

GI SPECIAL 2#89

OUR STREETS!



An armed Iraqi boy waves as he poses with his gun in the center of Najaf on Friday. (AP/Khalid Mohammed)

As U.S. Troops Pull Out, Shias Hail Madhi Army Victory: Silly Attempt To Capture Al-Sadr Falls Flat; Two U.S. Soldiers Wounded

5/28/2004 NAJAF, Iraq (AP) & Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive & (Reuters)

Friday, thousands of worshippers and followers of Sadr gathered inside and outside the mosque in Kufa where he normally preaches to show their support for the cleric. Scores of armed militiamen were interspersed among the crowds.

Worshippers converged on the city's gold-domed mosque, hoping to hear al-Sadr speak. Thousands of worshippers - many of whom had traveled from Baghdad, 90 miles to the north - praised him anyway, packing the mosque and its courtyard while chanting "Muqtada is a bridge to heaven!"

Khawla Hassan, 30, sat in the courtyard, waiting in a flowing black robe. She praised the radical cleric for the deal, describing it as a "victory for the master."

"This was a peace agreement," she said. "We all love peace."

Madhi Army soldiers opened fire on a U.S. patrol Friday near the mosque stronghold of a resistance cleric, wounding two American soldiers. The U.S. command in Baghdad said gunmen fired on a U.S. Humvee on a street in Kufa, which adjoins Najaf.

Armed members of Muqtada al-Sadr's militia — some of them masked and brandishing rocket-propelled grenade launchers and Kalashnikov rifles — roamed the streets of Kufa, the city adjacent to Najaf. Most of the shops were closed and the streets were largely deserted. **Other Madhi Army soldiers took positions on the streets of Kufa, squatting beside walls and waiting.**

Mortars fell on the main U.S. garrison in Najaf but caused no injuries.

In Baghdad, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said the incidents in Kufa "would appear to be violations" of the agreement struck the day before to end fighting in the twin cities. **(Duh!)**

However, U.S. spokesman Dan Senor said occupation authorities were still **hopeful the truce would hold. (Desperate is more like it.)**

U.S. forces set up a roadblock on the main street running from Najaf to Kufa, forcing most followers to take backstreets to get to the mosque.

The exchange in Kufa broke out early in the morning when U.S. armored vehicles approached the mosque where al-Sadr usually delivers the noon prayer sermon, an al-Sadr militiaman at the scene told The Associated Press.

The militiamen opened fire, and in the fight that ensued, three militiamen were killed, he said. At one point, U.S. tanks pulled in about 500 yards from the mosque, militiamen said, but they were no longer there later. Al-Sadr never showed up for the noon prayers. **(Unlike the idiot officer who thought he would, and sent the "armored vehicles" to take him—underestimating the opponent again as practiced since day one.)**

Despite the agreement, nine mortar shells hit the main U.S. camp in the Najaf area on Friday morning, according to a CNN correspondent embedded there.

Later Friday, explosions were heard in the Kufa area but it was unclear what caused them. U.S. forces blocked the highways leading to the city.

MORE:

Sistani Tells Occupation Take The Deal Or Else: General Kimmitt Says He Hopes It Will Turn Out Like Fallujah (!); Al-Sadr To Have “Political Role” In “New Iraq”

PBS 5.27.04 & 5/28/2004 NAJAF, Iraq (AP) & Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive

PBS Newshour 5.27 announced the following terms for the truce between Al-Sadr and the U.S. Occupation, which the PBS reporter in Baghdad says was “forced on the U.S. by the Shia leadership”:

1. **The arrest warrant for Al-Sadr is “suspended.”** Whatever “new” Iraqi government takes over June 30 will decide what to do about the arrest warrant. Occupation headquarters said this was a decision of the “Iraqi Government.”

Bullshit. There is no Iraqi government. The decision was made by the Occupation Command. So much for all the chest-beating rhetoric from Empty Suit Abizaid about how U.S. forces will “kill or capture” al-Sadr that the U.S. Command has been blathering for six weeks.

