

## GI SPECIAL 2:8



### **WASTED EFFORT, LETHAL SITUATION**

1st Infantry Division patrol looking for mortars fired at their camp Jan. 12 near Ramadi. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

**BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**

# **One Third Of Iraqis Tell U.S. Survey They Support Resistance Attacks On U.S. Forces**

By BARRY SCHWEID, AP Diplomatic Writer Jan. 8, 2003

Meanwhile, **an unscientific State Department survey released this week showed** most residents in five Iraqi cities believed attacks against Iraqi civilians, police and international organizations are more harmful than helpful for Iraq's future. **About a third of Iraqis said attacks against the U.S. forces are helpful.**

**Comment:**

1. If one out of three are willing to openly say they support the resistance war for Iraqi liberation, you can imagine how many more *think* it and are *actively* supporting it but not telling anybody.
2. No resistance movement with that kind of popular support can be defeated. None since the beginning of World War II ever has been.
3. Checkmate.
4. The only question now is how many more have to die before the U.S. ruling class and their politicians admit they've lost their Imperial war and get out. The strength of the anti-war movement in the Army and on the streets in the U.S.A. will answer that question.
5. The biggest problem the anti-war movement has now is the delusion that the Presidential election has something to do with ending the war, sucking decent people into futile, time-wasting electoral politics. Remind your friends that elections had nothing to do with stopping the war in Vietnam.

Nixon, the liberals favorite fright figure, was forced to end the war because the soldiers wouldn't fight it anymore, and the American working class turned against it.

The most intense opposition came from below. The intellectuals and upper classes, who prefer election activity to building fighting mass movements, gave the Vietnam war more support right up to the end, including doing all they could to suck movement activists into their ballot box games.

Check the polls from the 70's.

Or, even better, check out the book *The American War; Vietnam 1960-1975*, Jonathan Neale. Neale not only documents who stopped the war how, but has a very special chapter "The GI's Revolt".

**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.**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS:**

# TASK FORCE 1ST ARMORED DIVISION SOLDIER KILLED BY IED

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND  
January 12, 2004 Release Number: 04-01-12C

BAGHDAD, Iraq – One Task Force 1st Armored Division soldier was killed and two others were wounded at about 10 a.m., today when their convoy was attacked by an improvised explosive device (IED) in central Baghdad.

---

## Auburn Soldier Who Wrote Home About Mortar Attacks Killed In Mortar Attack

January 10, 2004 Associated Press, SFGate.com

**A Northern California soldier died this week when a mortar round hit a Baghdad-area logistics base, officials said.**

Pfc. Jesse D. Mizener, 24, died Wednesday, the Department of Defense said.

**In November, Mizener told The Auburn Journal newspaper that the mortar attacks were unsettling and all too common in Iraq.**

**"You miss home the most when you get mortared," he told the newspaper. "It gets scary, especially when you see it land and see how close it is. That's when you really think about home a lot."**

He is survived by his wife, Nicole, two daughters, ages 2 and 1, and a 2-month-old son, all of Auburn, Calif., about 35 miles east of Sacramento.

Mizener attended Bear Creek High School in Stockton, Calif., where his parents still live, said family spokeswoman Cindee DeGolia.

Mizener returned home in November in time for the birth of his son, his brother, Brian Mizener, told The Stockton Record newspaper.

**He was scheduled to come home for good soon, his brother said. "We stopped worrying; his time was so short," Brian Mizener told the newspaper.**

Mizener, a construction equipment repairer, was assigned to the 542nd Maintenance Company, 44th Corps Support Battalion, 593rd Corps Support Group based at Fort Lewis.

---

## Two Estonian Soldiers Wounded

By NADIA ABOU EL-MAGD, The Associated Press January 11, 2004

In Baghdad, two Estonian soldiers suffered what were described as minor injuries when a grenade was thrown at their patrol on Saturday, according to Estonian army spokesman Peeter Tali.

---

## Resistance Uses Anti-Tank Weapons

11 January 2004. Translated and/or compiled by Muhammad Abu Nasr, member editorial board of the Free Arab Voice.

**Iraqi Resistance fighters attacked an American occupation patrol with anti-tank weapons** in the Salah ad-Din area of Kirkuk on Sunday, according to the Iraqi puppet police. Turhan Yusuf, local puppet police chief, told the Agence France Presse (AFP) that "an American military vehicle was damaged in the attack that caused no casualties."

---

## Collaborator Killed

By NADIA ABOU EL-MAGD, Associated Press Writer, Jan. 11, 2004

**Sunday, authorities said the body of an Iraqi working with the U.S.-led coalition was found in the southern city of Basra**, along with the corpse of another man not associated with the coalition. Insurgents opposed to the U.S.-led occupation have targeted soldiers as well as civilians and Iraqi police working with the occupiers.

