

GI SPECIAL 2#81



A Window Opens On Chaos:

**Republicans In Congress Rebellious;
Rumsfeld “Forgetful” And Incoherent In
Baghdad,
Soldiers “Question” Him As He Forgets
Name Of Division Serving There**

5.14.04 By Greg Jaffe And David Rogers, Wall St. Journal

WASHINGTON—Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld paid a surprise visit to Iraq’s Abu Ghraib prison, where U.S. troops had been photographed abusing prisoners, and delivered a speech that was part pep talk and part rousing defense of the Bush administration’s Iraq policy.

The visit came only hours after new polls showed public support for the Iraq war eroding. For the first time, a majority of respondents to a Pew Research poll— 51%—said the war is not going well.

Instead of focusing on prisoner abuse, Mr. Rumsfeld sought to highlight what he described as the successes in Iraq, "Schools are open, the hospitals are open, the clinics are open," Mr. Rumsfeld said.

Mr. Rumsfeld's trip seemed aimed at two audiences: the troops overseas and lawmakers back home. **Having given the administration a remarkably free rein for the past two years. Republicans in Congress are embarrassed enough by the photos and management of postwar Iraq that they have begun to reassert more control over funding for the effort.**

Lawmakers are fuming over recent disclosures that in tandem with its prewar planning, the administration spent as much as \$178.4 million on 21 military-related projects in the Middle East without informing Congress. Annual costs for operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan are expected in fiscal years 2004 and 2005 to average more than \$65 billion.

The changed mood was dramatized yesterday as Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and the White House fended off bipartisan criticism from the Senate Armed Services Committee over the latest \$25 billion request for Iraq and Afghanistan.

The administration is asking that the full sum be treated as a contingency reserve to be available after fiscal 2005 begins on Oct. 1. **But both Democrats and Republicans said the language was so loosely written that the money amounted to a blank check.**

Even conservatives such as Sen. Wayne Allard (R., Cob.) warned that Congress should be given a greater chance to exercise its oversight. Armed Services Committee Chairman John Warner (R., Va.) later said he would refuse to move on the \$25 billion request until the administration makes changes to give Congress more of a voice in how and when the money is spent. With the full Senate poised to take up the issue next week as part of debate on the 2005 defense budget, Mr. Warner told administration witnesses, "You've got your weekend work cut out."

Mr. Wolfowitz conceded that a larger supplemental bill will be needed next spring—on top of the \$25 billion now. We're not pretending it's cheap," he said.

Democratic lawmakers also confronted Mr. Wolfowitz with interrogation techniques approved by the top commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez. **When asked if the "rules of engagement" violated the Geneva Conventions, Mr. Wolfowitz said he didn't know and hadn't read them.** "It just amazes me that you're not familiar with something that goes to the heart of the issue of the Iraqi interrogation," said Sen. Carl Levin (O., Mich.)

In the House, the Armed Services Committee approved late Wednesday a more restrictive version of the \$25 billion request, over protests from the administration. It included \$5.3 billion for personnel costs, which the administration had preferred to finance elsewhere, and a total of \$3.39 billion for a detailed list of items, such as more armored vehicles, that the White House hadn't spelled out.

In two appearances in Baghdad, Mr. Rumsfeld didn't address the spiraling costs of the war, and touched only briefly on the prison-abuse scandal, suggesting it was the work of a "few who have betrayed our values and sullied the reputation of our country."

The combative defense chief gave no indication that he was planning to step down, and dismissed as "garbage" suggestions that the Pentagon was trying to limit its inquiry to only a few low-ranking soldiers.

At times, the 71-year-old defense chief, who boasts of his attention to the smallest details, appeared weary and forgetful.

He couldn't remember the name of the Army division whose one-year tour he extended for 90 days to help put down a revolt led by radical cleric Muqtada al Sadr's militia in southern Iraq. "We asked some folks, I think basically from the First Infantry Division," Mr. Rumsfeld said before trailing off, according to transcripts. In fact, the troops came from the First Armored Division.

Soldiers at a second meeting in Baghdad questioned Mr. Rumsfeld about whether more armored humvees, which protect troops against rocket-propelled grenades and roadside bombs, were on their way. Other soldiers inquired about extended tours of duty, which in some cases have grown to 15 months in Iraq from an original promise of 12 months, and the prospect of bringing in some new allies to share the load in Iraq.

Mr. Rumsfeld said the Bush administration was pushing for another United Nations Security Council Resolution, which might draw more foreign troops. U.S. officials were in talks with "a couple of handfuls, maybe three handfuls of nations," about contributing more troops, the defense chief told soldiers.

He declined to name countries that might provide troops. But the security situation and the inflammatory photos of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners have made attracting new allies to the coalition harder.

