

GI SPECIAL 2#71

PERFECT HELL



GET OUT NOW!

Poll: Iraqis Want U.S. Out: Only 25% Reject Resistance Attacks On Occupation Troops

WASHINGTON (AP) - Despite concerns about their own safety, the majority of Iraqis say they want the U.S. and British troops now in Iraq to leave within the next few months, according to a nationwide poll of people in Iraq.

Seven in 10 said their lives or the lives of their family would be in danger if they were seen to be cooperating with the Coalition Provisional Authority currently governing Iraq.

Only a quarter of Iraqis said attacks on U.S. troops are completely unjustified.

Less than a third of Iraqis said the attacks are completely or somewhat justified from a moral standpoint. Another one in five said those attacks are sometimes justified. (Add those two up. Do the math. Time to go home.)

Half have doubts the United States is serious about establishing a democratic system in Iraq and even more, 57 percent, doubt the U.S. will allow Iraqis to design their own political future.

The CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll was taken between March 22 and April 9, before the latest rounds of fighting between coalition forces and insurgents.

Almost six in 10, 57 percent, said they would like to see coalition troops leave "immediately, within the next few months," while 36 percent said they would like to see those troops stay longer.

Last August, almost six in 10 Iraqis said they had a positive view of how U.S. troops are behaving. Now, residents of Baghdad view U.S. soldiers negatively, by almost 8-1.

Seven in 10 in the poll said they view the U.S. presence as an occupation and not a liberation.

Both Sunnis and Shiites shared the generally negative views of the U.S. mission in Iraq and U.S. troops.

In the Sunni region in central Iraq, where troops have faced some of the strongest resistance, six in 10 said the attacks on U.S. troops can be justified morally.

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/>

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Mortar Attack Kills Six U.S. Servicemen, 30 Wounded

May 2, 2004 CAMP FALLUJA, Iraq (Reuters) & AP

A mortar attack killed six U.S. service members and wounded about 30 on Sunday near Ramadi in western Iraq the U.S. military said.

Marine Major T.V. Johnson gave no further details and did not say whether the victims were Marines or Army soldiers. However, most of the Americans stationed in the Ramadi area are Marines.

Ramadi is about 60 miles west of Baghdad in Anbar province, which also includes Fallujah.

U.S. Soldier Killed, 10 Wounded In Attack On Base Near Kirkuk

May 2, 2004 The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - One U.S. soldier was killed Sunday and 10 were injured in a bombing and shooting attack on a coalition base near the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, the U.S. military said.

The wounded were evacuated to a nearby medical facility, the U.S. military said. No further details were available.

Two U.S. Troops Dead In Baghdad

5.1.04 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Two U.S. soldiers and two members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps were killed early Sunday in northwest Baghdad.

Two Fiji Mercenaries Killed

02/05/2004 ABC Radio Australia News

Two former Fiji soldiers have been killed by insurgents in northern Iraq.

Radio Fiji says their employer, Global Risk Strategies Limited has confirmed that two others were injured in the attack yesterday.

The company's executive in Suva, Colonel Sakiusa Raivoce says the victims' families were informed today.

According to the Associated press, an American soldier was also killed and three other foreigners injured, when insurgents attacked their convoy in Mosul.

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed In Amarah Convoy Attack, Trucks Burning

5.2.04 Najaf, Iraq-AP

A Shiite militia has attacked a U-S convoy south of Najaf, at Amarah. Two U.S. soldiers were killed.

Several Humvees and trucks caught fire from the assault by Muqtada al-Sadr's followers. The U-S base in Najaf also came under mortar fire today.



An Iraqi man holds a stick as he approaches a burning U.S. Army military truck outside the city of Amarah, southern Iraq May 2, 2004. **Shiite militiamen blasted their convoy with small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades near the southern city of Amarah, 180 miles south of Baghdad, a senior military official said.** (AP Photo/Nabil Al-Jurani)

Falluja Fighters Win Praise From Marines:

"We know nothing about them." "The problem is they know everything about us." "They are getting better."

30 April 2004 al Jazeera

Under cover of darkness, US Marine snipers hunting the fighters of Falluja have spent a long night on Iraq's desert sand, emerging with little but frustration.

"We were on some very exposed ground and we didn't get anyone," said an exhausted Lance Corporal Migel Nunez, 22, of Elgin, Texas.

It was their tenth ambush mission in Iraq, none of which killed or captured a fighter near the city, site of a weeks-long standoff with resistance fighters.

For weeks US Marines operating near the city have been searching houses, hunting suspected fighters and setting up ambush positions deep in enemy territory.

But the operations have yielded few tangible results and despite their high-tech weapons and draconian discipline, US Marines are struggling against resourceful resistance fighters with no clear leadership, structure or supply lines.

Marines say the fighters have mastered the art of attacking them and then melting away in villages where it is impossible to distinguish between fighters and civilians.