---

## Large Explosions Rock Central Baghdad

By Hamza Hendawi, The Associated Press, 12 January 2004

Large explosions rocked central Baghdad. In the late Monday blasts, Iraqi and U.S. security officials said at least two mortars exploded near the Baghdad Hotel in the center of the capital. At least one round exploded in the Tigris River and the other exploded on the river bank, U.S. troops said.

---

## Two Explosions Near Kirkuk Occupation Office

By NADIA ABOU EL-MAGD The Associated Press January 11, 2004

**Two explosions blasted near the U.S.-led coalition office in the northern oil city of Kirkuk**, but police said they appeared to be percussion bombs "aimed at terrorizing."

---

## TROOP NEWS

# Far From Baghdad, Soldiers Speak Their Truth; “Occupation” Not Liberation; No “War For Democracy”; “Take Me Home”

By Robert Fisk in Basra, 03 January 2004: (The Independent)

Most of Iraq is peaceful, they keep telling you at afternoon follies. An abiding theme of the occupation authorities - even when another American helicopter is shot down - is that life is normal in most of Iraq.

So I took the road to Basra yesterday.

On the road south of Nasiriyah, an extraordinary sight. Two American Humvees and military police having their pictures taken by Iranian pilgrims.

The soldiers chatted to those Iranians who spoke English, pitied their two-day bus journey from Tehran, privately bemoaned their own fate at spending 11 months in Iraq.

**They didn't like the war, didn't think they should be in Iraq, didn't believe it was about democracy.**

"I spent a week in Baghdad and that was enough," one of the Americans said. "It's really shit up there." And so, of course, it is. Which is why the folks from Colorado have an easy time in Basra, basking in the residual gratitude of a Shia population still celebrating the end of their Baathist tormentors.

Will it last? "I doubt it," a bespectacled sergeant remarked. **They all talked about "occupation" rather than "liberation" - which is why, I guess, they really do come from the land of the free. Or maybe it's because you can't stop soldiers talking.**

A Humvee overtook me at speed, its visored, flak-jacketed crew swinging their heavy machine-gun at all us civilians.

**Then one of the masked figures gave us a wave and a thumbs up and I saw what he'd written in dust on the window of his Humvee - "Take Me Home". Now there's the voice of the occupation army.**

**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/>

## **U.S. Mortuary Sees No Let-Up from Iraq War Dead MORE THAN FIRST THREE YEARS OF VIETNAM**

By David Morgan DOVER, Del. (Reuters) Jan. 10. 2004

Nearly a month after Saddam Hussein's capture, American war dead from Iraq continue to arrive with somber regularity at the wind-swept Air Force base in Delaware that is home to the world's largest mortuary.

**In November, U.S. casualties in Iraq surpassed the number of Americans killed in the first three years of the Vietnam War, according to a Reuters analysis of Pentagon statistics.**

**The mortuary has been empty only twice since U.S. forces invaded Iraq in March.** "The last time was in October," Karen Giles, an Air Force Reserve lieutenant colonel told Reuters during a tour of the facility.

**Saddam Hussein's capture on Dec. 13 raised hopes that attacks on U.S. forces would ebb as American authorities pursued new intelligence leads and stepped up counterinsurgency tactics.**

**But the pace of casualties has not changed**

Heritage Foundation senior policy analyst James Carafano said **"Look at the headlines. Casualties were on page one every day. Now they're drifting back to page four or page five."**

Back at Dover Air Force Base, the media are not allowed to see silver caskets arrive on the tarmac because of a Pentagon blackout first implemented in 1991 under Bush's father, former President George Bush.

**"The general assumption is that if people see the casualty visually, they will not any longer support the war,"** said retired Air Force Col. Sam Gardiner, a vocal critic of the Bush administration.

"The fear of images is a left-over Vietnam thing. However, the notion of controlling them is a modern thing."

---

## Military Begins Huge Rotation of Forces; Window For Resistance Attacks

By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer Jan. 8, 2003

WASHINGTON - The military has begun a rotation of forces in Iraq and Afghanistan that amounts to **the largest movement of American troops in decades**, Army officials said Thursday.

The changes present an enormous logistics challenge. **They also add to the security concerns of commanders on the ground in Iraq, who worry that fighters opposed to the U.S. occupation will look for security gaps created by the months long rotation.**

A senior Army official provided details of the rotation Thursday on condition of anonymity. He said the movement would involve the equivalent of 8 1/2 of the Army's 10 active-duty divisions.