And as for the “non-negotiable demand” that the Madhi Army “disband?”

2. **Madhi Army soldiers keep their arms. All of them.**

3. **Madhi Army soldiers can stay in whatever town they’re in.** They agree not to march around the streets too much. There will be “discussions” with the Shia leadership about the future of the Madhi Army. **(Wow!)**

4. **The US forces get out of the Shia cities.**

AP Reports: on Thursday, Shiite leaders announced a deal with al-Sadr to halt the fighting between U.S. troops and his militia, the al-Mahdi Army. The U.S.-led coalition said it was not a party to the agreement but would suspend offensive operations. **(That’s the truth. PBS reports Sistani told the Occupation the deal was done, so take it or totally piss off every Shia in Iraq.)**

The truce deal announced Thursday provides the Americans a way out of a standoff that threatened to alienate Iraq’s Shiite Muslim majority. But U.S. demands

for al-Sadr's arrest and disbanding his militia were unmet — and the deal opens the door for a political role for al-Sadr, a figure President Bush has branded a "thug."

As Occupation Forces Pull Back-----

WHOSE STREETS?



An Iraqi armed militiaman takes up position in the center of Najaf on Friday after American tanks charged into the center of the Iraqi city. (AP/Hadi Mizban)

OUR STREETS!!



Iraqi Shia children celebrate with burning street barricades against U.S. troops at the entrance to the Shia suburb of Sadr City, Baghdad. (AP/Karim Kadim)

The Wall St. Journal reported that “Mouwafak al-Rubaie, Iraq’s national security advisor, said it was even feasible that Mr. Sadr would seek a political role in the new Iraq.”

The Wall St. Journal 5.28 pointed out the bitter truth:

“The U.S. course in Najaf—failed negotiations, military offensive, suspension of attacks and then the involving of locals to resume negotiations—echoed that used in the city of Fallujah last month, when Marines pulled out after several weeks of fierce fighting with insurgents and then tribal chieftains stepped in to calm the insurgency.”

“The Fallujah negotiations ended gun battles, but so far they haven’t yielded the crucial results that U.S. officials had hoped for.” There has been no disarmament of insurgents...” and no handover of suspects responsible for the fighting that killed four armed American mercenaries in downtown Fallujah.

“But Gen. Mark Kimmitt, the coalition’s spokesman in Iraq, said the Fallujah cease-fire ‘has held since May 3. We’re hoping to the same thing in Najaf.’”

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

What “thunderous explosions?” How many wounded soldiers?

Who knows---

The story wasn’t reported!



U.S. Army soldiers rush to evacuate an injured comrade in the center of Baghdad after thunderous explosions at the capital, Tuesday. (AP/Muhammed Muheisen)

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/>

Bodies Identified As Japanese

May 28, 2004 By AUDREY McAVOY, ASSOCIATED PRESS & (Xinhuanet)

A car carrying two Japanese journalists in Iraq burst into flames, Japan's Foreign Ministry said Friday. Two bodies were found at the scene, and hospital officials identified them as Japanese.

The bodies have not been positively identified as the missing freelance journalists, Shinsuke Hashida, 61, and his nephew, Kotaro Ogawa, 33, said Yu Kameoka, a spokesman for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Hashida and Ogawa visited the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force's camp in Samawah on Thursday morning local time to pick up a press card Hashida had applied for and headed back toward Baghdad in the early afternoon, Defense Agency Director General Shigeru Ishiba said Friday noon at a news conference in Tokyo.

The attack happened late Thursday about 20 miles south of Baghdad while **the journalists were on their way to Baghdad from the southern city of Samawah, where Japan has deployed hundreds of troops, a Japanese Foreign Ministry statement said.** The driver was treated for injuries at a hospital near Baghdad, it said.

In the suburb of Mahmoudiya, about 30 kilometers south of Baghdad, the vehicle was attacked and burst into flames, Ishiba said.