(When soldiers "question" a Secretary Of Defense about anything, let alone why they aren't coming home, the "chain" of command" has become a fraying thread.)

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:

Car Bomb Kills Iraqi "Governing" Council President; CPA Cancels Football Game

May 17, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) & Associated Press & BBC News

Iraqi Governing Council President Izzedine Salim was killed Monday when a bomber set off a blast next to his convoy at a checkpoint in central Baghdad, the U.S. Army said.

Coalition officials released a statement that read: "Due to unforeseen and tragic events, the football game scheduled for Monday afternoon between the coalition press officers and Iraqi media will be postponed until further notice."

Salim was head of the Islamic Da'wah Movement in the southern city of Basra.

The attack on Salim took place Monday morning near Baghdad's "Green Zone" -- home to the American-led Coalition Provisional Authority headquarters. The blast killed four to six Iraqis and wounded six Iraqis and two American soldiers, U.S. Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said.

It damaged at least a dozen vehicles near a coalition checkpoint, leaving a crater 5 feet wide and 3 feet deep. Salim's car was in line at the checkpoint at the time of the attack.

Several vehicles were destroyed in the blast, which melted the asphalt of the road and sent debris flying over a large area.

"There was a huge crowd at the checkpoint," a security guard at a nearby residential compound told the Reuters news agency.

"There were a lot of cars and people on foot standing there and then this massive explosion. I saw body parts everywhere."

Kimmit said it appeared artillery rounds were packed into the back of the attacker's car. Thick black smoke billowed over central Baghdad shortly after the blast. Fire equipment, ambulances, Iraqi police and American soldiers raced to the scene.

Saleem was in a convoy of five vehicles, and the car carrying the bomb was adjacent to the council chief's car when it exploded, said witness Mohammed Laith. He said Saleem's driver and assistant were among those killed.

"I think it is more likely that he was targeted as **he has been warned for the last couple of months,**" he said. **"This is a very dangerous [check] point, and they can target any [governing council] member who leaves from the residence and enters into the Green Zone."**

A previously unknown Iraqi group said it had carried out the attack.

The Arab Resistance Movement al-Rashid Brigades posted a statement on the internet saying two suicide bombers had been used to carry out "a qualitative heroic operation, which led to the killing of the traitor and mercenary" Ezzedine Salim.

"The Brigades pledges to the masses of our nation to pursue struggle until the liberation of glorious Iraq and dear Palestine," the statement on al-Anbar website said.



U.S. soldiers survey the scene following a car bomb explosion outside the U.S.-led coalition headquarters May 17, 2004 that killed the head of the U.S. hand-picked Governing Council. (Akram Saleh/Reuters)

Two U.S. Troops Dead In Baghdad Area Fighting

5.16.04 By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, Associated Press Writer & Combined Joint Task Force Seven Release # 040516b & May 17, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

One U.S. soldier was killed Saturday night and another was wounded when a bomb exploded beside a vehicle in Baghdad, the Army said Sunday. The attack took place around 10:30 p.m. May 15.

A second soldier died of wounds suffered during a firefight Saturday south of the capital, the military said, and two others were wounded.

In central Baghdad, several explosions were heard near the U.S.-controlled Green Zone. It was unclear what caused the blasts, but smoke could be seen rising from the west side of the Tigris River.

Soldier Dead In Firefight Near Baghdad

May 17, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) & CJTF 7

A U.S. soldier died from bullet wounds and two others wounded Sunday in a firefight south of Baghdad, the coalition said. Since the start of the war, 783 U.S. troops have died, including 570 under hostile circumstances.

Shia Madhi Army Defeats Italians; Captures Their Base

5.16.04 By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, Associated Press Writer & May 15 By Suleiman al-Khalidi, washingtonpost.

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Fighters loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr drove Italian forces from a base in the southern city of Nasiriyah on Sunday and attacked coalition headquarters there with grenade and mortar fire as tensions in the Shiite region escalated.

Battles in Nasiriyah were mostly at two bridges crossing the Euphrates River, residents said.

Sadr's militiamen used mortars and rocket-propelled grenades to trap about 20 Italians, Americans and Britons overnight in the offices of the U.S.-backed Coalition Provisional Authority. Two Filipino guards were wounded.

The Italian troops evacuated as their base came under repeated attack. Portuguese police were called out to support the Italians, seeing action for the first time since the force of 128 deployed to Nasiriyah in November, a Portuguese duty officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

At least 10 Italians were wounded, one of the critically, contingent spokesman Lt. Col. Giuseppe Perrone told The Associated Press by phone. He said the Italians relocated to the nearby Tallil air base.

Elsewhere in Nasiriyah, a convoy transporting the Italian official in charge of the city, Barbara Contini, came under attack as it neared the headquarters of the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority, Perrone said. Two Italian paramilitary police were wounded.

