, while the rise of the Iraqi resistance has not yet altered the correlation of forces within Iraq, it has contributed mightily to transforming the global equation in the last 12 months.**

**It has discouraged a militarily overextended Washington from carrying out efforts at regime change in other countries, like Syria, North Korea, and Iran. It has deflected the attention and resources needed by the Washington for a successful occupation of Afghanistan.**

It has prevented the US from focusing on its backyard, thus allowing the consolidation of anti-free-market and anti-US governments in Latin America, such as Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. It has deepened the rift in the political, military, and cultural alliance known as the Atlantic Alliance, which served as a potent instrument of Washington's global hegemony during and immediately after the Cold War.

**Anti-hegemonic movements the world over, in short, owe the Iraqi resistance a great deal for exacerbating the American empire's crisis of overextension. Yet its face is not pretty, and many on the progressive movement in the United States and the West hesitate to embrace it as an ally. This is probably one of the key obstacles to the emergence of a sustained peace movement in the US and internationally--that the organizing efforts of progressives have been incapacitated by their own qualms about the Iraqi resistance.**

**But there is never any pretty movement for national liberation or independence. Many Western progressives were also repelled by some of the methods of the Mau Mau in Kenya, the FLN in Algeria, the NLF in Vietnam, and the Irish Republican Movement. National liberation movements, however, are not asking for ideological or political support. All they seek is international pressure for the withdrawal of an illegitimate occupying power so that internal forces can have the space to forge a truly national government. Surely on this limited program progressives throughout the world and the Iraqi resistance can unite.**

**Walden Bello**

P.S. Walden Bello is executive director of the Bangkok-based Focus on the Global South and professor of sociology and public administration at the University of the Philippines.

**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.**

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

# **“Chaos Reigns” As US-Trained Iraqi Troops Rebel**

By Sophie Shihab, Le Monde 22 April 2004

**Chaos reigns in the heart of the different "auxiliary" corps to coalition forces in Iraq, ruining any hope they may be able to take over as planned June 30. It's official: Paul Bremer, the American Administrator, has acknowledged it, while his new**

Interior Minister, Samir Al-Souwaydaï, announces massive purges of these units, which, in any case, are unraveling.

"Pitiful performances", desertions, even "going over to the enemy" in the middle of battles have increased since the beginning of the hot days of April. **The most affected units are naturally the police, who work in their own neighborhoods, in the middle of their near and dear, all the while remaining the choice targets for attacks like those that bloodied Basra again, Wednesday, April 21.**

**In the Sunni zones, Falluja, for example, the police en masse have been won over by or surrendered to the Iraqi "resistance" which has the wind in its sails ever since the town was surrounded and attacked by American Marines.**

**Several soldiers confided that they "felt a sense of solidarity with Falluja residents" and that they were shocked by "the aerial bombardment of the city, the destruction of mosques and houses."**

"When the information was given to the press, they were released and brought back here," an Iraqi employee of the American base situated in Baghdad's Qazimiya neighborhood told Le Monde Wednesday under cover of anonymity. **That's where the 340 members of "Battalion 36 of the Iraqi Special Forces, young educated men, many of whom have studied abroad where they were political exiles, all members of the opposition to Saddam Hussein, Kurds and Shi'ites" have been based for more than four months.**

The affair has effectively laid bare the contradictions at the heart of the IGC. **Subject to Paul Bremer's ultimate authority, its members can't, all the same, approve the deadly offensive against Falluja which provokes violent reactions among the people. The exception was Ahmed Chalabi, the Pentagon's old friend, who is widely detested in Iraq.** His spokesperson affirmed on Tuesday that Chalabi's men, but also those from Kurdish and Shi'ite parties, "were participating courageously in the American operations in Falluja."

**The IGC immediately published an indignant communiqué to deny "the allegations attributed to certain politicians" and to affirm that no "Iraqi force, Kurd or other, has participated in these (American) military operations". In other words, the Americans' "puppet government" is now compelled to stand them up.**

## **Resistance Forces 2 Big Contractors To Curb Work**

April 22, 2004 By JAMES GLANZ, New York Times

**The insurgency in Iraq has driven two major contractors, General Electric and Siemens, to suspend most of their operations there.**

The shutdowns were confirmed by officials at the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity, the Coalition Provisional Authority and other companies working directly with G.E. and Siemens in Iraq.

**"Between the G.E. lockdown and the inability to get materials moved up the major supply routes, about everything is being affected in one way or another," said Jim Hicks, a senior adviser for electricity at the provisional authority.**

The suspensions and travel restrictions are delaying work on about two dozen power plants as occupying forces press to meet an expected surge in demand for electricity before the summer.

**"What worries me is that, are the insurgents, the terrorists, are they winning the battle this way?" asked Isam al Khafaji, an Iraqi who is director of Iraq Revenue Watch, an initiative of the Open Society Institute, an organization backed by the billionaire George Soros. (No, it's only one of the ways the resistance is winning. Would you like the whole list now or later?)**

Electricity, he added, "is the most important sector for the Iraqis after security."  
"This will be affecting, really, people's everyday lives," he said.

The spokeswoman said Siemens and the authority were "working out their differences," but she said she had no information about whether the company would resume work.

General Electric booked \$450 million in orders in 2003 in Iraq, mostly for subcontracts to the large primary contractors in Iraq, said Gary Sheffer, a company spokesman.

**A major private security provider in Iraq with access to intelligence information said that Halliburton had "been slowed down in terms of the number of routes and convoys they can run" and said the firm was having a difficult time hiring truck drivers to work in Iraq. He estimated that the overall number of Halliburton convoys was down by 35 percent.**

Admiral David J. Nash is the director of the Coalition Provisional Authority's program management office estimated that during the most intense days of the insurgency in early April, **about 25 percent of Iraqi workers hired for his office's projects actually arrived for work. Last week, attendance was back up to about 50 percent, or an average of 3,517 workers, said Steven Susens, a spokesman for the authority.**

The lockdowns by General Electric in particular have led to delays on power projects that involved its huge turbine power generators, in some cases forcing other companies to slow or stop work.

The delays are slowing work on a \$50 million project to refurbish a large power plant north of Baghdad, said Robert Spaulding, an operations vice president for Fluor, a major contractor in Iraq.

About 70 Iraqis and a dozen non-Iraqi managers are taking apart three General Electric turbines, but G.E. has declined to send technical advisers and has been slow to ship new parts, Mr. Spaulding said. He said he might be forced to seek technical help from other companies that have experience with the G.E. units.

"Tell me what's different about having an American construction superintendent at this site," Mr. Spaulding said, referring to his own employees there, "but G.E. won't send an American tech guy?"

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## **CLASS WAR NEWS**

### **In Your Face, George**



**Tens of thousands of people** gather on the Mall in Washington April 25, 2004, for an abortion-rights rally and march. The rally, which focused on protecting women's reproductive rights, included men and women from across the country along with activists from nearly 60 countries (AP Photo/Lawrence Jackson)

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