---

## Two Generals

By ERIC SCHMITT, KUWAIT, Jan. 5  
NY Times January 11, 2004

**1. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of the 101st Airborne Division said there would also be an aggressive campaign in the Iraqi news media, *including television call-in programs*, to counter any efforts by the guerrillas to portray the troop rotation as the United States abandoning the Iraqi people.**

**2. *The shifting focus of their attacks is relentless,*" said Maj. Gen. Stephen M. Speakes, the senior Army officer here overseeing the troop rotation.**

### Comment:

The first general, Petraeus, is babbling his customary inane empty bullshit. Too bad no reporter has the nerve to ask this careerist egomaniac exactly how the Iraqis are supposed to see television with the power off most of the time, or "call-in" when they don't have a functioning phone system. As usual, what Petraeus has to say has nothing to do with reality, and everything to do with getting his next promotion.

The second general is likely to run into trouble in his new assignment. It would appear he has some grip on reality. That will make him enemies at the Pentagon and the White House, where there is no reality except the next election.

---

# Rate Of Wounded Soaring “Numbers Suggest We’re Losing”

Seattle Post-Intelligencer January 8, 2004

WASHINGTON -- **Nearly as many U.S. soldiers were wounded in Iraq last month as during the entire six-week period of major combat operations**, according to Defense Department statistics tracked by a leading research organization.

"That's a lot of pain," said John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, a defense-focused think tank that compiled the figures. "It suggests that the level of intensity of operations over there is a lot higher than would be suggested by the 'killed in action' numbers. ... The 'killed in action' numbers suggest that we're winning the war, and **the wounded in action numbers suggest that we're losing.**"

**According to the Defense Department figures that Pike's group compiled, 530 U.S. troops were wounded in December, only slightly fewer than the 550 wounded during combat operations last spring.**

**It was impossible to track month-by-month wounded statistics before December, Pike said, because the Pentagon only started releasing daily tabulations of them in late November.**

But he said that according to previous news reports of Pentagon figures, 570 U.S. troops were wounded in combat from May through August, while from September through November, 1,052 soldiers were wounded.

---

# Troops Screwed On Medical Care: “We Don’t Even Have Freedom Of Speech Anymore” Soldier Says

From Barbara Starr, CNN Washington Bureau January 8, 2004  
CNN Producers Laurie Ure and Linda Saether contributed to this report.

WASHINGTON (CNN) --The U.S. Army will send specialists to help reduce a backlog of National Guardsmen and reservists seeking medical care at Fort Stewart, Georgia, military sources said Monday.

**Troops have complained of a lack of timely medical care and substandard living conditions.**



The Army doesn't deny there is a backlog in providing medical care to some troops returning from Iraq.

Army sources said the backlog in medical appointments is due in part to the 20,000 troops of divisions returning from Iraq who are competing for the same medical care.

An Army spokesman said he did not know what conditions are like for sick and wounded soldiers and would wait for an assessment team's report.

Another soldier who recently left Fort Stewart described the conditions to CNN as "substandard." **One sergeant who said she was afraid to give her name cited a general fear among ill soldiers to speak to the media.**

**"Here we all were overseas ready to get ourselves killed in order to bring democracy to these countries, and we get home, and we don't even have freedom of speech anymore," she said,** adding that she has been on medical hold since May after becoming ill in Kuwait.

---

## **Wounded "Held Captive" At Walter Reed**

By DAVID VEST January 8, 2004

David Vest writes the Rebel Angel column for CounterPunch.

The organization known as Disabled American Veterans has been helping U.S. combat casualties figure out what benefits they have coming to them and how to apply for them since 1920. Lately the Bush administration has been going out of its way to make the DAV's job harder.

**And so now we learn that ever since Operation Iraqi Freedom got underway, it has been easier for a terrorist to get into the United States legally than for a DAV representative to get into a military hospital to help wounded soldiers with their benefit applications. Sickeningly, the Pentagon has been severely limiting DAV access to wounded veterans and doing it on grounds of "security." Oh, yes, and protecting "privacy."**

**It protects the veterans' privacy by not allowing them to speak with DAV representatives "unmonitored."**

Fortunately someone blinked and it wasn't the Disabled American Veterans.

**When he got back to the office after celebrating New Year's and opened his mail, Donald Rumsfeld found a letter informing him that he had messed with the wrong people this time.**

Here's part of what DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman had to say to the Secretary of Defense:

"At one facility in particular [Walter Reed Army Medical Center] our efforts to visit with wounded patients have been severely restricted. For example, all requests to visit

patients must now be made through the WRAMC headquarters office, which then selects the patients we may visit and strictly limits information about the patients, even the patient's name and the nature of the injury is withheld without express permission. **The DAV's representatives also are escorted at all times while in the facility, and all contact with patients is closely monitored by the escort. This is particularly unnerving and inappropriate as all conversations between a representative and client are confidential in nature.**

"I believe these overly broad restrictions on patient access inhibit the ability of our professional accredited representatives to help ensure these wounded service members have the vital information they and their families need in order to obtain the medical care and benefits many of these veterans will depend on for decades to come.