Fighting in the southern city began Friday. **All but two civilian staffers of the coalition were evacuated from their headquarters in Nasiriyah to a military base because of attacks by al-Sadr's fighters.**

Italy Foreign Minister Asks U.S. To Stop Holy City Attacks And Get Out:

Four Italian Soldiers Wounded

5.16.04 By Suleiman al-Khalidi, NAJAF, Iraq (Reuters)

Four Italian soldiers were wounded Sunday in Nassiriya, where **fighters loyal to Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr have taken part in what U.S. commanders call a "minor uprising" across the south provoked by U.S. assaults on Sadr's main Mehdi Army bases in the Shi'ite holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala. (How many dead U.S. and Iraqi resistance soldiers does it take to qualify as a "major" uprising? Could we please have the number?)**

Fighters loyal to Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr have taken part in what U.S. commanders call a "minor uprising" across the south provoked by U.S. assaults on Sadr's main Mehdi Army bases in the Shi'ite holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala.

"We have asked the Americans to avoid frontal attacks on Iraqi holy cities and to hand over military control of these cities to Iraqi forces," Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini wrote in a newspaper.

U.S. tanks dominated streets in Kerbala Sunday, exchanging fire from shortly after dawn with Sadr fighters who attacked with mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

Wounded Italian Soldier Dies

2004-05-17 ROME, May 17 (Xinhuanet) -- An Italian soldier died overnight from his serious wounds sustained in Sunday's fighting with Shiite insurgents in Nasiriyah, southern Iraq, the Italian Defense Ministry said here on Monday.

The dead soldier, Matteo Vanzan, along with another five Italian troops, were injured during clashes with militants loyal to the radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr on Sunday. At least nine Iraqi insurgents were killed in the fighting.

The War In Najaf

15 May 2004 By Alissa J. Rubin and Raheem Salman, The Los Angeles Times & By Scott Wilson and Daniel Williams, Washington Post Foreign Service & May 15, 2004 By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, The Associated Press & 5.17 Associated Press

U.S. tanks rumbled Friday into a vast cemetery in the southern city of Najaf, one of Shiite Islam's most sacred places, in pursuit of insurgents loyal to the rebel Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr. The fighting, which coincided with skirmishes in the other major Shiite holy city, Karbala, demonstrated some of the most aggressive tactics yet employed by U.S. forces against Sadr's Shiite militia.

Despite the intense fighting, Sadr delivered a scheduled sermon at Friday prayers in the main mosque in Kufa, roughly six miles east of Najaf. He warned that others were trying to divide the Shiite community and advised a rival Shiite militia attached to a political party not to fall for the ploy.

In images broadcast across the Middle East on Arabic satellite channels, U.S. Army OH-58 Kiowa helicopters fluttered above the ochre and tan necropolis on the edge of the city. Abrams tanks from the 1st Armored Division fired into the warren of tombs. Plumes of gray and black smoke puffed up from between the grave markers, where guerrillas bearing rocket-propelled grenade launchers were positioned.

"The cemetery lost its holiness in the early hours of today when the U.S. forces started to attack," said Khalid Farhan, 55, who owns the Thulfiqar Hotel in downtown Najaf. "Many of the graves have been destroyed. But we can say that people are dying and nice buildings are being destroyed also today. Who cares right now about graves?"

The battle in the cemetery also prompted Sadr's associates outside Najaf to call for a wider mobilization against U.S. forces.

The fighting in Najaf, which began with mortar fire around 8 a.m., involved hundreds of Al Mahdi militiamen armed with rocket-propelled grenades and Kalashnikov rifles. U.S. tanks, traveling in pairs, advanced on suspected mortar positions in several areas, including the cemetery and an amusement park, according to witnesses and U.S. military officials. Several helicopters buzzed overhead for hours, providing air support as U.S. soldiers on foot cleared buildings and returned fire.

During the fighting, the shrine of Imam Ali, one of the founders of the Shiite sect, was damaged, according to wire service reports. Four holes, each about 12 inches long and 8 inches wide, were visible on the gold dome of the mosque. They appeared to have been caused by machine-gun fire.

"Only Americans have such bullets," said Qais Khazali, a Sadr spokesman in Najaf, as Mahdi Army fighters draped in head scarves and waving rifles shouted: "They are Jews! They are Jews!"

The images of U.S. tanks near the Shrine of Imam Ali, one of Shiite Islam's holiest mosques, brought calls for resistance during Friday prayer services at pro-Sadr mosques.

"Where are those people who said Najaf is a red line?" Abdul Hadi Daraji asked several thousand worshippers at the al-Hikma Mosque in Sadr City, an eastern Baghdad slum named for the young cleric's father, who was assassinated in 1999. "I'm asking all the people here, 'If anyone feels he is able to go to Najaf to support your brothers, go!' "

Kimmitt described the operation as "counterinsurgency warfare" and a "small engagement" rather than a full-scale assault.

