

GI SPECIAL 2#69

HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?



Spc. Kenneth A. Melton, 30, of the 39th Infantry Brigade, in this undated photo, was killed on patrol April 25 in Iraq. (AP Photo/KYTV)

Bush's War Approval Rating At All-Time Low

Apr 28 NEW YORK (Reuters)

President Bush (news - web sites)'s approval rating is at an all-time low and fewer than half of Americans now believe invading Iraq was the right thing to do, according to a CBS/New York Times poll released on Wednesday.

"Just 32 percent, the lowest number ever, say Iraq was a threat that required immediate military action a year ago," the poll reported.

"Less than half, 47 percent, now say the United States did the right thing taking military action in Iraq, the lowest support recorded in CBS News/New York Times polls since the war began."

The poll said the Iraq war appeared to have hurt assessments of Bush -- his overall approval rating (46 percent), his rating on handling Iraq (41 percent) and his rating on handling foreign policy (40 percent) "are at the lowest points ever in this administration."

"His approval rating has dropped five points from early March, before the start of intense new fighting in Iraq. Immediately after the fall of Baghdad a year ago, 67 percent of Americans approved of the job Bush was doing as president," the poll said.

In March last year, at the time of the invasion, nearly seven in 10 Americans thought it was the right thing to do.

The poll said 56 percent of Americans thought Bush was "mostly telling the truth but still hiding something" when he spoke to them about Iraq.

It said 61 percent of respondents now believed the administration did not try hard enough to reach a diplomatic solution before going to war in Iraq -- a reversal of the public's belief last year during the war.

It said the economy and jobs were at the top of the list of issues voters wanted to hear the candidates discuss ahead of the Nov. 2 election.

"But the war in Iraq, although still in second place, is now mentioned by one-in-five voters, a 10-point jump from 11 percent six weeks ago, and the highest it has ever been since the CBS News/ New York Times Poll began asking this question last December."

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Falluja Will Not Be Occupied: Marines To Withdraw;

“Outspoken Opponent Of Occupation” Set Free

4.29.04 By JASON KEYSER and KATARINA KRATOVAC, Associated Press Writers

FALLUJAH, Iraq - U.S. Marines negotiated a "tentative" agreement Thursday to pull back forces from Fallujah, a deal that would lift a nearly monthlong siege and allow an Iraqi force led by a former Saddam Hussein era general to handle security.

Marines on the south side of the city began packing up gear Thursday in preparation to withdraw and breaking down earthen berms and other security barriers.

U.S. military commanders met with former Iraqi generals Thursday to hammer out the details of the Fallujah agreement, Marine Capt. James Edge said.

In an apparent gesture to help the Fallujah negotiations, U.S. authorities Thursday released the imam of the city's main mosque, Sheik Jamal Shaker Nazzal, an outspoken opponent of the U.S. occupation who was arrested in October.

NOT ANY MORE....



U.S. Marines take their fighting positions near Falluja, April 29. (Oleg Popov/Reuters)

The tentative deal for the Iraqi force outlined a surprising new way to find an "Iraqi solution to an Iraqi problem," said Marine Lt. Col. Brennan Byrne. **It envisions a force of some 1,100 members called the Fallujah Protective Army.**

The force, which would replace the Marine cordon and move into the city as U.S. troops pull back, would be led by a leading general from Saddam's army and include Iraqis with "military experience" from the Fallujah region, Byrne said.

It could even include soldiers who fought with guerrillas against the Americans — particularly ex-soldiers disgruntled over losing their jobs when the United States disbanded the old Iraqi army, another Marine officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Byrne identified the commander of the new force as **Gen. Salah**, a former division commander under **Saddam**. He said he did not know the general's full name, but Lt. Gen. Salah Abboud al-Jabouri, a native of the Fallujah region, served as governor of Anbar province under Saddam.

(My, how things change in two days. Check out the next item: empty bullshit the Occupation was mouthing only 48 hours ago. Looks like the Occupation masterminds decided to declare victory and get the hell out of Dodge City.)

4.27.04 By JAYSON KEYSER, Associated Press Writer

Earlier in the day, U.S. aircraft dropped leaflets in the city of 200,000 people, calling on insurgents to surrender.

"Surrender, you are surrounded," the leaflets said. **"If you are a terrorist, beware, because your last day was yesterday. In order to spare your life end your actions and surrender to coalition forces now. *We are coming to arrest you.*"** (No, we aren't coming to arrest you. We're heading in the opposite direction.)