**"The American public would be outraged if these restrictions became public knowledge."**

[There has been little or no coverage in the media since the DAV released the letter.]

Gorman goes on to say:

**"The record of benefits awarded by the VA shows our honored wounded and injured are getting less than they are rightfully entitled. Those wounded and disabled in service to our nation should not be held captive and deprived of the knowledge that would allow them to receive all their rightful benefits, earned on a battlefield half a world away. It brings great dishonor to our nation to learn of disabled veterans suffering physical and economic hardships following their release from medical treatment solely because they are unaware and uninformed of their rightful benefits."**

**Think of it ... wounded veterans "held captive" ... prevented from seeing people who have a congressional charter to serve them ... not allowed to speak with DAV reps in private, lest their "privacy" be violated ... an administration that regards Disabled American Veterans as security risks.**

***A government increasingly unable to tell the difference between terrorists and its own citizens.***

**Although it hasn't hesitated to send them to face death in Iraq, the administration has consistently opposed any attempt to extend full benefits to Reservists and National Guardsmen, twenty percent of whom have no health insurance by General Accounting Office estimates.**

It was one thing when the White House tried to roll back increases in monthly imminent-danger pay and family separation allowance, and another when it called a modest proposal to increase the sum given to families of soldiers who die on active duty "wasteful and unnecessary."

**Finally, it occurred to the firm of Bush Cheney Rumsfeld Rice Minions and Myrmidons to wonder how much money the country would save (and how much more could be diverted to Bechtel and Halliburton contracts) if veterans couldn't even find out what their benefits are.**

(Said it before, say it again: the enemy is in Washington DC, not Iraq. Iraqis fighting the occupation and U.S. soldiers have a common enemy: the government of the United States.)

---

## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **Bush In Deep Shit Now: Leader Of Shiite Majority Denounces Bush Plan To Appoint Puppet Government: Demands Democracy And Elections; Rejects Plan For Continued Occupation**

By NADIA ABOU EL-MAGD, Associated Press Writer, Jan. 11, 2004

**Iraq's top cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, demanded the country's next parliament be elected and not chosen by local caucuses, an idea at odds with U.S. plans.**

**Al-Sistani, whose views are highly influential among Iraq's Shiite majority, said Sunday the current U.S. plan to have regional caucuses select members of a provisional national assembly would give birth to an illegitimate Iraqi government.**

**"This will, in turn, give rise to new problems and the political and security situation will deteriorate," al-Sistani said in a statement released by his office in the holy Shiite city of Najaf, south of Baghdad.**

**Al-Sistani demanded the assembly be directly elected, saying credible elections could be held in Iraq within months.**

**Al-Sistani also balked at U.S. plans to seek quick approval for the continued occupation of Iraq through its hand-picked Governing Council. The ayatollah said only an elected government could sign off on the presence of U.S. troops beyond July 1.**

Al-Sistani's opposition forced the Americans to change their transition plans once already. **Participation by Shiites — who make up 60 percent of Iraq's 25 million people — is essential to the success of the transition.**

But drafting a new plan to accommodate his views would further anger Iraq's minority Sunnis, who had dominated politics in Iraq for decades and are bristling at the attention given now to the Shiites they traditionally oppressed.

---

## **Unemployed Stone British Troops In “Tranquil Shi’ia” Southern Iraq**

By NADIA ABOU EL-MAGD The Associated Press January 11, 2004 &  
January 12, 2004 By Hamza Hendawi, Associated Press

AMARAH, Iraq - **Hundreds of Iraqis hurled stones at baton-wielding British soldiers Sunday** in the southeastern city of Amarah, witnesses said, a day after clashes killed six protesters and wounded at least 11.

**Angry protesters, some armed with sticks and shovels, attacked in waves throughout the day, trying to rush troops guarding the city hall.** The British drove the crowd back from the compound, which also houses the U.S.-led occupation force and the 1st Battalion of Britain's Light Infantry.

**Booms and flashes of light exploded in the crowd, believed to be from homemade bombs of tin cans packed with explosives and nails and lit with candlewicks.**

**Hundreds of Iraqis gathered to protest that authorities had not kept a promise to give them jobs.**

They stoned the town hall, shattering windows. Shots rang out, makeshift bombs were thrown and the British and Iraqi police opened fire. Hospital officials said six people were killed.

Tensions in Amarah, 200 miles southeast of Baghdad, erupted Saturday after hundreds of Iraqis gathered to complain that authorities had not kept a promise to give them jobs. **On Sunday, demonstrators said they were looking to avenge those killed Saturday.**

**Demonstrators sent a representative to talk to British and Iraqi officials, who promised them 8,000 jobs, according to witnesses. But protesters said a similar promise made weeks before had not been fulfilled.**

**Sunday scores of Iraqis, many of them relatives of those killed the day before, staged another protest demanding compensation. Iraqi police and British troops watched from a distance but did not intervene.**

Shiite cleric Watheq al-Batat said he delivered four demands from the protesters to the Coalition Provisional Authority: firing the governor, electing a new governor, an investigation into Saturday's deaths and jobs.