"They fire their AK-47s from their homes, walk out the back door and then actually walk up and shake hands with American soldiers when the fighting is over," said Lance Corporal Peter Johnson, 20, of Wheaton, Illinois.

"It is just impossible to tell them apart. They can't aim very well and they don't have lots of weapons but they are resourceful and smart. They are getting better."

That reality is especially troubling for Marines who had hoped to launch an offensive in besieged Falluja but have instead been searching for resistance fighters in nearby villages along roads infested with bombs.

So far they have seen signs of activity only in hamlets where assault rifles are hidden in wheat fields, while they listen to air strikes and explosions around Falluja in the distance.

Some Marines have begun questioning their own tactics. Many complain they alert their enemies long before they enter villages by travelling in noisy armoured vehicles.

But commanders say moving in small groups is far too risky in a land where everyone from farmers to soda shop owners could be guerrilla supporters or fighters.

Overnight on Thursday, the sniper unit attached to Golf Company returned to a village they left just hours earlier, hoping to ambush fighters who might have returned.

As soon as their noisy armoured vehicle approached, every household in one hamlet turned off its lights and then switched them on again when they left, an apparent signal to fighters.

"The problem is they know everything about us. They hear us coming, they know what vehicles we ride in and calculate how many in each vehicle," said Private First Class Joseph France, 19, of Batesville, Indiana.

"We know nothing about them. We don't know who they are. They know how to surprise us and they are resourceful with their weapons and know how to escape."

Marines recalled how one resistance unit put ice in a mortar tube and then pumped the mortar down it. The ice melted and the round was fired after they made their getaway.

The eagerness to kill fighters showed in a recent skirmish when Marines entering a village spotted three men running as they approached. They pursued and fired on the men, killing one, wounding and capturing another.

Marines said the men fired on them. A senior officer said they had no weapons, but that with shots coming in the men were legitimate targets because they ran.

TROOP NEWS

Soldiers Welcome Home Party Cancelled; Memorial Service For The Dead Instead

May 2, 2004 (AP)

Yellow ribbons and a German and US flag are fixed on houses in the city center of Baumholder, southern Germany.

Welcome home banners still hang on houses at the U.S. Army's Baumholder base, but members of this tight-knit military community are now planning memorial services instead of celebrations.

Eight Baumholder-based 1st Armored Division soldiers were killed in a single attack near Baghdad last Thursday in what was the bloodiest month since the U.S. entered Iraq with the loss of at least 138 U.S. troops.

Pentagon Stupidity Causing Casualties;

Lawmaker Admits He Helped Kill Undefended Marines

May 03, 2004 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

The military's acquisition system failed U.S. troops in Iraq, allowing continued casualties from roadside bombs and rocket-propelled grenades while officials hemmed and hawed about a simple, quick protection system, according to senior House Armed Services Committee members.

"This is pathetic," said Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., the committee chairman. "This is a case of a bureaucracy that is simply paralyzed."

Hunter, joined by the committee's ranking Democrat, Rep. Ike Skelton of Missouri, **lambasted defense, Army and Marine Corps officials at an April 21 hearing for moving at a "molasseslike pace" while troops were being injured and killed by improvised explosive devices.**

"You guys cannot tie your own shoes," Hunter thundered.

Most of the discussion about force protection has focused on delays in getting body armor and armored Humvees to Iraq, but **Hunter and Skelton concentrated on military trucks, which have gotten less attention but also are being hit by explosives.**

In some instances, plywood has been used to create double-hulled cargo bays, which Hunter said don't provide much protection. In other cases, steel hulls have been added from donated or scrounged supplies, although some of the steel has been too soft to stop anything more than small-arms fire.

Three months ago, a supply of hardened steel was found left over from a cache that had been used to "up-armor" some Stryker vehicles.

There was enough to be cut into manageable pieces, shipped to Iraq and bolted into double-hulled protective cocoons for 60 trucks, which would fill part of the need for 800 armored trucks.

Hunter said this should have been a quick and easy process because the steel could be cut in about eight days.

But the endeavor has become "mission impossible," he said. Three months after the steel was located, only three kits have been cut, and the project is not expected to be completed until July.

Bureaucracy got in the way, Hunter said.

Although the "Stryker steel" was certified 10 years ago, the Army demanded a variety of tests of its protective qualities.

This included special tests involving firing various weapons at the steel, Hunter said, the results of which already were known.

Troops in the bed of a truck shielded by two pieces of steel, with the 8-inch space between the plates filled with something to stop shrapnel, were protected against every type of round up to a 155mm artillery shell, although a rocket-propelled grenade still might pass through the hull.

Test after test was conducted to look at how much weight the trucks could carry and various methods of installing the armor while troops in Iraq were injured or killed, Hunter said, adding that the military acquisition system suffers from “a case of the ‘slows.’”

When troops in the field took steps of their own to buy steel from Iraqi machine shops to mount on their trucks, Hunter said, the Army fared best because it got there first.