It was the first time U.S. soldiers had advanced so deeply into Najaf, apparently having concluded that trying to take on the rebels was worth the risk of alienating

mainstream Shiites. Even Shiites who dislike Sadr are sensitive about non-Muslims approaching the sacred shrines.

Najaf's newly appointed governor, Adnan Zurufi, said this week that he would not detain Sadr for fear it could set off violence. However, he said he was prepared to use force to disarm the Al Mahdi militia.

"I said clearly to [Iraq civilian administrator L. Paul] Bremer and the officials in Baghdad earlier this week that Muqtada should not be detained," Zurufi said. "We must settle this in a way that guarantees that the law will be applied but also allows Muqtada to save face."

Witnesses said Najaf's Thulfiqar Hotel came under fire Friday morning as U.S. tanks rattled through the streets. Correspondents from the Reuters news agency, Agence France-Presse and the Associated Press, as well as The Washington Post and the U.S.-funded al-Hurra satellite channel, reside at the hotel.

As described by witnesses, tank rounds struck the roof, the lobby and a courtyard behind the building, sending cameras toppling and reporters ducking for cover. Some suffered minor injuries.

"They first made warning shots," said Farhan, the owner. "When the reporters wouldn't move [from the roof] they shot."

Despite overnight bombing, militiamen were in control of some government buildings in Nasiriyah, and some people were taking advantage of the chaos to loot cars, residents said.

Sadr loyalists Friday attacked the lightly protected coalition headquarters in Nasiriya, about 200 miles south of Baghdad.

Firing rocket-propelled grenades, the insurgents bombarded the fortified building in which about 20 international staff were still at work in the early evening.

Earlier in the day, a crowd of about 50 people, some armed with rocket-propelled grenades and others with Kalashnikovs converged on the local governor's office, where they fought Iraqi police.

On Friday, Sadr militiamen tried yet again to take over the city's main police station. The fighting continued late into the night.

One Polish soldier was wounded in Saturday's skirmishes, the Polish military said in Warsaw.

Sadr Support Makes Huge Gain

15 May 2004 By Alissa J. Rubin and Raheem Salman, The Los Angeles Times

A recent poll showed a dramatic rise in support for Sadr in recent months. Three months ago, 2% to 3% of Iraqis said they supported or strongly supported him. But after his militia launched its fight with U.S. forces, more than 50% of those polled said they either somewhat supported or strongly supported him.

Unconquered---Unconquerable



Iraqis chant in support of Shi'ite resistance cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr, during Friday prayers in Baghdad, May 14, 2004. (Akram Saleh/Reuters)

Cottage Grove Soldier Wounded

May 15, 2004 WCCO-TV Minneapolis, MN

A soldier from Cottage Grove was injured Friday in a motor attack in Iraq.

Private First Class Corey Rector was serving with the 95th Military Police Battalion near Karbala when his camp came under attack.

Rector was lifting weights at the time. He went back to his tent, put on his body armor and helmet and ran out of the tent. As soon as he left, it exploded.

Rector helped a wounded soldier to a bunker before realizing he was also injured. He has shrapnel wounds in his legs, neck and back.

He had surgery Friday night in Baghdad. He will be sent to a hospital in Germany before being sent back to the United States to recover.

Two Hurt in Attack On Coalition HQ

May 15, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

A guerrilla rocket attack on the "Green Zone" compound that houses the headquarters of the U.S.-led administration in Baghdad on Saturday wounded a soldier and a civilian, the U.S. military said.

Insurgents regularly attack the heavily-defended headquarters, firing mortars from across the Tigris River toward the several-kilometer (mile) square area, Saddam Hussein's former presidential complex.

Most attacks on the Green Zone occur at night, but in recent weeks there have been more daytime assaults on the complex, which houses several thousand U.S., British and other employees of the Coalition Provisional Authority administering Iraq.

Sunnis From Fallujah Visit Shia Resistance Army To Show Solidarity; Tanks Fire On Anti-Occupation Demonstration

5.16.04 By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, Associated Press Writer

Several mosque imams from Fallujah, a Sunni stronghold west of Baghdad that was the site of heavy fighting last month, visited al-Sadr in Najaf to show solidarity.

On Sunday, American tanks drove through the center of Karbala and exchanged gunfire with insurgents. **The tanks also opened fire to break up an anti-American demonstration.**

Coalition forces guarding large quantities of captured arms and explosives at Karbala's Mukhaiyam mosque came under mortar fire three times overnight, said Lt. Col. Robert Strzelecki, spokesman for the Polish-led multinational force in south-central Iraq.

Two U.S. tanks were stationed Sunday in a main square in Najaf, while militiamen held positions in the cemetery and other areas.