---

## **New Unemployed Protests Explode In Shiite South; Ukrainian Soldier Wounded**

Kut, Iraq- By Hamza Hendawi AP 1.12.03

About a thousand Iraqis rioted today to protest a lack of jobs and food in the city of Kut, **the second southern Shiite Muslim city to be hit with unrest over the last few days.**

Ukrainian troops fired warning shots in the air to calm a group of 1,000 angry Iraqis in Kut, protesting against corrupt officials, lack of food and jobs, said Lt. Col. Robert Strzelecki of the Polish army stationed in the area.

**An explosive was thrown during the protest, injuring one coalition soldier and two Iraqi police officers.** An Iraqi police official says Ukrainian troops fired back, injuring a protester.

The demonstrators also hurled bricks at government buildings and trashed a post office. There have also been violent protests in the city of Amarah. The protesters sent a few representatives to talk to the Ukrainian commander in the city, about 95 miles southeast of Baghdad.

---

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **“We Oppose Imperialism In All Its Forms”**

By Mary E. Marcy, **International Socialist Review**, December 1916

The interests of the Mexican workers, the American, German, French, English, Belgian, Austrian workers, of all those who are exploited by the capitalist owners of the means of production—the interests of these people are *one*. **These workers have no national flag, no country. They must unite against the capitalists of all nations and take back the world for those who labor and those who produce. They must unite to make the whole world the country of the workers of the world.**

Left Wing socialists everywhere find themselves gaining new revolutionary recruits because they throw themselves into every labor struggle, showing how much more effective these struggles may become if made a struggle of all the workers in an industry than when they represent only the interests of a small group in an industry, and how ultimately, **when the workers more and more learn to fight and to organize as a class, they may overthrow the present system of exploitation.**

The *Review* stands for political action in its broadest sense: mass action, industrial unionism, class unionism and for international socialism, of which these are the strongest weapons. We oppose Imperialism in all its forms.

### **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/>

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**



An Iraqi woman waits in a room with other women and children as Iraqi police officer Mohammed Abid Mohammed stands guard at the door Jan. 12 while U.S. soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division search the house near Ramadi. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

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

# Iraqi Workers Ready To Shut Down Basra; “Our Real Problem Now Is With Bremer”

Ewa Jasiewicz, Occupation Watch Jan 9, 2004  
For more, check out <http://www.occupationwatch.org/>

**Five days ago, workers in Najebeeya and Haatha power plants, and power stations in Khor Zubair and She'iba, staged protests and walk-outs over low wages and long hours. In Najibeeya workers attacked the administration building and the boss himself - Hammad Salem Rghadbaan – a man notorious for mistreating workers, many a workers Molotov target, and now protected by the usual boss-propping heavies in Basra - SCIRI'S Badr Brigades, muscle also for Iraqi Port Authority chief – Abdel Razzaq.**

Rghadbaan, a former influential Baathist, enjoys a stretch-office complete with massive satellite television, sofas, an expensive, imposing desk and male minions serving crystal bowls full of chocolate treats. **He denies the existence of unions, using Bremer's issue on Organization in the Workplace to delay all recognition,** pressurizes building workers at the plant to halt construction on the union's HQ, has allowed a former buddy employee to effectively squat the plant's nursery with his family, despite them having their own house in Gurna and leaving 28 kids shut out from a safe space to dwell in during the day, and forcing women workers to bear their kids on their arms or walk with them in baleful tow.

The current new nursery space - the former canteen - is a loose electricity-cable dangling shaft of a place, devoid of furniture and being renovated at a painstaking slow pace. Rghadbaan also pays out slavewages (2000 ID per day, just over a dollar - a kg of apples, a kg of potatoes and packet of cigarettes) to retired workers forced back to work out of desperation, and a basic \$60 per month for most under 5-years service workers at the last count two months ago.

**Women are also discriminated against in their wages-receiving 10,000-20,000 ID less than their male counterparts, per week - an undercut of over a whole day's wages. Rghadbaan also assaulted the plant's only female trade unionist, and mother** (who brings her 5-year-old son Saif with her everywhere she goes) and an outspoken critic of the management. Friends inform me that she was shoved by him, which is here is culturally akin to a full attack.

**There is also no safety equipment at Najebeeya** -no boots, new suits, glasses, masks, gloves, first-aid equipment, emergency communication system or safety belts. No major necessary reconstruction has been carried out yet either, nine months on into the occupation.

Rgadan, a known tightwad in the wage stakes also scrimped on the annual Eid bonus. Whilst some public sector workers received as much as 70,000 ID (\$40) Rghadbaan gave his workers 5,000 ID (\$3).