Marines, he said, “got to the steel mills too late” and ended up with thinner steel that offered less protection.

Hunter said he shared some blame for letting down the Marines, who provided help in tests of the Stryker steel and were ready to ship it to Iraq right away.

Hunter said he told them to wait so the Army could be the lead agent for purchase and production.

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/>

How Fucking Generous #1; Government Considers Your Life Worth An Extra \$5 An Hour

May 03, 2004 By Vince Crawley, Army Times staff writer

The 20,000 troops involuntarily extended in Iraq qualify for \$1,000 a month in additional combat pay under a previously approved policy.

(That works out to \$250 a week. Assuming everybody is having a common delusional fantasy, and the soldiers only have to put in 40 hours a week, that works out to \$6.25 an hour in extra pay.

But everybody knows a 40-hour week is something only the Pentagon brass enjoy. Figuring a 50 hour week, still laughable, that works out to an extra \$5 an hour to be forced to say and die or get maimed in Iraq. *Meanwhile, mercenaries pull down \$1000 a week.*)

More:

How Fucking Generous #2; Government Says Well Off Deployed Reservists Can Take Money From Their IRAs; (Broke Working Class Reservists Who Don't Have IRAs Will Have The Same Right)

May 03, 2004 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

By a 415-0 vote, the House approved legislation April 21 allowing mobilized National Guard and reserve members to tap personal-retirement savings accounts without penalty if they have financial problems when mobilized for duty.

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.

Military Families Condemn Pentagon Policy On Returning Dead

Army Times Letters To The Editor, May 3, 2004

In the "Families find obstacles in path to meet deceased loved ones" [April 5], I find it reprehensible that the Defense Department and Dover Air Force Base, Del.,

officials “highly, highly, discourage” families from going to Dover to meet their deceased loved ones when they arrive back on American soil.

I believe that officials should do all they can to accommodate these families instead of putting obstacles in their way.

One of the reasons the article gives for the discouragement is “officials cannot bring family members out to the restricted flight-line area to meet the aircraft.”

Family members regularly are brought out to the restricted flight-line area to meet the aircraft that carry aircrew members on their last flights due to transfer from that unit or retirement and observe them being hosed down, an Air Force tradition.

Family members also regularly are taken out to the restricted area flight line for a tour of an airplane.

To discourage families of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for their country from meeting their loved ones’ caskets on their return home is outrageous and insult to these families. Hopefully, this policy will change.

Ken Brown
Altus Air Force Base, Okla.

More:

Army Times Letters To The Editor, May 3, 2004

The article on Dover Air Force Base shocked and angered me. **As a military wife, I feel if my husband dies overseas, for my peace of mind, I need to be at Dover to see the plane come in. I feel it is part of my responsibility to see his remains come to American soil.**

I would not be there to cause grief to the military personnel taking care of the body.

I can understand that since Sept. 11, 2001, security has changed and we have to change the way we do things. **But I refuse to allow anyone to discourage me from what would be an important milestone in my life.**

When I married into the military, I knew there would be things over which I had no control, and I accepted it as part of the marriage package.

But I will not accept some insensitive idiot saying there is nothing to see when the plane lands.

When our spouses die, our world as we know it comes to a stop, and we need some security. Seeing a wooden crate may seem stupid to those who have not lost someone in the military, but the body of our loved one is in that crate.

The military’s “honor and duty” motto should be allowed to be extended to the family. It is our duty and honor to be there if we choose to be.

Although there is no longer hoopla attached to the Dover homecomings, they do serve as a starting point for healing.

My husband is getting ready to go to Iraq, and some of our discussions have been on death and what would need to be done. I told him if the worst happened, I would be there to meet his plane. That made him feel better in a sort of sad way.

When a person dies, he is beyond the point of caring what happens, but the living need the security of knowing what is being done for the fallen soldier.

The job of the military is to bring the body home and work with compassion with the family, not make the death even harder.

Michele Preston
Fitchburg, Mass

Officers Find Sauna Too Hot To Handle

Army Times May 3, 2004

Two officers who ordered Russian navy engineers to install a sauna next to the engine room of their ship are in hot water because the sauna caught fire and caused thousands of dollars in damage, according to RIA Novosti, a Russian news agency. A military court ordered the two men to pay a hefty fine to cover the damages.