An explosion in the southern city of Samawah killed at least one Iraqi security force member, and there also was shooting between Iraqi security forces and al-Sadr supporters, Japan's Kyodo News reported.

Two mortar shells were fired at Dutch soldiers guarding the provincial governor's building in Samawah, Kyodo said. **Japanese soldiers had virtually confined themselves to their base on the southern outskirts of the city because of deteriorating security.**

Attempt To Disarm Shell Goes Wrong, Sarin Gas Released

17 May, 2004 BBC News

Coalition troops found an artillery round containing the deadly nerve gas sarin, but were unable to defuse it and a small "dispersal of agent" occurred, the US military said.

TROOP NEWS

“Most Soldiers Feel Betrayed”

16 May 2004 Donna Mulhearn From Baghdad

Most soldiers, when they realize no one has brought any freedom to this country question why they're here, feel betrayed and want to go home. (Yes, they tell us).

No one trusts what anyone says, especially if they are dressed in a suit and go by the name of Paul Bremer (US head in Iraq), especially not trusted by the soldiers! (Yes, they tell us).

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/>

Missouri Governor Pissed; Extended National Guard Troops Being Used As Free Labor For Halliburton

5.12.04 By DAVID A. LIEB ~ Associated Press Writer

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) -- Missouri's governor and National Guard leader raised concerns Tuesday that some soldiers in Iraq are improperly being used as drivers for civilian supply contractors.

In a letter to President Bush, Democratic Gov. Bob Holden complained that members of the Guard's 1221st Transportation Company, which consists of 145 soldiers from detachments in Centertown, Dexter, Trenton and St. Louis, were being directed to drive vehicles for contractors of Kellogg, Brown & Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton.

"Clearly, the use of the 1221st Transportation Company in this manner violates the traditional employment of soldiers in a manner that disregards the risks to the lives of these young Americans," Holden wrote, asking Bush to look into the matter.

White House spokesman Jim Morrell confirmed the receipt of Holden's letter but referred questions to the military's public affairs office in Baghdad, Iraq, citing troop assignments as an "an operational decision" handled by Defense Department.

Missouri's adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Dennis Shull, said in an interview with The Associated Press that he also sent a letter Tuesday expressing concerns about soldier-citizen mixing to the Army's top officer, Gen. Peter Schoomaker.

Shull said relatives of one of the Missouri soldiers had complained to his office that soldiers were being placed in vehicles with civilian contractors -- a task for which they had not been trained.

"Soldiers of a transportation company are used to riding with soldiers next to them who are armed. ... They are battle buddies" in case of an attack, Shull said in the interview. "

The 1221st Transportation Company typically drives flatbed tractor-trailer rigs, which can carry everything from tanks to food to the troops on the battlefield.

Holden attended the unit's deployment ceremony in March 2003 and knows at least one of the troop's members. **Shull said the unit is among those whose stay in Iraq has been extended by an additional three months.**

U.S. to Shift 4,000 Troops from S. Korea to Iraq

5.16.04 SEOUL (Reuters) & 5.17 Associated Press

The United States plans to withdraw a 2nd Infantry Division brigade based in South Korea and deploy the 4,000 troops in Iraq, the JoongAng Ilbo newspaper reported on Monday.

South Korea has delayed the deployment of 3,000 of its troops to Iraq, which was approved three months ago, amid concerns over security and where they will be stationed.

Tapping into the U.S. military force in Korea would be an historic move by the Pentagon, underscoring the degree to which the military is stretched to provide enough forces for Iraq while meeting its other commitments

Those Who Gave Torture Orders Said “Call Me Mister”-- “You Can Get In Trouble For Not Doing What You're Told Or Get In Trouble For Doing What You're Told” Sgt. Says

May 14, 2004 ABCNews.com. Baghdad Iraq

Sgt. Javal S. Davis — one of four former Abu Ghraib prison soldiers who are scheduled to be court-martialed next week — said any physical actions he took with Iraqi detainees were at the direct instructions of the interrogation officers at the Baghdad prison.

According to the charge sheet, Davis told Army investigators he was "made to do various things that I would question morally."

"Yes, I could have said no to anything. But that would have been disobeying an order," Davis said on *Good Morning America*. "So either you can get in trouble for not doing what you're told or get in trouble for doing what you're told. So it's kind of like a Catch-22. But it's my choice to make a decision what I consider would be the right thing to do or not."

Davis — who has been accused of jumping on a pile of prisoners by prison guard Spc. Jeremy Sivits, the first soldier scheduled to be court-martialed in the abuse scandal — said he followed the intelligence officers' lead when he was asked to prepare prisoners for questioning.

Davis, a power tool salesman in civilian life, said it's not easy to offer the names of those officers who gave instructions because they were not always clearly identified.