**During the protests at the plant, workers stormed the administration building, attacked Rgadan's offices, hauled the boss himself up by his lapels and gave him a beating.**

Haartha workers held similar protests, again over low wages and poor conditions. Many work 15-hour days when an official day should be six, in noisy, carbon monoxide fumed environments, with no safety equipment. Again, similar to Najeebeeya, there are no emergency communication devices to inform workers six floors up of any potentially lethal malfunctions. **The main boiler turbine in the control section is caked in mud to keep it cooled**, as the automatic cooling system broke-down long ago. The safety equipment, any which wasn't stolen or looted dates back to the 80s and is insufficient.

Haartha power plant is currently running at 25% capacity, with only one of its generators operational which was reconstructed autonomously by workers using cannibalized spare parts from other damaged generators.

**Bechtel, the US corporation which won the contract to conduct emergency repairs on bomb-smashed electricity plants has been paralyzed in its efforts to even begin reconstruction.** Japanese technology giant Mitsubishi built Haartha 20 years ago. Only Mitsubishi owns all the drawings, plans, and crucially the spare parts which make up the plant - the South's largest and most significant. And Mitsubishi are officially staying out of Iraq, due to the security situation, for another two full years. The options for re-charging Basra with electricity are slim and rely on either taking apart the massive generators and making moulds out of the moribund parts, or shipping in entire mobile power plants - an expensive, unstable and unsustainable solution.

Basra experiences blackouts daily, sometimes three times a day. The old Baghdad Baath first system of diverting 70% of the country's power to the capital and starving out the unruly south persists. No one drinks from the tap – the unpurified salty water and DU cause everyone's hair to fall out in matted clumps in the shower; skin cracks and rashes flare up, especially amongst young children with sensitive skin. And those who cannot afford to fill the 250 ID 5 litre UN plastic water carriers have to suffer the thirst-stoking tap stuff. Bechtel, which provoked an insurrection in Cochabamba, Bolivia when it privatized water, shooting rates up 60%, is now responsible for repairs to the damaged Basra Sweet water Canal.

According to an engineer I spoke to working on the project, said that Bechtel were just doing minor repairs and that the canal was being slowly re-abled rather than reconstructed and that workers are still using inadequate sanctions-wear equipment.

**The feedback from the management of all the plants and stations affected by the workers protests was basically: 'Our hands are tied. It's a CPA ruling'. And indeed, the occupation government has instituted its own laws, including the lowering of public sector wages.**



Emergency payments were \$60, \$100, \$120 and \$220 at the beginning of the Occupation. Now the lowest wage on the CPA 130-position table is 69,000 ID (\$40) with three grades and 31 positions to be undergone before a worker can reach the lowest previous CPA emergency payment of \$60 - equal to a Grade 9, Step 1 102,000 ID. **Order 30 on Reform of Salaries and Employment Conditions of State Employees also eliminated all previous house, food, family, risk and location subsidies.**

**Electricity sector union reps, including Najebeeya's Hashimiya Masin Hussein, visited Basra's Governor, Wael Abdul Lahtif and informed him of their resolution on the CPA wagescale. 'If our wages are not corrected we will stop all the signs of life here, we will shut down all the electricity in Basra'. And if the electricity cuts out, after three or four days, so do the gas and oil plants, businesses, shops, and hotels.**

**The current strike threats echo those of the Southern Oil Company Union two weeks ago, which had the Oil Minister scarping to Basra to hold emergency talks with union heads in order to avert the promised walk-out and armed worker resistance in the eventuality of troops taking over pumps.**

**SOC Union members drafted their own wage table in response to the CPA dictated one and demanded it be accepted on pain of armed, if necessary, strike action at every SOC location.** All workers were returned to emergency pay levels immediately and the Unions new wage table will be implemented next month, as demanded.

The Electricity Sector union is advising, co-operating and co-ordinating with the SOC Union, but, their job is harder due to lack of managerial support. In SOC, the General Director fully supported the Union's autonomous wage table.

**The Governor of Basra took the union's demands seriously and wrote a secret memo marked 'urgent' to the Minister of Energy, advising him to heed the strike threat and to return workers to the emergency payment system ASAP.** He urged a fast response and told him formally that if the Ministry does not delay the implementation of the CPA wage table then there will be a major strike in Basra. The memo ends with 'Please give this issue the most important consideration'. It was also copied to the Governing Council.

The delegation went on to tell the governor, **'We are considering the benefit of our country but we are also putting it in our minds the benefit of the workers. We have come to let you know our plans out of respect for you and because you represent Basra people, but if there is no result from our negotiations, we will go on total strike'**. Further points include equal pay for women, training and status elevation for women, maternity payment, no nightshift work, and full nursery and childcare facilities to be present in all workplaces.