The officers were fined about \$91,000, which Russian officials realize is a lot of money to pay upfront, particularly for poorly compensated Russian military members. So the court ordered them to forfeit 20 percent of their military salaries to cover costs. **At that rate, it will take the officers about 47 years to make full payment. In the meantime, the sauna has been dismantled.**

Drunken Brawls Mar Recruit Training

Army Times May 3, 2004

Malaysia's experiment with mandatory military service isn't turning out exactly as planned, according to the South China Morning Post. When the first group of 28,000 trainees reported for service, problems quickly surfaced, including abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs, hazing, sexual assault and interracial fighting. **Even instructors got involved when fighting broke out over whether troops should be forced to lick their plates clean in the mess hall.**

Malaysian officials said the problems are largely the result of boredom, and they have not given up on the concept of having national service training. **To keep troops busy, training will include more military drills and field trips, along with singing patriotic**

songs. The training does not include learning to use weapons, and probably won't anytime soon.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The Resistance Flag Waves Proudly



Residents of Fallujah celebrate with the Iraqi flag, as they remove a US Marine checkpoint on the edge of the city center of Fallujah May 2, 2004. (AP Photos by Abdel Kader Saadi)



The New Occupation “Governing Council” Flag Is Nowhere To Be Seen

Three Guesses Who Won The Siege Of Falluja?

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Vietnamese See Parallels Between Situation There & U.S. Iraq War

April 21, 2004 Knight-Ridder, by Ben Stocking

HANOI, Vietnam - The Vietnamese people have some friendly advice for the United States: Don't make the same mistake twice. Get out of Iraq before it's too late.

Opinion in Vietnam is united: What the Vietnamese call the "American War" was a misguided adventure, and so is the war in Iraq.

In two dozen interviews, Vietnamese nearly all said there was a common theme: imperialist wars of aggression in which a rich, powerful country meddles in the affairs of a smaller, weaker foe whose culture it doesn't understand. The result, they say, could be another quagmire.

"It seems like the United States is going to be stuck in Iraq, just like they got stuck in Vietnam years ago," said Col. Tran Nhung, who writes for Quan Doi Nhan Dan, Vietnam's military daily. "No country in the world will accept a foreign invasion - this is a fundamental truth."

Nhung and others said the war was an unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty.

Inevitably, Vietnamese view Iraq through the prism of their own experiences. And 75-year-old Mai Van Thuan's experience under French colonialism makes him deeply suspicious of foreign intervention of any kind.

Sixty years later, he still has vivid memories of his father's French employers slapping him across the face. Thuan worked with his father for a telephone company, installing phone lines. He remembers a daily barrage of insults. "They called me a monkey. They called me a pig."

He doesn't believe American promises about building democracy in Iraq or saving Iraqis from a brutal tyrant.

"The invaders always say nice things when they arrive," said Thuan. "They always have nice, elegant words."

"Everyone in the world can see that the United States went to Iraq for oil," said Hoang Van Think, a 27-year-old Hanoi resident. "And they had a political motive as well: to expand their influence in the Middle East."

The longer the United States occupies the country, said Nguyen Thi Han, an elementary school teacher from Long An, the faster Iraqis will put aside their differences.

"They need to learn from us," said Han. **"Vietnam is a united country, and that strength was there when we defeated the United States. If the Iraqi people stand up and fight, surely they will win."** (A bit behind the curve: "surely they are winning" now.)

Vietnam Viet Nails Kerry: Just Another Racist Soldier-Killer For The Empire

From Covert Action Quarterly, Spring 2004. Check it out at <http://www.covertactionquarterly.org/kerrys.html>

By S. Brian Wilson

On March 7, 1969, I arrived at a tiny airbase south of the Bassac River in Vietnam's Mekong Delta as head of an Air Force combat security unit. On March 13, Navy swiftboat commander John Kerry received a bronze star for actions on the Bay Hap River 70 miles further south. Two years later, in April 1971, we would meet at a week-long veteran's encampment on the mall in Washington, D.C., during the historic "Dewey Canyon III: a limited incursion into the country of Congress" organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).

Kerry, recipient of five war medals, was one of its organizers. I was ecstatic to simply be present with 1,000 other veterans vigorously opposing a senselessly brutal and racist war still raging.

Thursday of that week I stood crying outside the packed hearing room of Senator William Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee listening to John Kerry's powerful speech condemning the war and asking for its quick cessation. **For the first time I felt validation for a horrible experience that I, like with so many veterans, was just beginning to recover from. I will never forget his concluding remarks: "Our determination [is] to undertake one last mission, to reach out and destroy the last vestige of this barbaric war...and...30 years from now...we will be able to say**

‘Vietnam’ and...mean...the place where America finally turned and where soldiers like us helped in the turning.” Wow!

The following day John Kerry joined 700-800 vets who threw their medals over a quickly erected fence near the west steps of the Capitol. It was a powerful collective catharsis.

Sadly, Kerry has forgotten the lessons from Vietnam, if in fact he once understood them.

He has been one of the leading hawk cheerleaders for war against Saddam Hussein. He claims to have believed in every pretext offered by Bush II. The numerous deceptions visible to so many, strangely were overlooked by this well-educated lawyer. In fact, he declared on the floor of the Senate, October 9th, on the eve of the vote: “In the clearest presentation to date, the President laid out a strong, comprehensive and compelling argument why Iraq’s WMD programs are a threat to the United States and the international community.”