Time To Go Home



U.S. Marines from the 1st Battalion 5th Marines take cover after an explosion in Fallujah, April 29, 2004. (AP Photo/John Moore)

8 U.S. Soldiers Killed In Mahmudiyah Car Bomb Attack; Had Almost Gone Home When Bush Ordered Them Back To Die

4.29.04 By JASON KEYSER and KATARINA KRATOVAC, Associated Press Writers & The Guardian

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Eight U.S. soldiers were killed Thursday in the Baghdad area, a U.S. military spokesman said, when their team from the 1st Armored Division was attacked while removing roadside bombs from a key highway, near the town of Mahmudiyah, south of the capital.

A driver in a station wagon neared the team, then "detonated an explosive device," the statement said.

A US army rapid reaction force sealed off the area and the soldiers, from the army's 1st Armoured Division, were taken to the 31st Combat Support hospital in Baghdad by medical evacuation teams.

The soldiers had been due to return to their home base in Germany days earlier, but their departure was blocked by Pentagon officials who ordered them to stay in Iraq for a further 90 days following the recent upsurge in violence.

Task Force Baghdad Soldier Killed In Baghdad RPG Attack

4.29.04 Release #040429b Combined Joint Task Force 7 & JASON KEYSER and KATARINA KRATOVAC, Associated Press Writers

BAGHDAD, Iraq - A Task Force Baghdad Soldier from the Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division was killed as a result of a rocket-propelled grenade attack on his patrol in eastern Baghdad at about 5 a.m. April 29.

Pfc. Dead In "Accident"

April 29, 2004 United States Department of Defense News Release No. 384-04

Pfc. Marquis A. Whitaker, 20, of Columbus, Ga., died April 27 in Scania, Iraq, after falling from a bridge.

His vehicle was hit from behind by a civilian truck and left hanging off the side of the bridge. Whitaker attempted to climb out of the vehicle but fell. Whitaker was assigned to the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Polk, La.

Two Ukrainian Soldiers Killed, One Wounded West Of Kut:

Ukrainian Pres. Says “We’re Not Occupying Iraq” & Claims To Be Against War

KIEV, April 28 (Xinhuanet) & KIEV, April 28 (Reuters)

Two Ukrainian soldiers were killed Wednesday in an attack in Iraq as opposition parties continued to urge the former Soviet republic to consider pulling back its troops from Iraq.

The Defense Ministry said one soldier died at the scene and the other in hospital after their armored convoy came under rocket-propelled grenade and machine-gun fire during a routine patrol about 60 km west of the city of Kut.

A third soldier wounded in the attack was not in life-threatening danger after operation, said the ministry.

President Leonid Kuchma had pledged that the soldiers, who carry out a peacekeeping mission in Iraq, would have to stay. He accused the opposition parties of making troop withdrawal demand for political reasons. **(Sending them was “for political reasons.” Why shouldn’t getting them home be “for political reasons?”)**

Ukrainian troops pulled out of Kut, southeast of Baghdad, this month after one soldier was killed in an explosion and five wounded in crossfire with followers of Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. (Next time, try pulling out of the whole country. That might work.)

Earlier President Leonid Kuchma offered his condolences to the family of the first dead soldier, but said Ukraine's approximately 1,600 peacekeepers would stay in Iraq.

"Our troops are not occupying Iraq and are not taking part in military action against Iraq. Our position remains the same," Kuchma told a news conference.

He said Ukraine's Council of Security and Defence would meet on Friday to discuss the situation.

"From the beginning we were against solving the problem of (Saddam) Hussein by military methods. We were against the war," he said.

U.S. Soldier Dead In Tel Afar Ambush

April 28, 2004 The Associated Press

In northern Iraq, a U.S. soldier was killed in an ambush on troops responding to a roadside bombing, the military reported Wednesday. The Tuesday attack was near the city of Tel Afar, 240 miles northeast of Baghdad, where a bomb hit a coalition patrol.

Baquba Convoy Hit, One Soldier Killed, One Wounded



BAGHDAD, April 29 (Xinhuanet) --**One US soldier was killed and another wounded Thursday when a roadside bomb exploded near their convoy northeast of Baghdad, a US military spokesman said.**

The explosion took place outside the town of Baquba, some 60 km northeast of the capital, spokesman of the 1st Infantry Division said.

The wounded Soldier was evacuated to a Coalition medical facility and was listed in stable condition.



An American soldier's helmet is seen on the asphalt after an attack on a U.S. Army convoy, April 29 outside the town of Baqoubah., (AP Photo/Mohammed Adnan)

Another Soldier Killed in Vehicle Accident

4.29.04 Combined Joint Task Force 7 Release #040429a

BAGHDAD, Iraq - One Task Force Baghdad Soldier died as a result of non-battle injuries sustained in a vehicle accident in western Baghdad April 28.