"As far as their names, it's hard to tell their names, because most intelligence personnel don't wear name tags or they'll have their shirts off and they wouldn't tell you their name. They just say 'call me agent' or 'mister' or a fake name or something like that," Davis said.

(For more see the article "Trained To Kill For A Political Purpose," by Barry Romo, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, centerfold at www.socialistworker.org.)

Scum In Uniform Caught In Iraq Prison Abuse Beat His Wife & Prison Inmates Back Home In Pa.

(Hardly surprising. Just doing what cops, prison guards and other cowards do naturally: beat up helpless people.)

May 13, 2004 By Judy Lin, ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNIONTOWN, Pa. - Spc. Charles A. Graner Jr., the military policeman photographed with a big smile as he stood behind a pile of naked Iraq prisoners, was a target of abuse allegations long before he was singled out by an Army investigator as the worst of the guards in the Baghdad scandal.

His ex-wife once accused him of dragging her out of a room by her hair and trying to throw her down the stairs during a fight over their breakup.

At the Pennsylvania prison where he worked as a low-level guard in civilian life, the Army reservist was accused in two lawsuits of brutality. In one, an inmate said Graner planted a razor blade in a plate of his potatoes.

Raised in the Pittsburgh suburb of Whitehall, Graner joined the Marines after high school and married in 1990.

Seven years later, his wife, Staci, filed for divorce, claiming her husband had been violent and threatening against her and their two children, now 11 and 13. When a friend tried to calm him down after the hair-pulling incident, she said he replied, "I have nothing if she's not my wife. She's dead," court documents show.

The two divorced in 2000. She obtained a protection-from-abuse order in 2001 after claiming that Graner had tried to throw her down the stairs following a heated argument about her leaving him. In all, she filed three such orders.

The two brutality lawsuits against Graner occurred while he worked at the state prison in Waynesburg.

Horatio Nimley, who served time for burglary, accused Graner and other guards of planting the razor blade, but the case was thrown out because Nimley could not be found after his release from prison in 2000.

Osborne Johnson, in a 2000 lawsuit, said Graner caused him to fall on his face during a patdown search. The state Attorney General's office got that lawsuit

dismissed by arguing that the statute of limitations had run out and that Johnson failed to show his constitutional rights were violated.

Prisoner Abuse Scandal Hits Front Line Troops

May 15, 2004 By Daniel Williams and Scott Wilson, Washington Post Foreign Service

At Spec. Jesse Haggart's outpost and in other troubled areas in Iraq, soldiers are facing new hostilities as they struggle to pacify the country. **Disclosure of prisoner abuse has further complicated life for front-line soldiers, mostly by giving resistance leaders a new rallying point against the occupation.**

In interviews after the photos were published, troops serving in Baghdad expressed deep frustration. **But while the scandal poses an image problem, the soldiers said, the deteriorating security situation and the halting progress of their nation-building chores pose a far greater threat to U.S. success in Iraq.**

Lt. Mike Beckner's focus, like those of his enlisted men, is less on Abu Ghraib than the clash between their expectations of Iraq and the reality. **As members of a tank crew who have become mechanized infantry, his troops had expected to be patrolling the neighborhood in Humvees on what amounted to police missions, he said.**

But insurgents loyal to the rebel Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr are using rocket-propelled grenades in ambushes, so the vulnerable Humvees have been stashed at neighborhood council offices.

The conversations, however, quickly turned to challenges the troops face every day on the street. Heavy fighting in the neighborhood, once receptive to the American occupation, began before the reports of abuse, continued sporadically over the past the month and erupted again this week.

"Everyone said this was the friendliest neighborhood around," said Sgt. James Touchton resting in a council building turned military camp. "Then, a few days later, we were having more firefights than the people who were here before us had in a whole year."

"One day, we're soldiers, the next day politicians," Touchton said. **"We sometimes shook hands with young Iraqi guys. They are probably the same hands that pull the trigger on the RPGs."**

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 RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Inside The Resistance; Anatomy Of An Ambush

May 2, 2004 By CHRISTINE HAUSER and WARZER JAFF, The New York Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq, May 1 — He calls himself God's Fighter and says he is from Falluja, the town west of Baghdad where Americans and guerrillas have been embroiled in battle.

His role as a resistance fighter, the Iraqi said, was to drive a getaway car on Thursday after a fellow fighter fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a fuel convoy supplying the American-led military occupation.

"We were hiding day after day, waiting for the right moment to strike," said the Iraqi, who identified himself as a former soldier pressed into Saddam Hussein's army and who refused to give his name.

"My fellow fighter had tried about a week ago but missed his target," he said.

"Today we planned it so that I was the driver. We waited in hiding," he said, scanning the street as he described the moment late Thursday morning when their opportunity finally arrived.

"Suddenly we were tipped off by our men down the street that a convoy was approaching. He launched the weapon. Then he jumped into the back seat of the car and I sped off."