Kerry is now the wealthiest of all 100 Senators (around \$500 million), largely due to his wife’s fortune. Despite Kerry declaring his intentions to take on the special moneyed interests that control politics, he is one of the largest recipients of special interest money.

Perhaps most disturbing is Kerry’s ardent support of Bush II’s 2002 request of Congress to unlawfully transfer their non-delegable war-declaring power to the president to launch first-strike, pre-emptive war as he determined to be necessary to defend national security. There were 23 Senators and 133 members of the House of Representatives who voted “NO” on the October 2002 resolution, far more grotesque in lies and fabrications than the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that granted unlimited war authority to President Johnson.

In John Kerry’s 2003 book, *A Call to Service: My Vision for a Better America* (Viking), one particularly revealing statement indicates Kerry’s betrayal of the veterans who shared the sentiments of his 1971 speech: **“As a veteran of both the Vietnam War and the Vietnam protest movement, I say to both conservative and liberal misinterpretations of that war that it’s time to *get over it* and recognize it as an *exception*, not as a ruling example, of the U.S. military engagements of the twentieth century.** If those of us who carried the physical and emotional burdens of that conflict can regain perspective and *move on*, so can those whose involvement was vicarious or who knew nothing of the war other than ideology and legend” (p. 43, italics mine). Kerry is out of touch. Iraq repeated a tragedy that could have been avoided if we had heeded the lessons of Vietnam — lies and consequent quagmires.

Vietnam an exception? Kerry ignores the 200 U.S. overt, and thousands of covert, illegal interventions against “majority world” nations since World War II alone, resulting in the murdering and maiming of millions of impoverished peoples in more than 100 countries as they aspire for a bit of justice, a pattern of wholesale terrorism used to maintain a grotesque, unsustainable global gap between the haves and the have-nots.

To so ignore this suggests a total insensitivity to our cultural racism that has enabled such systematic exploitation of “majority world” peoples, an attitude that simply can no longer be tolerated as part of our national policy.

What happened to Kerry's commitment to the historic "turning" of America? Or perhaps he never meant it in the first place. It could be that John Kerry always has been driven by a burning ambition for the presidency that has guided his actions, including his Vietnam tours of duty and his anti-war actions—and those historic words he uttered in 1971. Kerry is deeply entrenched in the corrupt, U.S. oligarchic structure with his obsession to be president overriding all else. This is where he stands.

It is ironic that John Kerry now sits as an experienced lawyer on the same Senate Foreign Relations Committee before which he testified so eloquently in 1971. In 2002 hearings before the same Committee he listened to voluminous testimony authoritatively challenging all of Bush II's pretexts. Kerry dismissed every piece of evidence offered. **I believe Kerry voted in a manner he thought would serve his presidential ambitions, even though it meant defying the Constitution he swore to uphold.**

Despite my desire to see Bush II dethroned, I cannot join the growing "Band of Brothers" working on Kerry's presidential campaign. I belong to a different tribe of veterans who are still working for the "turning of America." Whether Kerry truly meant those words or not, many others of us took them to heart. That turning is still desperately needed. The world may not survive if we don't participate in a dramatic turning – away from blinding arrogance and plutocracy and toward loving compassion and authentic grassroots-based democracy.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

“Meet George W. Kerry” Kerry Wants NATO To Help Occupy Iraq

By Farah Stockman, Boston Globe Staff April 26, 2004 & May 1, 2004 By Stephen Dinan and Bill Sammon, The Washington Times

(THANKS TO MAX W WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: M WRITES: NEBBICH!)

"The nightmare for Kerry is that all of his criticisms become moot, except the woulda-shoulda-coulda criticism about the war," said Walter Russell Mead, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "In this sense, voters are going to say to themselves: 'What's the difference? **If I vote for Kerry, I will get a war in Iraq and someone who doesn't believe in the war but is going to have to fight it anyway. If I vote for Bush, I get a war in Iraq, fought by somebody who believes in the war.'**"

"I think they are moving toward a merge," Mead said. "Most of the people I talk to don't think there's going to be that much difference between them, in substance, because the options are so limited."

That view will be expressed in next month's issue of Foreign Policy magazine in an article titled "Meet George W. Kerry."

An option Kerry put forth in a recent op-ed essay in The Washington Post is to place the military in Iraq under NATO, which is commanded by a US general, as a way to share the burden with more foreign troops.

Bullshit By The Book

(From the net. Author?)

More than anything, the administration's war in Iraq resembles a software program that, at first, works brilliantly, but then catches the user in a cycle of "fatal error" messages.

Here then, in Silicon Valley terms, is a review of the Bush administration's year in Iraq:

Saddam Hussein poses an 'imminent threat' to the American people.