TF OLYMPIA SOLDIER DIES FROM INJURIES FOLLOWING GRENADE ATTACK, 3 WOUNDED

April 28, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
Release Number: 04-04-46C

MOSUL, Iraq - One Soldier assigned to Task Force Olympia died April 28 from wounds following a hand grenade attack west of Mosul just before 7 p.m. April 27. Three other soldiers were wounded in the attack.

Three Soldiers were transported to the 67th Combat Support Hospital in Mosul. One of these Soldiers later succumbed to wounds and died in the hospital on April 28. A fourth Soldier was provided with medical treatment and has been returned to duty.

Fighting In Golan Neighborhood Of Fallujah Wounds One Marine

April 28, 2004 The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Lt. Col. Brennan Byrne said Marine units moving into a position in southeast Fallujah came under fire, wounding one Marine in the shoulder.

U.S. Marine patrols into Fallujah originally scheduled to begin Thursday will be delayed a day to allow more training, a U.S. commander said after three days of fighting in the city. **Asked if the delay until Friday was due to the fighting, Byrne said, "I don't know."**

After sunrise, at least eight destroyed houses could be seen in the Golan neighborhood.

Ambush Near Baghdad Wastes Convoy

April 28, 2004 The Associated Press

Outside Baghdad, gunmen opened fire on a military convoy headed in the direction of Fallujah, killing or wounding at least two people.

After the attack, a cargo truck was left with its tires shot out and windshield pockmarked with bullets. Pools of blood were on either side of the truck's cab, and U.S. soldiers at the scene said two casualties were taken away. Their nationalities were unknown.

Polish Patrol Ambushed

April 28, 2004 The Associated Press

Karbala, Iraq-AP-- Polish authorities say a Polish patrol saw some action in southern Iraq overnight.

The patrol battled insurgents after being ambushed near the holy city of Karbala. But the soldiers suffered no casualties. The attackers fled.

A spokesman for the multinational force headed by Poland says a booby-trap blew up as the patrol drove by, and attackers then fired machine guns.

Helicopter Down, Explodes In Kut

April 28, 2004 AP, Baghdad

A US helicopter exploded in the southeastern Iraqi city of Kut after an engine problem forced it to make an emergency landing, a US military spokesman said Tuesday.

He said there were no casualties in the incident which occurred late Monday after an "engine malfunction". The crew was able to get out of the helicopter "with their equipment" before it exploded, he said.

South African Killed In Basra

29apr04 From correspondents in Johannesburg, news.com.au

A SOUTH African was killed in Iraq today, the fifth national to die in the conflict, the foreign ministry said.

"The South African diplomatic mission in Kuwait has confirmed the death of yet another South African in the ongoing conflict in Iraq," a foreign ministry statement said.

A British military official said in the southern Iraqi city of Basra that a civilian, believed to be South African, was killed in a shooting.

(The others were mercenary scum. Hopefully this one was too.)

Explosion In Iraq Kills Washington, Oregon Mercenaries

April 28, 2004 By Tracy Vedder, KOMO 1000 News

PORTLAND - Two private security guards from the Northwest were killed in an ambush in Iraq.

One of the men, 31-year-old Vincent Foster, lived in Port Orchard. The other, 49-year-old Thomas Carter is from Portland. **Both were hired to provide security for a demolition team working in Bayji in Northern Iraq.**

Carter was an Army veteran and an early member of the Army's elite special operations unit Delta. He leaves behind a wife and three children.

Foster is a Marine Corps vet who served in both the Persian Gulf and Somalia. He's a weapons expert who signed on with Cochise Consultancy of Florida to go to Iraq in January. Foster's mother does not want any pictures of her son released now.

The two men were guarding a demolitions convoy heading back to base camp. The group collects unexploded Iraqi ordinance and disposes of it.

The owner of Foster's private security firm says the group was ambushed Sunday morning. Jesse Johnson says anti-coalition forces detonated a bomb beneath their truck.

"It was not a booby trap that they run over and trip it themselves, all indications are they rigged the explosion," Johnson said.

Johnson says Carter died immediately while two others, including Foster, were severely injured. A fourth man in the truck returned fire and then began giving medical aid. **"We did our best to take care of our own as quickly as we could until the Army arrived with the medical evacuation helicopter."**

Foster died in the helicopter on the way to a hospital.

Carter's family knew he was in dangerous territory.

"I think the one thing he told me one time is, it's the wild west," says Carter's father-in-law Bruce Hoyt. "It's a dangerous place and I don't know what happened."

The State Department is flying the bodies of both men back to the United States Wednesday night. **While they were private security contractors, we understand they will be accorded full military honors.**

Danville Soldier Hurt In Blast

Apr. 28, 2004 Northeastern Pennsylvania Times Leader

A Pennsylvania National Guard soldier from Danville has been injured in an explosion in Iraq.