The driver escaped from the vehicle before it exploded, was taken to hospital and asked his uncle to go to the Japanese Embassy in Baghdad to inform it about the incident, according to the official.

The two Japanese were in the second car of a two-car team and the driver of the first vehicle reported the attack to the Japanese Embassy, Kyodo said, quoting the driver that an unidentified car followed their cars and attacked from behind.

The attack follows the kidnapping of five Japanese civilians by armed militants in Iraq in April. **Some of the kidnappers threatened to kill their captives unless Japan withdrew its troops. The government refused.**

Japan has dispatched more than 500 soldiers to Samawah in southern Iraq and hundreds more naval and air force troops to the surrounding region on a humanitarian mission in support of the U.S.-led coalition.

Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Friday that the incident would not affect Japan's troop deployment.

"We have not judged, at this time, that this incident will have an impact on the activities of the Self-Defense Forces," Ishiba said at a news conference.

"We ask everyone - including journalists - to think about their own safety and personal responsibility," lawmaker Jiro Kawasaki said. **"We've repeatedly asked people to leave Iraq because of the situation there. We again ask that media representatives leave the country." (How about getting the Japanese soldiers "to leave Iraq because of the situation there"? This would likely produce fewer dead Japanese.)**

Three Dutch Soldiers Injured In Attack

28 May 2004 Expatica Communications BV

AMSTERDAM — A Dutch patrol in Iraq came under fire on Friday morning, injuring three soldiers. Two of the wounded were airlifted by helicopter to the hospital at Camp Smitty in the southern city As Samawah.

The vehicle in which the troops were travelling in was not hit in the attack, but it swerved from the road, resulting in the troops' injuries. The Dutch were on patrol between As Samawah and Al Khidr.

Dutch peacekeeping troops in Iraq have frequently come under attack in recent weeks. Bases have been the targets of attacks with various explosives and Sergeant Dave Steensma was killed in a hand grenade attack on 10 May

The Cabinet is currently considering whether to extend the peacekeeping mission until after the 30 June transfer of power to Iraqi authorities.

Marines In Charge Of Nothing Much In Falluja

5.28.04 Associated Press

The resistance released three veteran NBC journalists and an Iraqi freelancer Friday, three days after the group was captured in Fallujah, NBC said in a statement.

The statement said local Iraqi leaders helped mediate with "armed Iraqis," who let the reporters go "after their identities as working journalists became clear."

The group's Tuesday capture was never announced for security reasons, NBC said.

In a statement Friday, the **U.S. Marines, who are in charge of security in the Fallujah area, said the crew was "apprised of the situation and advised not to attempt access to the city."** (Correction: "U.S. Marines, who are not in charge of anything at all in the Falluja area..." obviously had nothing to say about what happened, and nothing to do with how it turned out. If the resistance had captured armed mercenaries again, they would be dead again, just like last time. Falluja is free territory.)

"The crew's decision to enter the city was irresponsible," the Marine statement said. "Luckily, it did not cost them or anyone else their lives."

Abu Ghraib Prisoner Guards Return Fire After Not Being Fired Upon; Families Block Roads, Take Prisoners Home



Holding an Iraqi resistance flag he had concealed while in Abu Ghraib prison, a freed Iraqi waves from a bus as released prisoners are escorted to freedom. (AP/Anja Niedringhaus)

5/28/2004 NAJAF, Iraq (AP)

U.S. troops escorting a convoy of inmates released from the Abu Ghraib prison opened fire, apparently thinking they had been fired upon. An AP reporter at the scene saw no casualties.

Gen. Kimmitt said further investigation showed the gunfire was simply in celebration of the release — the third since the scandal broke over the abuse of detainees last month.

The firing at Abu Ghraib took place after U.S. forces in Bradley fighting vehicles halted the convoy of buses with the freed detainees. Hundreds of relatives parked their cars, blocking traffic in both directions, and rushed the buses to find their loved ones.