The attack on the convoy, on a major highway next to a teeming west Baghdad neighborhood called Shula, is a measure of just how dangerous this city has become for the Americans, whether in combat patrols or supply convoys.

This incident offered a rare glimpse into the planning and execution of an ambush by a tight network of fighters who hide near major convoy routes in crowded districts, attack, then slip away undetected into dusty side streets or chaotic markets. Their motive is simple, the Iraqi said: to get rid of the military occupation of Iraq.

There were no casualties in Thursday's attack, said a military spokesman, Lt. Col. James Hutton, who reviewed a report on the incident in Baghdad on Friday, more than 24 hours after the attack.

The thunderous slam of the explosion, and thick coil of black smoke drifting into the skyline, drew huge crowds of Iraqis who jostled for position, dancing around the burning truck, shouting anti-American slogans and posturing for the cameras.

Iraqis in cars and trucks honked and waved as they passed the burning skeleton of the vehicle, which took up a lane on the overpass of the north-south beltway known to local residents as the "fast road" through Baghdad.

But the man who claimed to be God's Fighter surveyed the result of the attack from the edge of the crowd. At first he watched journalists speaking with groups of angry Iraqis, some of whom waved posters of the fiercely anti-American cleric Moktada al-Sadr.

He approached their car and leaned in through the open window. "Are you Iraqi?" he asked one of the journalists inside. The answer was affirmative. A curious group of onlookers had gathered around him as he spoke to the journalists, but he waved them away. "Go away, I have something to tell them in private," he shouted at them.

He said he wanted to tell a story about the role he said he had played in the attack. While the details of his story were impossible to verify, he said he wanted no cameras, no attention from the crowds and no credit.

The man led the journalists onto a service road on the edge of Shula where they could park. He spoke in broad daylight and in view of three cars that had trailed him and circled the place where he stood, as if on lookout.

"The Americans say that the Iraqi resistance is composed of former Baathists, and intelligence and security officers," he said, alert to the movement of the traffic and passers-by. "That's not true. Saddam was an oppressor, and I lost a brother because of him."

He said the resistance worked in a network of coordinated groups, dispersed in hiding along known convoy routes. "We use cars without license plates, and never use men who are from the neighborhood where the operation is taking place, for fear of them being recognized," he said.

Some of the fighters act as lookouts, tipping off the others by telephone when a string of vehicles approaches, he said.

"In the next few days, I will prove to you again how we strike the Americans," he said.

Roadside bomb attacks and ambushes are an almost daily occurrence in Iraq, striking the underbelly of the reconstruction and strategic supply effort so central to the occupation of the country.

The sight of dozens or sometimes hundreds of Iraqis rejoicing around a burning American military vehicle is almost an everyday sight on the streets of Baghdad.

Sometimes, American troops arrive quickly and search suspects among the crowds that gather to dance and shout slogans amid the wreckage, as scores did that day in Shula.

Using a hand-held detector, the Americans can sometimes identify men who have recently handled explosives or fired a weapon, as they did when they arrested two men on Thursday near the scene of a car bombing near Mahmudiya, south of Baghdad, in which eight American soldiers were killed.

But at other times, their troop strengths stretched thin by the violence, the soldiers appear only briefly to retrieve those wounded or killed, and then withdraw, leaving Iraqis to celebrate. Such was the case on Thursday, allowing one of the men who pulled off the attack to come forward.

One man, Bassim Chumakh, was among dozens who tore up the vehicle and burned it, prancing around and speaking with the bravado typical of those wanting to claim a part in a story they see as a victory against their occupiers.

"It was an American truck," he said, as crowds of men gathered around him, almost completely blocking the southbound lane and all trying to speak at once. "We took four burned people out. One of them was alive."

Suddenly several American military vehicles crested the top of the overpass, swooping down on the crowd. They dispersed in all directions, panicked. The sound of explosions went off, prompting some to hit the road and lay flat. One little boy crouched close to the asphalt, his face twitching with fear.

"Percussion grenades!" someone yelled from the ground. Men rose to their feet and reconstituted into a crowd.

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

Ho Hum, Occupation Liars Caught Again

(Last week, after the resistance blew up the only remaining open oil pipeline out of Iraq, which reaches the sea near Basra, the Occupation authority said of course the damage was minor, and it would re-open right away. Check out what the Wall St. Journal reported on 5.14.04, buried in the middle of a story by Bhushan Bahree about rising gas prices and oil demand from China.)

"Iraq hasn't yet repaired a sabotaged pipeline feeding its two offshore oil-export terminals, missing a target set by the country's oil minister this week. The attack has cut Iraq's oil exports by 600,000 barrels a day, or almost a third."