Version 1.0 - Saddam Hussein is an imminent threat

Version 1.01 - Saddam Hussein is a gathering threat

Version 1.02 - Saddam Hussein poses a real and dangerous threat

Version 1.1 - The smoking gun will be a mushroom cloud

Version 1.2 - We can't afford to wait

Version 1.3 - We never said imminent

Version 1.3.1 - OK, maybe we did say it once or twice

Version 1.4 - We should have been more precise

Saddam Hussein is ready to use weapons of mass destruction.

Version 2.1 - Saddam has weapons of mass destruction

Version 2.2 - Saddam has nuclear weapons

Version 2.3 - Saddam has biological agents he's never accounted for

Version 2.3.1 - The trailers are mobile labs for producing chemical weapons

Version 2.3.2 - Unmanned aircraft are ready to spread Saddam's biological weapons

Version 2.4 - Saddam's going to make more of all these weapons

Version 2.5 - We all know where the weapons are

Version 2.5.1 - Well, Saddam has used weapons of mass destruction

Version 2.5.2 - Iraq is a big country. We'll find the weapons eventually.

Version 2.5.3 - Saddam had weapons of mass destruction programs

Version 2.5.4 - Saddam had "weapons of mass destruction program related activities"

Version 2.5.5 - David Kay? Who's David Kay?

Version 2.6 - It's not about misleading the American people - Saddam Hussein is gone and that's the most important thing

The intelligence is clear.

Version 3.0 - We based our statements on our available intelligence

Version 3.1 - Saddam tried to buy uranium ore in Niger

Version 3.1.2 - Well, that was what the British told us

Version 3.1.3 - Did we tell you about Joe Wilson's wife?

Version 3.1.4 - Do you know a good lawyer?
Version 3.2 - The intelligence is absolutely clear
Version 3.2.1 - Intelligence is never 100 percent certain
Version 3.2.2 - We didn't manipulate the intelligence
Version 3.3 - There was no consensus within the intelligence community
Version 3.3.1 - We saw the same intelligence the last Administration did

Saddam Hussein has deep ties to al Qaeda.

Version 4.0 - Saddam has long-standing ties to al Qaeda
Version 4.0.1 - You can't distinguish between Saddam and al Qaeda
Version 4.0.2 - There is an al Qaeda terrorist network in Iraq
Version 4.0.3 - Saddam has provided al Qaeda with chemical and biological weapons training.
Version 4.0.4 - Saddam will give his weapons to al Qaeda
Version 4.0.5 - Colin Powell: I have not seen smoking-gun, concrete evidence about the connection [between al Qaeda and Iraq]
Version 4.0.6 - Vice President Cheney: I still believe there's a connection
Version 4.0.7 - CIA Director George Tenet: I told Dick not to say that.

The United Nations just can't handle this.

Version 5.0 - The UN had 12 years to deal with this
Version 5.1 - We don't trust the UN to handle this
Version 5.1.1 - We don't need the UN's help
Version 5.1.2 - The UN should play a vital, but not central role
Version 5.1.3 - You there, UN, tell Ayatollah Sistani that elections aren't possible
Version 5.1.4 - UN, please oversee the election process
Version 5.1.5 - Pretty please? We'll pay our dues

The war in Iraq won't hurt our efforts in Afghanistan or the hunt for Bin Laden.

Version 6.0 - Iraq won't affect our hunt for bin Laden
Version 6.1 - Assets have been moved from Afghanistan to Iraq
Version 6.1.1 - Assets are being returned to Afghanistan
Version 6.2 - We're mounting a spring offensive against bin Laden
Version 6.2.1 - We'll catch bin Laden this year
Version 6.2.2 - We hope to catch bin Laden this year
Version 6.3 - Even if we catch bin Laden, the threat will still exist.

Mission accomplished.

Version 7.0 - We won't need hundreds of thousands of troops - that's wildly off the mark
Version 7.1 - Mission accomplished
Version 7.1.1 - We'll stay as long as needed and not one day more
Version 7.1.2 - The troops will be home in six months
Version 7.1.3 - The Iraqi Army will provide security
Version 7.1.4 - Where's the Iraqi Army?
Version 7.1.5 - We've disbanded the Iraqi Army
Version 7.1.3 - The troops will stay a year and be replaced
Version 7.2 - We're training the Iraqi army - Iraqification will work
Version 7.2.1 - We don't need any more American troops
Version 7.2.2 - Well, maybe we do
Version 7.2.3 - We're keeping 30,000 more troops on active duty than were authorized
Version 7.2.4 - We don't know if this increase in troops is a spike or a plateau

Version 7.2.5 - We're establishing stop loss so troops can't leave
Version 7.2.6 - The Army is planning multi-year rotations

The cost to the American taxpayer.