Many relatives ignored warnings from the U.S. troops who pointed their rifles and yelled at them to stay back.

In previous releases, detainees were escorted all the way to their hometowns. On Friday, detainees headed for Baghdad got out of the bus and left in the hundreds of cars that had raced after the buses out of the prison gates.

Most of the buses continued on to destinations including Tikrit, Baquoba and Kirkuk.

TROOP NEWS

REMEMBER THE DEAD & FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

New York City MEMORIAL DAY Commemoration for Peace

This year Memorial Day takes on an especially painful meaning as the violence and bloodshed in Iraq continues, claiming the lives of increasing numbers of US soldiers and Iraqi citizens daily.

Join with veterans, military families, 9/11 families and supporters to remember those we've lost and to call for an end to the occupation and the safe return of our troops to their homes.

On Sunday May 30 we will gather at the NYC Vietnam Veterans Memorial in downtown Manhattan for a short service.

From there we will hold a solemn procession to the Battery Park waterfront where people can remember those lost and cast a flower in the water in their memory.

All are welcomed.

**SUNDAY MAY 30th AT 2:00 PM
NYC VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL
55 Water Street (2 blocks from the Staten Island Ferry)
Take #1 or 9 subway to South Ferry and walk east on Water Street**

**Sponsored by
Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War,
Military Families Speak Out, 9-11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows**

For more info call 718-805-6341 or 201-876-0430

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/>

Member Of 706th Injured By Mine

May 13, 2004 News Journal (Ohio)

AKRON — An Ohio soldier seriously injured in Iraq when a land mine exploded was in a medically-induced coma at a Baghdad hospital, family members said.

Doctors were trying to stabilize Jessica Clements, 27, of Coventry Township, so she can return to the United States for further treatment.

Clements, an Army staff sergeant with the 706th Transportation Company based in Mansfield, suffered injuries to her head, hip, back and buttocks after the fuel tanker she was driving rolled over the mine last Wednesday, said her stepfather, Christopher Wyatt.

About 170 men and women of the 706th left on Dec. 10, 2003, for training at Fort Campbell, Ky., before being deployed to Iraq. Capt. Carlos R. Rodriguez, company commander, said at the time the unit would be away for 18 months.

The family was told Tuesday she showed signs of emerging from the coma and was able to move her legs and right arm in response to commands, boyfriend Greg Ramos said.

Before Tuesday, reports of Clements' condition were grim, Wyatt said.

"It was devastating. I could not believe this happened to my child," he said. "You always believe it just wasn't going to happen."

If her condition improves, she could be transferred to Germany and eventually to a hospital in Washington, D.C.

Clements joined the Army reserves nine years ago.

EHS Grad Recovering From Wounds

May 26, 2004 By LIONEL TIPTON, Times Staff Writer, The El Dorado Times

In the days following Dec. 15 of last year, Teresa Walker said, she, her husband and her mother were all recalling the "uneasy feeling" they had during the week leading up to that date.

It was a feeling, she said, that something might happen to her son - a feeling amplified by her son's letters home about the days of open fire he and his unit had been coming under.

It was a call from her daughter-in-law, Walker said, which confirmed the fears she and her family had been experiencing. That call brought her the news her son had been critically injured in Baghdad.

Sgt. Keith R. Walker, son of John and Teresa (Sullivan) Walker of El Dorado and a 1999 graduate of El Dorado High School, suffered injuries during a Dec. 15 grenade attack which occurred in Baghdad as part of an insurgent rally.

Five other soldiers were injured when their company tried to contain the crowd.

Walker had to have one finger amputated and two other re-attached as a result of the injuries he suffered in the attack.

Walker is a military policeman assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division's 549th Military Police Company.

According to information provided by him and his family, on the night of Dec. 15 he and his company were patrolling downtown Baghdad when they responded to an overwhelming crowd at an Iraqi police station.

After taking enemy insurgent fire from Ak-47 weapons and hand and remote-propelled grenades, Walker said, he and his company were able to engage the insurgents and decisively overwhelm them.