Nancy Messersmith said Tuesday that her son, Spec. Brian Messersmith, called her Monday to say he had a severe leg laceration and burns on his arms and hands.

He is member of the 103rd Armor Regiment in Lewisburg.
The 103rd is the same unit 42 members of 109th Field Artillery Battalion are assigned to.

Messersmith said she is not certain whether her son was injured in the same explosion that killed Sgt. Sherwood Baker of Plymouth on Monday.

Messersmith, 30, is an emergency medical technician and a volunteer firefighter. His mother said he volunteered to deploy to Iraq in place of other men who have families. "He saw that as an important thing to do," she said.

She said her son is being taken to a military hospital in Germany and then to a hospital in Texas.

Bonnie Adams

Henderson County Marine, Wounded At Husaybah, Reports On Battle

April 29, 2004 The Associated Press, HENDERSONVILLE, N.C

A Henderson County native wounded in fighting in Iraq said in an e-mail that the evacuation from the battlefield was the worst part of the experience.

Shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade hit Marine Staff Sgt. Adam Walker, 27, in his left arm and left thigh April 17. A bullet from an AK-47 also entered his right leg.

He was transported to an Army field hospital outside of Baghdad, then to Kuwait and later to Germany. He arrived Friday at his Marine Corps base at Twenty-Nine Palms, Calif.

"I'm limping about with a cane right now and can't lift anything of weight with my left arm," Walker said Tuesday in a telephone interview. **"Five Marines died that evening. One of my neighbors didn't make it. He has a wife and four children."**

Walker and his wife, Cathy, have two children, with another expected in July. His grandmother, Peggy Heatherly, lives in East Flat Rock

In an e-mail to the Times-News of Hendersonville, Walker said the battle started when up to 500 insurgents from the city of Fallujah entered the city of Husaybah.

"We had moved about three blocks into the city when the team that I was with came under fire," he wrote.

"An RPG flew about 18 to 24 inches past my head. I crept up to peek around the corner and spotted an insurgent firing from a second-story window. As I stepped out and began firing in the window something popped in front of me. Small arms fire continued to buzz around our heads.

"I looked down and my left arm felt sort of limp. A hole was put in my magazine, the canteen cap was blown off my canteen and something entered my gear, blowing through my magazine pouch and finally lodging in the second magazine. It then burst into flames."

Walker said when he was taken out of the town to a soccer field to be evacuated, he didn't want to leave.

"It was then that tears began to well up in my eyes," he wrote. "Leaving the company was the hardest thing that I've ever had to do. When they said that I was going to Germany, I began feeling lower."

U.S. Najaf Base Mortared

4.29.04 Najaf, Iraq-AP

A U-S base in the southern Iraqi holy city of Najaf has come under mortar fire.

The attack caused no casualties, but could indicate growing aggression from Shiite Muslim militiamen.

Local hospital officials say militiamen also attacked a U-S convoy passing through part of the city overnight.

Bloomer Man Wounded In Iraq

April 29, 2004 By Terry Grover, FT. SMITH, ARKANSAS: TIMES RECORD

BLOOMER — Sgt. Wayne Irelan felt a need to serve his country. That's why he gave up his retirement and returned to the U.S. Army as a reservist, his wife said.

On Saturday, Irelan was among the members of the Army's 39th Infantry Brigade injured when their base was hit by enemy rounds, Lana Irelan said.

The attack on Camp Cooke near Taji, Iraq, left four Arkansas soldier's dead, according to military reports.

Lana Irelan said she was notified late Saturday that her husband was seriously injured in the attack.

Initially, Lana Irelan said she was told her husband was on life support and was not expected to survive. However, later reports have indicated that he is in critical condition at a military hospital in Germany.

She said he is expected to be transferred to a base in San Antonio later this week.

According to Irelan, her husband suffered extensive injuries throughout his body, including burns to his face, a fractured arm and shrapnel wounds.

"The doctors have said he should make a full recovery," Irelan said.

Irelan and her husband have been married for more than 29 years. They met at Fort Chaffee where he was a cook.

He served for more than 26 years in the active military, retiring on Sept. 9, 2001. Then the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, occurred.

"It drove him nuts. He wrote letters to the President asking that he be reactivated," she said.

Within 30 days, Wayne Irelan was once again in the Army National Guard, his wife said. "He wanted to go there so they wouldn't come here. He wanted his grandchildren to be safe," she said.

The 48-year-old Whirlpool employee served where he was needed, including Operation Desert Storm.