Version 8.0 - Economic advisor Larry Lindsey: The war will cost \$200 billion
Version 8.0.1 - President Bush: You're fired!
Version 8.1 - The war will pay for itself very quickly
Version 8.1.1 - Iraqi oil revenue will pay for reconstruction
Version 8.2 - Our allies will help us
Version 8.3 - We'll pay for the war through supplementals
Version 8.3.1 - Congress wouldn't let us put it in the budget
Version 8.3.2 - Can we please have \$87 billion?
Version 8.3.3 - Well, we really can't calculate what it will cost
Version 8.3.4 - Well, maybe we can - \$50 billion may be on the low side
Version 8.3.5 - Ask us after November 2

Democracy comes to Iraq.

Version 9.0 - We will be greeted as liberators
Version 9.0.1 - We'll establish democracy in Iraq
Version 9.1- We'll turn this back to the Iraqis quickly
Version 9.1.1 - President Chalabi will be welcomed with open arms
Version 9.1.2 - Well, not so fast - we're prohibiting political parties
Version 9.2 - We have the November 15 agreement - it's unchangeable
Version 9.2.1 - We will appoint a small governing council
Version 9.2.2 - Well, maybe a larger one
Version 9.3 - We don't favor elections
Version 9.3.1 - Caucuses work in Iowa, why not Iraq?
Version 9.3.2 - OK fine, we'll have elections
Version 9.4 - We can't return sovereignty until there is a constitution
Version 9.4.1 - Nevermind, we'll turn over sovereignty first
Version 9.4.2 - We need to return this to the Iraqis - How about June 30?
Version 9.4.3 - We're still focused on elections - the ones on November 2

The bottom line.

Version 10.0 - Trust us. We know what we're doing

More Agents Track Castro Than Bin Laden

(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: In case you thought the government cared about terrorism...)

4.29.04 By JOHN SOLOMON, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON - The Treasury Department agency entrusted with blocking the financial resources of terrorists told Congress that at the end of last year it had just four full-time employees dedicated to investigating Osama bin Laden's and Saddam Hussein's wealth while nearly two dozen were working on Cuban embargo violations.

In addition, the Office of Foreign Assets Control said that between 1990 and 2003 it opened just 93 enforcement investigations related to terrorism and collected just \$9,425 in fines for terrorism financing violations since 1994.

In contrast, OFAC opened 10,683 enforcement investigations since 1990 for possible violations of the long-standing economic embargo against Fidel Castro's regime, and collected more than \$8 million in fines since 1994, mostly from people who sent money to, did business with or traveled to Cuba without permission.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Fiasco In Afghanistan: Enemy Grows Bolder

By Christian Lowe 5.3.04 Army Times staff writer

NEAR THE PAKISTAN BORDER, Afghanistan

The Afghan sergeant major looked concerned as he held the radio up to his ear.

The caller was speaking in the Afghan dialect Pashto, but the stress in his voice over the radio made the U.S. soldiers in the room fall silent.

Something clearly was wrong.

In staccato bursts issued between the caller's frantic reports, the sergeant major blurted orders to his militia troops here at border checkpoint 4.

A small group of Afghan militia soldiers were under attack by anti-coalition militants more than 20 miles away, near border checkpoint 2. **It was unclear how large the enemy force was, but the Afghans had been caught by surprise.**

As the U.S. soldiers stood by helpless — it would have taken hours over the rough dirt roads to get anywhere near the battle — the Afghan troops mounted up in their battered Toyota trucks and careened down the hillside.

The recent battle illustrates the increased aggressiveness of the militants, their organization and training. And some say it could show the coalition's Afghan allies are going to continue to need a lot of help as they assume an increasing role in their domestic security.

According to an after-action report, a four-man team of Afghan militia troops walked down from their border checkpoint position and through a narrow wadi, or

ravine, to investigate a group of 10 men with several camels perched on a hilltop nearby. As they came closer, the Afghans realized the 10 men were armed.

Almost immediately the Afghans came under fire, which killed two and injured two others. The Afghans manning the border checkpoint raced down to help and set up supporting fire from the wadi and from the border checkpoint position to the north.

The 25 militia members opened up with 107mm rockets and DshK heavy machine guns at two positions — the hilltop with the camels to their west and another hilltop to their east — targeting two trucks loaded with ammunition.

Over the radio, the tactical operations center for the 1st Battalion of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment maintained close communications with a special forces team observing the battle nearby.

Two A-10 Thunderbolt attack jets were called in but would not engage the enemy because they had no U.S. controller on the ground who could mark the enemy position precisely, officers here said.

The special-ops soldier radioed that the Afghans had signal mirrors and would fire a rocket-propelled-grenade smoke round to mark the enemy's redoubt. But that wasn't enough.

More than three hours later, with the A-10s flying low overhead to try to draw fire on themselves — the only sure way to mark the enemy position aside from the eyes of a ground controller — the militants began to retreat from the western hilltop.

Running low on ammo, the Afghans were in desperate straits. Then the Marines went in. Four AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopters and two UH-1N Hueys swooped to the battle scene.

The helos, working out of Forward Operating Base Salerno, strafed the hilltop with the two trucks, blowing the ammo-laden vehicles sky high. One of the Hueys then brought in an Air Force combat controller and a translator to help guide the Cobras as they pounded the opposite enemy position.