**Asked how the unions will respond if they are forced to take strike action, Samir Hanoon, a negotiator and Vice President of the Federation of Iraqi Trade Unions Basra explained, 'Us unionists hope that this strike can be conducted safely and by the law. If we cannot win through the legal procedures, if there is no positive result for our demands, we will take actions - riots, protests, demonstrations and total shut-downs. We realize that there may be some sacrifices but we are ready to**

**accept these for the sake of our demands. Our real problem now is with the CPA, with Bremer'.**

Contacts

Hassan Jum'a Head of SOC Union 00965 973 8243

Ewa Jasiewicz 00965 789 5523

---

## Kurds Piss On Bremer

*[Washington Post, January 9, 2004, Pg. 12]*

The U.S. is faced with the prospect that two governments could control Iraq--one for Kurds and one for Arabs. The Kurds have so far failed to compromise on a formula to distribute political power when the U.S. occupation ends. **Paul Bremer met recently with Kurd leaders to urge them to back off their demands to retain autonomy. They refused,** insisting on holding on to the basic political, economic and security rights that achieved during a dozen years of being cut off from the rest of Iraq during Saddam Hussein's rule. **(The Kurds have the same right to form their own nation as any other people. For years they've been butchered by the ruling classes of Turkey, Iraq and Syria. As if anybody in Washington gives a shit.)**

---

## Taxi Occupants Killed For Passing Convoy'

By Harry de Quetteville in Tikrit, (Filed: 10/01/2004) [Telegraph Group Limited](#)

Propped up in his bed at what used to be the Saddam Hussein hospital in Tikrit, few Iraqis can better testify to the potentially fatal consequences of disobeying the country's new highway code than Ibrahim Allawi Ahmed.

Wheezing slightly from a gunshot wound to his lung, Mr Ahmed, 32, a sharp-faced man from Ramadi, is the only survivor from a bullet-riddled taxi which he claims came under US fire after it tried to overtake army vehicles on a road near Tikrit.

For Iraqi drivers though, mile-long supply convoys trundling slowly across the immense desert landscape present a frustrating impediment, often doubling journey times.

Rather than wait, many attempt to pass the military columns, watching and waiting for a soldier astride a mounted machinegun to wave a casual "OK". But passing lines of trucks and humvees is always a tense affair, with drivers on both sides fearful of their opposite numbers.

"I was in a taxi with four other people including the driver," said Mr Ahmed.

"We were stuck behind a US convoy just outside Tikrit when the soldier on the rear vehicle lifted his hand from the trigger of his gun and clearly motioned us to pass.

"Cautiously we overtook on the right-hand side, then suddenly the gunner on the front vehicle swivelled his gun towards us and started firing."

Mr Ahmed said he ducked under the taxi's dashboard as bullets ripped through the car, killing the driver.

When he recovered consciousness the car had careered off the road.

In the back seat he found the other passengers, including a mother and her six-year-old son, had also been shot dead. "The soldier just kept firing for five to six seconds, but the convoy didn't stop for us," said Mr Ahmed. "I was hit in the lung."

Both Iraqi doctors and police have said that the taxi was indeed hit by US bullets.

**The incident is one of a series of traffic shoot-outs that are undermining the already shaky trust between coalition soldiers and Iraqis.**

**In wards next to the unit caring for Mr Ahmed, doctors pointed to two other patients with gunshot wounds they said were also the victims of US convoys.**

**"It's not just bullets," said Dr Safaa Abbas. "I've treated people from cars that have been crushed by tanks."**



**ANOTHER LIBERATED IRAQI**

---

## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **"Serious Blow": 3,000 New Afghan Soldiers Desert Occupation**

AFP 1/11/2004

Kabul, Afghanistan (AFP) - **Thousands of Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers have deserted the fledgling service after completing training given by instructors from the United States, France and Britain, defense ministry officials said Sunday.**

**"Some 3,000 ANA soldiers have fled the army,"** ministry spokesman General Mohammad Zahir Azimi said.

"The defense ministry has announced that they have to come back and join the army otherwise they will have to pay for all the expenses spent on their training."

Tough training, low wages and factional links to the private militias which still control wide swathes of the country outside Kabul are believed to be behind the mass exodus from the ANA.

It is not known how much money has been spent on the deserters but recruits receive 50 US dollars a month during training and a minimum wage of 70 dollars per month after that.

In addition to their imported uniforms and tuition, soldiers receive a seven dollar a day food allowance and 60 dollars a month if they go on exercises outside the capital Kabul.

**"The salary they were paid was less than what they could make in a month doing other things so they left."**

**(For more about the occupation, see the article "Afghanistan's Sham Of A Constitution", by Nicole Colson, at [www.socialistworker.org](http://www.socialistworker.org).)**

---

## **SOLDIER DIES IN VEHICLE ACCIDENT**

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND  
January 11, 2004 Release Number: 04-01-11C

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – One soldier was fatally injured when the vehicle he was traveling in near Kabul, Afghanistan hit another vehicle Jan. 09. The soldier was evacuated to Bagram Air Base where he later died.