That tradition has been handed down. All three of the couple's children have served in the military. Their daughter, Heather Lassiter, 26, served in the Air Force; sons Wayne III, 24, and Donnie, 19, have each spent time in the Army.

Irelan says despite the injuries, her husband was doing what he felt he needed to do.

"He wanted to go. He wanted to serve the country one more time. **He felt they had sent so many kids over there who were 18 and 19 years old, and they didn't know what they were doing. He said he felt like someone needed to be there to show those kids and to bring those kids home,**" she said.

Killed during the same incident in which Irelan was injured were Capt. Arthur L. Felder, 36, of Lewisville; Chief Warrant Patrick W. Kordsmeir, 49, of North Little Rock; Staff Sgt. Billy J. Orton, 41, of Humnoke; and Staff Sgt. Stacey C. Brandon, 35, of Hazen.

Ireland's unit left for Iraq in March and was among the last units from the 39th Infantry Brigade positioned in Iraq, according to information from the Army.

Bulgarian Pres. Says Soldiers "Not Prepared" For Fighting

4.27.04 By JAYSON KEYSER, Associated Press Writer

Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov said his country's troops were "not prepared" for the kind of fighting they are doing in Iraq and need "immediate and substantial military backup" from the coalition.

Speaking in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia after a visit to the 485-member contingent Sunday, **Parvanov said he wants the troops be relocated to a new camp outside Karbala by June 30.** Karbala has been the scene of recent heavy fighting by al-Sadr's followers.

Blasts Near Japanese Base

April 29, 2004 From correspondents in Tokyo, AFP

TWO explosions were heard early today near the camp housing Japanese troops in the southern Iraqi city of Samawa, a spokesman for the Defense Agency said, adding there were no injuries.

"At around 2:00 am on April 29, there were two explosions near the base in Samawa. No one was injured and there was no property damage either," said the spokesman. The agency has no further information, he said.

TROOP NEWS

Panic Time: Army Wants Howitzers Back From Ski Areas

4.27.04 By MARTIN GRIFFITH, Associated Press Writer. AP correspondent Scott Sonner in Reno contributed to this report.

RENO, Nev. - The U.S. military is demanding the return of five howitzers that two Sierra Nevada ski resorts use to prevent avalanches, saying it needs the guns for the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Alpine Meadows and Mammoth Mountain received the artillery pieces on loan from the Army and began using them last year to fire rounds into mountainsides and knock snow loose.

But the ski resorts received word earlier this month that the Army's Tank Automotive and Armaments Command at the Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois needs the howitzers back immediately.

"I need to have them back in the troops' hands within 60 to 90 days," said Don Bowen, the Army command's team leader in charge of the howitzers. "It's a very short timeframe to get them serviceable and back into the theater in southwest Asia. Afghanistan-Iraq is the immediate concern."

Howitzers are short-barreled cannons that can be pulled by a vehicle. They fire three to 10 rounds per minute at a range of 9,600 to 12,330 yards. Replacing one would cost around \$1 million, Bowen said Tuesday.

Resort officials said they spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to transport the guns, reimburse the Army for training and build firing platforms.

Wounded Independence Soldier Returns Home

April 28, 2004 The Kansas City Channel.com

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- An Independence, Mo., soldier returned home from Iraq on Wednesday after being wounded in the line of duty.

Pfc. Lucas Fournier, 22, found himself fighting for his life just six days into his Iraq tour. He was caught in the crossfire during a skirmish in a suburb southeast of Baghdad, KMBC's Kris Ketz reported.

The firefight happened April 4, less than a week after Fournier arrived in Iraq. **He was one of 16 Army soldiers in the back of a lorry who were rushing to help an ambushed company, but came under fire themselves.**

"When I got hit, the first thing I thought was, 'I'm never going to see nobody again from my family,'" Fournier recalled.

He was hit twice in the shoulder and once in the chest. It took 90 minutes before he arrived at a hospital. Fournier said reassurance from his fellow soldiers helped get him through the tense minutes.

"I just kind of calmed myself down and relaxed and just kind of rode it out," he said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Madhi Army Holding Kufa; Spokesman Defies Occupation

4.27.04 By JAYSON KEYSER, Associated Press Writer

In Najaf, Mustaq al-Khafaji, accused Americans of trying to advance toward Kufa. "We will face the Americans whenever they show up," he said.

(For more, see the article "Cracks In The Empire; Iraq One Year Later" at www.isreview.org.)

"We Hate The Policy Of Mr. Bush;" "Day After Day, They Take Lives, And Do Nothing For Us."

Apr. 28, 2004 BY EVAN OSNOS, Chicago Tribune

BAGHDAD - (KRT) - When war arrived, 70-year-old professor Gailan Ramiz set out to protect the small, refined world he cherished.