However, he and his fellow soldiers were injured as they were trying to aid injured Iraqi wounded.

Two hand grenades were thrown by insurgents who were in the building behind them. While there were no deaths, Walker related, his right middle finger had to be amputated and two other fingers were re-attached.

Tendons in his hand and wrist had to be repaired, he said, and dozens of pieces of shrapnel removed from his arms and lower extremities. In all, he said, x-rays counted 36 pieces of metal entering his body.

Teresa Walker said she and her family were "stunned" when they first learned her son had been wounded.

New Portland Soldier Survives Shots To Head

May 28, 2004 By Jodi Hausen, Staff Writer, Lewiston Sun Journal

Three bullets burrowed into the helmet of Army Cpl. Joshua Handrahan during an ambush in Iraq.

Another bullet lodged in his head.

The Mount Abram High School graduate lived to tell his family and friends about it during a hero's welcome last weekend in New Portland.

On April 14, Handrahan was on a "battalion-sized" mission in Fallujah to raid three houses where insurgents were known to be located. His unit, traveling in a 5-ton truck, was ambushed by roadside machine gunfire.

"We thought we had taken out the objective," he said, "but we were lit up by machine gunfire from a nearby bunker," he said, recalling the incident.

He felt something hit him in the head and knew he'd been shot when he felt the blood. He said he continued to fight until the battle was over.

He credits his Kevlar helmet with saving his life.

He and other wounded soldiers were taken to Baghdad where he underwent surgery to remove a bullet that had grazed his skull but was only skin deep. He also was hit in his right thumb.

Handrahan's parents, Terry and Maynard Handrahan, received a telephone call at 8:15 p.m. on the day their son was shot. The extent of his injuries was unknown then. Later that evening, they heard he had been shot in the head.

"I had so much adrenaline going," his mother said. "If I smoked, I would have." Neither of his parents slept that night.

At about 2 a.m., they heard their son's voice. He said, "I'm good to go; a little messed up, but good to go."

"I knew he was talking and breathing," said his mother of that call, but neither she nor her husband were truly satisfied until they were reunited with him at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

The hardy, soft-spoken soldier downplays his war experiences. He said he was in no pain after the April incident and that he and his fellow soldiers "made fun of each other" while awaiting medical attention.

Reflecting on his decision to join the armed forces, Handrahan says he was not surprised by the gunfire he experienced, but he didn't expect to be injured.

"It was our job (to go to war)," he said, "I knew I was going to get shot at. It was just a bad night, that's all."

"Those guardian angels up there should be paid overtime," his mother said.

Near-death experiences were not unprecedented for the resilient 21-year-old.

In February, a 155-mm explosive device was remotely detonated under the Humvee he and four others were traveling in Ramadi, Iraq. No one was seriously injured, though Handrahan has shrapnel scars on his right arm from the encounter. The bomb had been buried under a pile of trash in the road.

Handrahan will spend a few days at home before going to Fort Riley, Kan., where he will receive treatment for his thumb. Soon to be promoted to sergeant, he plans to return to service once he is cleared to do so.

Handrahan says he learned a couple of things from his war experiences.

"I don't take anything for granted anymore," he said. "And, I learned to duck."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

That Fallujah Spirit: "Dispatches From The Scene Of A Political Disaster"

June 10, 2004 From Review By Mark Danner. New York Review of Books of the Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade (The Taguba Report) by Major General Antonio M. Taguba

Last November in Iraq, I traveled to Fallujah during the early days of what would become known as the "Ramadan Offensive"--when suicide bombers in the space of less than an hour destroyed the Red Cross headquarters and four police stations, and

daily attacks by insurgents against US troops doubled, and the American adventure in Iraq entered a bleak tunnel from which it has yet to emerge. **I inquired of a young man there why the people of that city were attacking Americans more frequently each day. How many of the attacks, I wanted to know, were carried out by foreign fighters? How many by local Islamists? And how many by what US officers called "FRL's"-- former regime loyalists?**

The young man--I'll call him Salih --listened, answered patiently in his limited but eloquent English, but soon became impatient with what he plainly saw as my American obsession with categories and particulars. **Finally he interrupted my litany of questions, pushed his face close to mine, and spoke to me slowly and emphatically:**

For Fallujans it is a shame to have foreigners break down their doors. It is a shame for them to have foreigners stop and search their women. It is a shame for the foreigners to put a bag over their heads, to make a man lie on the ground with your shoe on his neck. This is a great shame, you understand? This is a great shame for the whole tribe.