As unit officials tell it, two of the Cobras' guns jammed, but the other two blasted all their ammunition on the enemy position, sending the militants into retreat.

It was unclear how many militants were killed, with few on the ground to identify battle damage.

Briefing his men on the battle the next day, Lt. Col. Harry Glenn was downtrodden. He said he has encouraged his unit commanders to cultivate close ties with the Afghan forces in their operating zones and saw the length of time it took to render assistance to their allies as a let-down.

Likewise, it is uncommon for such a large force — Glenn estimated 50 to 100 enemy militants, with command-and-control operators, were just over the border in Pakistan — to show itself and engage for so long.

“My cut on it all was that it was a huge opportunity lost,” Glenn told his men, promising to bring the issue up to higher authorities. He said he believes U.S. forces, given the ability to move in faster, would have dealt the militants a significant, important blow.

“These border checkpoint things are getting uglier and uglier,” he said.

More Fiasco In Afghanistan: Troops Face Down Tougher Opposition

May 03, 2004 by Christian Lowe, Army Times staff writer

NEAR THE PAKISTAN BORDER, Afghanistan — It seemed like a raw deal to Staff Sgt. David Wait — but in a good way. Wait had just learned that the man suspected of shooting one of his fellow soldiers April 1 was captured using a little sleight-of-hand.

In short, the company commander had exchanged a gas generator with the village elder of Zan Shora for the suspect, Imal Khan.

“Swapping out one of their dudes for a generator,” said Wait, the platoon sergeant for 2nd Platoon, Delaware Company, with a shake of his head.

It is unclear why, but leaders here are seeing increasing activity by anti-coalition forces in Pakistan and in Afghan towns near the border such as Khost, intelligence officials said. (Nothing unclear about it. Afghans threw out the Russian Army that tried to occupy their country. Now they’re getting their shit together to throw out the U.S. army that tried to occupy their country. That’s called fighting for your national independence.)

In fact, Forward Operating Base Salerno — where the 1st of the 501st is camped — was rocketed for two nights after the April 8 and April 9 ambushes near the border. Those were the first attacks in nearly a month, and the camp was rocketed again one week later.

Said the battalion’s operations officer, Maj. Val Keaveny, “The rocket attacks you’ve seen the last few nights, the ambushes, they are indications that they are upset at the success we’re having in this war, so they are coming forward for the fight,” he explained. “We want them to come show themselves, and when they do, we will destroy them.”

(General Robert E. Lee said today the attacks at Appomattox show the Union Army is “upset at the success we’re having in this war.” General Erwin Rommel said today the attacks on his forces by the American Army commanded by General George Patton show “the Americans are upset at the successes the German army is having in this war.” General William Westmoreland said today that the Tet Offensive shows the Vietnamese are “upset at the success we’re having in this war.” King George said today that the attack by George Washington on Trenton showed the rebellious Americans were “upset as the successes we’re having in this war.” Blah blah blah.)

When Blackfoot commander Capt. Jonathan Chung asked to see Imal Khan, the elder led the soldiers right to him, up the steep dirt path to his modest mud-brick compound.

Khan emerged as the soldiers approached, wearing an aqua-blue shawal kameez, the traditional male Afghan garb of a thin shirt with long tails and loose-fitting pantaloons. His round, animated face ringed with a thick black beard gave no hint of guilt.

He sat calmly as Chung explained through an interpreter that he had come to deliver a generator to the town and that Khan had been chosen specially to be its steward. To lure him down to a Humvee peacefully, Chung asked Khan to come inspect the machine.

The soldiers from 3rd Platoon were on edge as they walked down the winding path to the vehicles waiting in a clearing below the village. They didn’t want to antagonize Khan into bolting, but they were sure they had the man whose bullet nearly killed their comrade.

“We have information that you were involved with the shooting of an American soldier,” Chung said. “I had nothing to do with it,” Khan said calmly as he inserted another pinch of naswar, a kind of chewing tobacco, between his cheek and gum. “You may cut my head off if I had anything to do with it.”

Bundling Kahn into the first-aid truck later in the day, Spc. Russell Davis, a radio operator with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, was perplexed. “He sure isn’t acting like he did it,” the Kentucky native said in his easy drawl.

“But a lot of these guys have had counter-interrogation training, so maybe that’s what’s going on,” 3rd Platoon commander Estes added.

“Their training has gotten better, and they clearly have some experts planning the attacks,” Glenn, the battalion commander, explained during a visit to Blackfoot Company here at the border. “But their local recruits are not as skilled and don’t have the same enthusiasm for the fight. They bug out quickly.”

No matter how hard U.S. forces try to hit back, no matter what tactics they use to draw out their opponents, the war often is waged on the militants’ terms: They are the ones who choose when and where they are going to fight. And the information needed to capture or kill them is hard to come by.

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