This week, the chaotic and brutal world outside finally reached him.

While he sat with his wife and their daughter in their stately, high-ceilinged drawing room Monday, an explosion tore through his home, reducing most of it to rubble. Ramiz was killed.

U.S. soldiers had come to investigate a tip that munitions were being produced in a perfume factory that rented the rear of the basement of the Ramiz home. U.S. officials still do not know what caused the blast, which left two Americans dead and eight wounded.

For the nervous-looking soldiers who fanned into the street, this was the site of a tragic and mysterious incident. **The two Americans who died were members of the Iraq Survey Group, a government team that is searching for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, an unnamed defense official told the Associated Press.**

Soldiers stood with their guns at the ready as one ordered relatives to get out of the house so the Humvees could be hauled from the rubble. Ramiz's father-in-law,

Qassim Murad, in a rumpled black suit, rose from a bench by the front door of the ruined house and walked away, sobbing.

"This is democracy? Democracy sounds like that?" spat Jamaal Qassim, an electrical engineer and Ramiz's brother-in-law, as the Bradleys rumbled to a halt.

"Look, we are afraid of them, and they are afraid of us," Qassim said of the soldiers. **"We do not hate the Americans, but we hate the policy of Mr. Bush. I see the young soldiers with their baby faces, and sometimes I feel sorry for them."**

Engineers, professors and other professionals, many of Ramiz's relatives are just the sort of middle-class moderates who the U.S.-led coalition has looked to for a bedrock of support. **But these family members say the U.S. military and civilian authority has failed them. The last straw, they said, was that no one from the coalition had come to talk to them about the deaths or the destruction of the house.**

"In the beginning, when the Americans arrived, we were not happy and not unhappy," said Murad, who studied English in London a half-century ago. "But day after day, they take lives, and do nothing for us."

In the moments after the blast, local teenagers and young men flocked to the burning building shouting "God is greater," celebrating and taunting the U.S. soldiers evacuating their wounded. In the dark logic of Iraq, their joy at the Americans' loss outweighed the fact that an esteemed professor had been killed, said Nabil Emad, a 27-year-old neighbor, who said he was among those posing for television cameras.

"I couldn't control my emotion," he said in English. "When you see the people on television killed in Fallujah, that is the power of the United States. We know that something is more powerful than the United States, so we are happy. I have to say, `God is greater.'"

For Ramiz, the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq had crystallized the lifelong hope of modern political freedom in Iraq. In addition to Baghdad, he had taught in Malaysia and Jordan and served 10 years as director of research in the Foreign Ministry.

When American tanks rolled into Baghdad, he hid in the cellar of his home and prayed that the regime had fallen, he wrote. On the day that Saddam's statue came down in Firdaus Square, he screamed himself hoarse with the crowds of cheering men, women and children. His hopes were high, he told people at the time, that Americans would help Iraq find its long-undiscovered ability for democracy and then leave the nation on its own.

But as the months passed, Ramiz winced at what he considered American failings in Iraq.

"Life has become negative," he told the Christian Science Monitor in September.

As violence erupted this month, Ramiz apparently grew more despondent. He lamented to journalists that pursuing the militant cleric Moqtada Sadr had only elevated Sadr in the

eyes of Iraqis who otherwise would ignore him, and that the Marines' move to surround Fallujah may have been an overreaction to the deaths of four U.S. contractors in the city.

In his last days, he seemed to believe that the situation was spinning beyond control.

"All of this has triggered outrage against the Americans," he said last week to a reporter from U.S. News and World Report. Iraqis were alienated. They were dissatisfied. And they had yet to glimpse a sovereign government.

The last two weeks of violence, he said, "was the straw that broke the camel's back."

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

Seven Occupation Police Killed In Mosul Attack On Police Chiefs Residence

4.29.04 Release #040429c Combined Joint Task Force 7

MOSUL, Iraq - Seven Iraqi Police and one civilian were killed in two attacks targeting Iraqi security forces in Mosul April 28.

The first attack occurred when two Iraqi Policeman were shot in front of their homes. Both officers were taken to Al Razzi hospital after the shooting where they later died.

Later that day, a second attack occurred when a drive-by shooting killed one civilian and wounded an Iraqi policeman as they stood guard at the residence of the Mosul Chief of Police.

Five policemen pursued the assailants and were later ambushed in an open field where all five of the officers were killed. During the pursuit, the assailants attempted to steal a car and shot and wounded the driver after he refused to hand over the car keys.

Iraqi Police are investigating the series of attacks.