It is the duty of that man, and of that tribe, to get revenge on this soldier--to kill that man. Their duty is to attack them, to wash the shame. The shame is a stain, a dirty thing; they have to wash it. No sleep--we cannot sleep until we have revenge. They have to kill soldiers.

He leaned back and looked at me, then tried one more time. "The Americans," he said, "provoke the people. They don't respect the people."

I thought of Salih and his impatience as I paged through the reports of General Taguba and the Red Cross, for they treat not just of "abuses" or "atrocities" but the entire American "liberation" of Iraq and how it has gone wrong; they are dispatches from the scene of a political disaster.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Lies We Are Told

Mark Steel The Independent, UK 5/04

There's a charmingly off-key, surreal logic to the line coming from the British establishment, that any repercussions from torturing people are the Daily Mirror's fault for telling us it happened. For example, this Colonel Black says, "The decision to publish has played right into the hands of the insurgents. There will be more people prepared to kill the troops." So it's not torturing that annoys people, it's showing photos.

Perhaps the people who've been tortured will scream, "Oh my God they've shown my worst side. I told them my left profile always makes me look chubby when there's a sack on my head. Now I'm really annoyed."

Whatever the origins of the photos, none of the figures condemning them seem to dispute that torture is taking place. So the idea must be that the Iraqis would never have known we were torturing them if it wasn't in the newspapers. They'd think "There is a sharp buzzing in my left testicle consistent with the pain experienced following primitive torture techniques, but there must be some other explanation because I've looked in the Daily Mirror and there's nothing about it at all."

The Americans are probably regretting they didn't try a similar tactic, ignoring the issue of torture and contesting the validity of the pictures. They could have claimed it was a fashion shoot, and originally there was a caption underneath that said, "Black cape, chiffon, \$ 199.95 from Miss Selfridge - leads, \$ 79.95 the pair from Prada (also available in pink or khaki)." Or they were merely passing the time with the traditional game of "pin the electrode on the donkey", and the Iraqi had never played before so he lost his bearings and clipped the wires to his own nuts.

The frustrating thing for people who run the world's armies is that this sort of thing keeps happening. The investigation into the My Lai massacre found that hundreds of Vietnamese civilians were murdered, as GIs shouted "Hey, I got another one" and "Chalk one up for me." Following the Falklands War, a corporal in the Parachute Regiment revealed how his colleagues had bayoneted unarmed prisoners and cut off their ears as trophies, and there are similar examples after every war.

So maybe someone should work out whether there's a pattern here. If it was discovered that every week a dustman had locked a couple of residents in a wheelie-bin and administered electric shocks to their rectum, local authorities might ponder whether the problem wasn't just the individuals but something in the nature of the job.

This is one reason why the pleas from people who support the occupation on the grounds that it will help the Iraqis appear increasingly tragic. They implore the Americans to be democratic and truthful and not to electrocute people, in case they spoil the good work done in overthrowing Saddam. But the Americans didn't overthrow Saddam to create a nicer Iraq, they wanted to secure a Middle-East that served their own interests.

As with most military occupations, the true motives become increasingly evident as time goes on. At first, when the Americans were full of promises, surveys suggested most Iraqis supported the US presence, just as Catholic areas of Northern Ireland greeted the arrival of British troops in 1969 by offering them cups of tea. But military occupations almost inevitably lead to the majority of the population being seen as a threat, and eventually as sub-human, who it would be a laugh to photograph wearing a black cape and jump leads.