---

## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

**Election Year Posturing Aside,  
Democrats And Republicans Agree  
Perfectly:**

# Grab The Money

January 10, 2004 [Interpax]

Perhaps we are asking the wrong questions during election years.

**Our Senators and Congresswomen do not pay into Social Security and, of course, they do not collect from it.** You see, Social Security benefits were not suitable for persons of their rare elevation in society. **They felt they should have a special plan for themselves. So, many years ago they voted in their own benefit plan.**

In more recent years, no congress person has felt the need to change it. After all, it is a great plan.

**Their plan works like this:**

**When they retire, they continue to draw the same pay until they die.**

Except it may increase from time to time for cost of living adjustments.

**For example, former Senator Byrd and Congressman White and their wives may expect to draw \$7,800,000.00 (that's Seven Million, Eight-Hundred Thousand Dollars), with their wives drawing \$275,000.00 during the last years of their lives.**

This is calculated on an average life span for each of those two Dignitaries.

**Younger Dignitaries who retire at an early age, will receive much more during the rest of their lives.**

**Their cost for this excellent plan is \$0.00. NADA....ZILCH....**

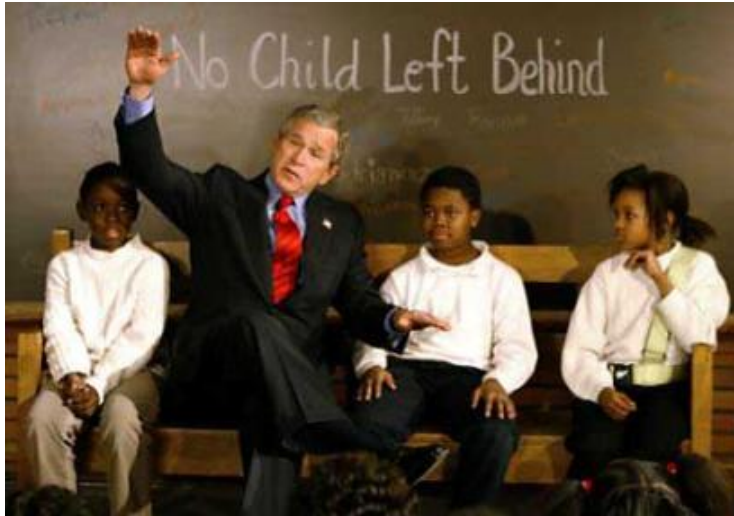
This little perk they voted for themselves is free to them. **You and I pick up the tab for this plan. The funds for this fine retirement plan come directly from the General Funds;**

**"OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK"!**

From our own Social Security Plan, which you and I pay (or have paid) into, -every payday until we retire (which amount is matched by our employer)- we can expect to get an average of \$1,000 per month after retirement.

**Or, in other words, we would have to collect our average of \$1,000 monthly benefits for 68 years and one (1) month to equal Senator Bill Bradley's benefits!**

---



**George Bush with fourth graders at Pierre Laclede Elementary school in St Louis, Missouri Jan. 5. The children show by their appropriately vigilant expressions they are less than thrilled to be in his presence. Since the overwhelming majority of black Americans understand perfectly that Bush is a cold, vicious, crooked, murderous asshole who cares only for his rich friends, that is hardly surprising.**

**Children tend to favor the public views of their families, especially where a racist piece of shit like Bush is concerned, who happily presided over the execution of many people of color, and enjoyed it, when he was Governor of Texas. Polls show that white Americans, although they are traditionally slower to recognize reality, are moving in the same direction. (Jason Reed/Reuters)**



**Protesters hold up a banner as President Bush's motorcade speeds by, en route to an election fundraiser in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, January 8, 2004. (Jason Reed/Reuters)**

---

# CLASS WAR NEWS

## Think Again Flag Wavers

Cookie The Junkman Jan 10, 2004  
(<http://geocities.com/cookiejunkman>)

A car company can move its factories to Mexico and claim it's a free market.

A toy company can outsource to a Chinese subcontractor and claim it's a free market

A major bank can incorporate in Bermuda to avoid taxes and claim it's a free market.

We can buy HP Printers made in Mexico.

We can buy shirts made in Bangladesh.

**We can purchase almost anything we want from many different countries.**

**BUT, heaven help the elderly who dare to buy their prescription drugs from a Canadian (Or Mexican) pharmacy. That's called un-American!**

**And you think the pharmaceutical companies don't have a powerful lobby? Think again flag wavers.**

**And I'm proud to say that I'm ashamed to be an American.**

---

**If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited."**