Anyone with information about criminal or terrorist activities should inform the Iraqi Police, Coalition forces, or call the Tips Hotline 813-343 or 780-013. (Sounds good, but we don't have Rumsfeld's home address. Oh well, at least we can turn in Bush & Cheney. That's a start.)

Italian Hostages' Families Lead Peace March

4.29.04 By JASON KEYSER, KATARINA KRATOVAC, and TOM RACHMAN,
Associated Press Writers

In Rome, the families of three Italians held hostage in Iraq led a march Thursday by several thousand people near St. Peter's Square after the abductors threatened to kill the captives unless Italians carried out a "huge demonstration" against the war.

The relatives described the march as a peace rally and said they were not giving in to the captors. Four Italian security guards working in Iraq were abducted April 12, and the kidnappers killed one of them a few days later.

Jane Reynolds, a 47-year-old British technical writer who lives in Rome, characterized it as a protest against the war — although she hoped the hostages would be released.

"I don't think that Italy will leave three boys like this to die," Angelo Stefio, the father of one of the hostages, said on TV before the demonstration. "If we do not do this, perhaps it might be too late."

To coincide with the march, the opposition leftist Green Party said they had sent a video of recent anti-war demonstrations in Italy to the London office of pan-Arab television channel Al-Jazeera.

"The Italian people have been fighting for a long time against the war and for the withdrawal of our soldiers from Iraq — as you can see from these images," said a text accompanying the video.

Al-Jazeera said they intended to broadcast the video, probably on Friday, said Green Party spokesman Andrea Alicandro.



Protestors hold a peace flag in support of the three Italian hostages held in Iraq during a demonstration at the Vatican, April 29, 2004. Relatives and friends of the three hostages gathered for a peace march they hope will convince kidnappers to free the men. (Max Rossi/Reuters)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Former General Demands Unilateral Withdrawal From Iraq

April 28, 2004 Wall Street Journal CAPITAL JOURNAL, By JOHN HARWOOD

The time to worry is when Washington politicians on all sides agree. So when John Kerry echoes President Bush in arguing that the United States "can't cut and run" from Iraq, maybe it's time to listen to someone who says we must.

Maybe it's time, in other words, to listen to retired Gen. William E. Odom. It is delusional, asserts the Army veteran, college professor and longtime Washington hand, to believe that "staying the course" can achieve President Bush's goal of reordering the Middle East by building a friendly democracy in Iraq. For the sake of American security and economic power alike, he argues, the U.S. should remove its forces from that shattered country as rapidly as possible.

"We have failed," Mr. Odom declares bluntly. "The issue is how high a price we're going to pay. ... Less, by getting out sooner, or more, by getting out later?"

His is not the voice of an isolationist, or a peacenik, or Republican-hater. He is talking from the conservative Hudson Institute, where he was hired years ago by Mitch Daniels, later Mr. Bush's budget director. His office displays photos of Ronald Reagan, under whom Mr. Odom directed the National Security Agency, and Jimmy Carter, on whose National Security Council staff he served.

Rather, his unsettling view reflects a broader reassessment of America's predicament as Iraq looks ever-uglier. It can be seen as well in U.S. Administrator L. Paul Bremer's tacit admission of error in disbanding the Iraqi Army and Mr. Bush's new reliance on United Nations help.

Mr. Odom opposed the Iraq war before it happened. An expert in comparative politics who teaches at Georgetown and Yale, he warned that there was no reason to expect that Iraq could soon develop the ingredients for constitutional democracy: individual rights, property rights and a tax-collection system supporting a government to enforce them. **The violence of recent months, he concludes, has exposed Mr. Bush's vision of doing so as a dream.**

Following the planned June 30 handover of nominal sovereignty, Iraqis may go to the polls and vote. As televised images of Iraqis cheering attacks on U.S. troops suggest, it's not likely to be anything Americans would consider worth the war's cost in blood and treasure.

"Anybody that's pro-American cannot gain legitimacy," he says.

But can't U.S. troops there tamp down hostile activity? Well, yes, he says -- at a cost of rising hostility to the U.S. throughout the region.

"It probably will radicalize Saudi Arabia, [and] it could easily radicalize Egypt," Mr. Odom says. Violence yesterday between security forces and terrorists in Syria hinted at what may come, heightening dangers for Israel and the U.S.

The longer U.S. troops hang tough, he reasons, the more isolated America will become. **That in turn will place increasing strain on international economic and security institutions that have undergirded the emergence of "America's Inadvertent Empire," as Mr. Odom's latest book calls it. "I don't know that the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, [or] NATO can survive this," he says.**

His proposed solution sounds initially like Mr. Kerry's: a call for the U.N. and European allies to take charge of political and security arrangements. What's different -- even Bushlike -- *is that Gen. Odom would accompany that request with a unilateral declaration that U.S. forces would leave even if no one else agrees to come in.*

It is a jarring prescription. But ask yourself, as bullets fly in Najaf and Fallujah, which sounds more credible: Mr. Odom's gloomy forecast, or Mr. Bush's prediction of success?