So surveys now suggest most Iraqis would rather the invasion hadn't happened. Maybe that was part of the thinking behind killing hundreds of civilians in Fallujah. They saw they were 3 per cent behind in the polls, and figured if they wiped out the right 3 per cent they'd be back on level pegging.

It also suggests few Iraqis will believe the statement that the occupation forces will "leave no stone unturned" in rooting out the torture. Because during the invasion, the instant response whenever a missile killed a pile of civilians was to suggest that Saddam had done it himself to make the Americans look bad. Perhaps this investigation will go the same way. Donald Rumsfeld will announce that having looked into the matter, it turns out that for propaganda purposes, the Iraqis have set up a self-electrocution torture chamber in a photo booth in Woolworths.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Missing Kiwi Was In US Gulag For Three Months

5.25.05 Antiwar.com (NZ)

A New Zealander whom authorities here feared had gone missing in Iraq was held incommunicado in United States Army custody for three months of interrogations, the New Zealand Herald says.

Software developer Andreas Schafer, 26, vanished in March, sparking high-level inquiries by New Zealand with US authorities that repeatedly denied knowledge of him.

The Herald says it has contacted Mr Schafer in Amman, Jordan, where he said Iraqi police in Diwaniya, south of Baghdad, had initially detained him in early March and they handed him to the United States.

"I was then held for nearly three months and interrogated by the US Army on several occasions," he told the Herald in an email.

"Each time they questioned me they said it was the first they had heard I was being detained and that the investigation was starting from the beginning."

The report added that Mr Schafer was released a week after the British Consul got involved.

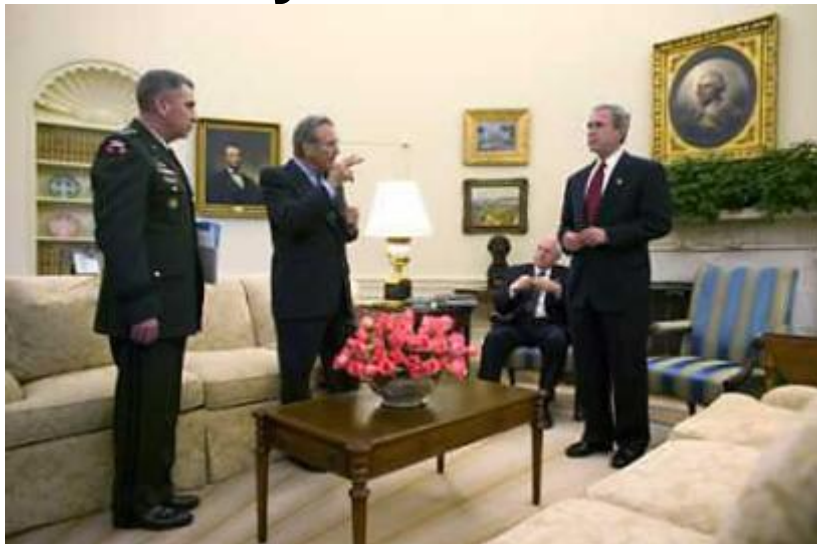
Mr Schafer had been working on software in Afghanistan for non-government organisations and had decided to go to Iraq early this year to continue the same work.

The US embassy in New Zealand, which had denied knowledge of Mr Schafer, has not commented on the latest report.

Every time you think the US has plumbed the depths of stupidity and arrogant incompetence in Iraq, you find you've underestimated them.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Crime Family Chiefs Meet In D.C.



Bush and his counselor Richard “Bunkers” Cheney meet with Donald “Donny Ducks” Rumsfeld in the White House Oval Office, May 20. **In a desperate effort to save his job, Rumsfeld flashes gang signs, but Bush refuses to respond.** (Eric Draper, The White House/Reuters)

(For more see the article “Bush’s Recycled Lies” at www.socialistworker.org.)

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