Collaborator Governors' Uncle Killed

5.17.04 Associated Press

The new U.S.-appointed governor of Najaf, Adnan al-Zurufi, said Monday that unidentified assailants killed his uncle, Kadhim Abbas al-Zurufi.

Collaborators Killed In Baghdad

5.16.04 By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, Associated Press Writer

Resistance fighters fired on a minibus and detonated explosives in Baghdad on Sunday, killing two Iraqi women and the driver and injuring another woman. Police said the women were working for the Americans but did not specify their jobs.

Early Sunday, a female Iraqi translator working with U.S. troops was killed and another was critically injured when gunmen broke into their houses in Mahmoudiyah, said Dawood al-Tae, director of the city's hospital.

The civilian killings appeared to be part of a rebel strategy to deter cooperation between Iraqis and the coalition, which plans to hand over sovereignty on June 30.

OCCUPATION REPORT

CPA “Lurching Around Wildly”

40517 By Kevin Whitelaw usnews.

With Iraqis so alienated from their occupiers, U.S. officials have been projecting an air of near desperation as they continually scramble to devise new policies that will somehow defuse both the festering Sunni insurgency and the challenges posed by an upstart Shiite cleric and his surprisingly persistent militia.

In Fallujah, where U.S. forces had met with fierce resistance in their effort to root out former Saddam loyalists, U.S. marines staged a confused tactical retreat, briefly placing one of Saddam's former generals in charge before being overruled by Washington.

There was similar confusion over how much the Coalition Provisional Authority would relax a year-old rule banning former Baath Party officials from public life (story, Page 36). **"The way CPA operates is by digging itself into rigid positions and then lurching around wildly with policy adjustments," says one State Department official. "Suddenly, everything changes after they are finally backed into a corner."**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

U.S. TO LEAVE IRAQ JUNE 30, RETURN JULY 1 Bush Announces 'Operation Iraqi Re- Freedom'

May 15, 2004 The Borowitz Report

In his weekly radio address, President George W. Bush announced that if the new Iraqi government asks the United States to leave Iraq on June 30 it will do so, but added that it will return to Iraq on July 1, one day later.

Mr. Bush expressed his hope that the U.S.'s one-day absence from Iraq would stir nostalgia for the coalition troops and cause a public groundswell of support for their re-occupation of the country.

Calling the U.S.'s planned July 1 re-invasion of Iraq "Operation Iraqi Re-freedom," Mr. Bush said the troops' return to the Middle Eastern nation would give the Iraqi people a unique chance to "get it right this time."

"Last time we invaded, we were not greeted with flowers," Mr. Bush said. "There are operators standing by at 1-800-FLOWERS even as I speak."

The president also revealed that U.S. forces were currently re-erecting a statue of Saddam Hussein to be re-topped upon their July 1 return.

In other developments in Iraq, Mr. Bush announced that as a goodwill gesture the U.S. would close Abu Ghraib prison and re-open it as a Wal-Mart.

The president pointed out that the prison was an ideal candidate for such a conversion since it already had the facilities necessary to lock in its employees at night as well as an extensive ladies' underwear department.

Mr. Bush concluded his radio address by confirming that he had asked Congress for \$25 billion for Iraq and a books-on-tape version of the Geneva Conventions.

How Many Members Of The Bush Administration Needed To Replace A Lightbulb?

Forwarded by (ZB):

The Answer is SEVEN:

- (1) one to deny that a lightbulb needs to be replaced,
 - (2) one to attack and question the patriotism of anyone who has questions about the lightbulb,
 - (3) one to blame the previous administration for the need of a new lightbulb,
 - (4) one to arrange the invasion of a country rumored to have a secret stockpile of lightbulbs,
 - (5) one to get together with Vice President Cheney and figure out how to pay Halliburton Industries one million dollars for a lightbulb,
 - (6) one to arrange a photo-op session showing Bush changing the lightbulb while dressed in a flight suit and wrapped in an American flag,
 - (7) and finally one to explain to Bush the difference between screwing a lightbulb and screwing the country.
-

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed in Afghanistan Attack

5.16.04 The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan -- Suspected insurgents attacked a coalition combat patrol in southern Afghanistan, killing one American soldier and wounding two, the U.S. military said Sunday.

One "anti-coalition" fighter was detained after the attack Saturday near Girishk, in Helmand province, said Lt. Col. Michele DeWerth.

The two injured U.S. soldiers returned to duty after treatment, she said. She did not identify the soldiers.

CLASS WAR NEWS

Bush Scheme Against Chavez Screws Up



Supporters of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez hold anti-US banners as they march to protest against the presence of Colombian paramilitaries in Caracas, Venezuela, May 16, 2004. **More than 100 Colombian paramilitaries were arrested on a ranch outside Caracas last Sunday, preparing to overthrow Chavez.** (AP Photo/Leslie Mazoch)

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