John Harwood is political editor of The Wall Street Journal.

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

True Imperial Arrogance: Burning With Anger, Iraqis Infuriated By New Flag That Was Designed in London

(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: "BUSH THINKS 'IF WE TAKE THEIR FLAG, THE IRAQIS WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO FIGHT FOR'. OOPS.)

April 28, 2004, The Independent/UK by Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad and David Usborne in Baghdad

For many Iraqis it was the final insult. Again and again they expressed outrage yesterday that Iraq's United States-appointed and unelected leaders had, overnight, abolished the old Iraqi flag, seen by most Iraqis as the symbol of their nation, and chosen a new one.

"What gives these people the right to throw away our flag, to change the symbol of Iraq?" asked Salah, a building contractor of normally moderate political opinions. "It makes me very angry because these people were appointed by the Americans. I will not regard the new flag as representing me but only traitors and collaborators."

The outburst of fury over the flag highlights the extraordinary ability of US leaders and the Iraqi Governing Council to alienate ordinary Iraqis, already angered by the bloody sieges of Fallujah and Karbala. And yesterday, in the hotbed of Iraqi rebellion, the flag was burnt in public in a demonstration of public anger.

When, as expected, the controversial new flag is hoisted inside the security of the Green Zone in Baghdad today, there is little prospect that the flag will be fluttering over other Iraqi cities.

But in Iraq greater problems loom where insurgents will be able to strengthen their patriotic credentials by sticking with the old and popular Iraqi flag and portraying the new one as a sign of subservience to foreign occupiers.

Already anti-US guerrillas are adopting the old red, white and black banner as their battle flag, tying it to their trucks and sticking it in the ground where they have their positions. This blend of nationalism and religion has proved highly successful in spreading resistance to the occupation.

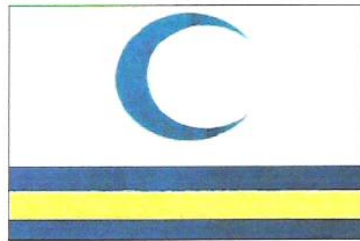
As the security situation deteriorates in Baghdad, Iraqis are more often refusing to reveal their family names when interviewed. **Jassim, standing behind the counter in his grocery shop, said: "That flag is not Saddam's flag. It was there before Saddam and it represents Iraq as a country. The whole world knows Iraq by its flag."**

A further reason for popular anger is that many Iraqis are convinced that their new flag is modeled on the Israeli flag. It is white with two parallel blue strips along the bottom. Iraqis say the blue stripes are suspiciously like those on the Israeli flag.

The old Iraqi flag was modified but was otherwise unchanged by Saddam Hussein. It had red and black bands across the top and bottom and three green stars on the white stripe separating them. Just before the 1990-91 Gulf War the words "Allahu Akbar", God is Great, were added to boost the religious credentials of Saddam Hussein's secular regime.

The flag won the loyalty of many Iraqis who did not support the old regime. Dhurgham, a 23-year-old student, said: "We cheered Iraqi footballers under that flag for a long time. I feel it represents me as an Iraqi. **I don't like this new flag. It does not look Iraqi. It is more like the Turkish or Israeli flags. The main reason I don't like it is that it comes from the Americans.**"

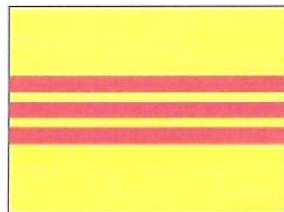
"They" like stars, "we" like stripes...



"Our" Iraqi Flag



"Their" Iraqi Flag



"Our" Vietnamese Flag



"Their" Vietnamese Flag

Can you find the losers in this picture?

When the idea of getting a new flag was first talked about last year, it stirred up strong feelings against change. But the Iraqi Governing Council, made up of former opponents of Saddam Hussein and Iraqis in exile during his rule, has a well-established reputation for being wholly out of touch with Iraqi opinion. The council approved the new flag, only asking the artist to make the crescent a deeper blue.

The new flag is the work of an Iraqi artist resident in London called Rifat Chadirji whose design was the best of those considered. He is also the brother of Nassir al-Chaderchi, the chairman of the IGC committee charged with choosing a new flag for Iraq. "I had no idea about a competition to design the flag. My brother just called me and asked me to design a flag on behalf of the IGC. Nobody told me about a competition," Mr Chadirji told The Independent yesterday.

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