

GI SPECIAL 2#90



Soldier-Killer Kerry Wants 40,000 More Troops For Empire “For A Decade”

May 28 (Bloomberg)

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry called for increasing the U.S. military by 40,000 troops, probably for a decade, in order “to match its new missions.” (And don’t forget Kerry’s call for “battlefield victory” in Iraq. That bloodthirsty idiocy should kill off thousands more.)

Half of the 40,000 troops Kerry is calling for would be used as military police and for civil affairs, tasks now mainly carried out by reservists, while the other 20,000 would be combat troops, according to Kerry's campaign.

52% Say Iraq War Not Worth It

May 28 (Bloomberg)

In a Gallup poll this week, 52 percent of those surveyed said the war in Iraq wasn't worth it while 45 percent said they believed that it was. A year ago, 68 percent said they supported the war and 29 percent said it wasn't worth it.

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:

Madhi Army Controls Kufa

May 29, 2004 By MARIAM FAM, Associated Press Writer, KUFA, Iraq

U.S. soldiers and fighters loyal to a radical Shiite cleric exchanged gunfire here on Saturday.

Explosions could be heard near Kufa's main mosque, where members of Muqtada al-Sadr's militia had taken up positions. Militia members accused U.S. troops of provoking the gunfight by approaching the city center.

The main road leading to Kufa was blocked by tires and concrete blocks, forcing cars to take back roads into the city. Members of al-Sadr's militia, the al-Mahdi Army, set up checkpoints and roamed the streets around the mosque carrying Kalashnikovs and rocket-propelled grenades.

Najaf's governor, Adnan al-Zurufi complained that "**Armed men are filling the streets and there have been number of attacks on state employees in Kufa.**" (Translation: "State employees" = Occupation collaborators.)

Three Iraqis were reported injured in the exchanges on Saturday. At Kufa's Furat al-Awsat hospital, Ali Moussa, 22, was among those treated for shrapnel wounds. His head was wrapped in a bandage and his black T-shirt was soaked in blood.

"I was walking down the street and they started attacking people," he said of the Americans. "They say there is a truce. Where is this truce?"

Najaf Truce “Major Concession” By U.S.: Madhi Army Arrests Assassin



Iraqis celebrate in the center of Najaf May 28, 2004. The U.S.-led coalition agreed Thursday to suspend offensive military operations in Najaf. **Sadr's followers accused U.S. forces of bad faith by trying to capture their leader and his Mehdi Army fighters returned in force to the streets of Najaf** (Zohra Bensemra/Reuters)

May 28, 2004 By EDWARD WONG, The New York Times

The agreement reached on Thursday appeared to be a major concession to Mr. Sadr, whom American commanders said in April they intended to "kill or capture."

The agreement also did not require Mr. Sadr to surrender himself to any kind of authority, even though an Iraqi judge had issued an arrest warrant for him in relation to the murder last April of an American-backed cleric.

Today, Dan Senor, an occupation spokesman, insisted that the Americans still wanted to see Mr. Sadr disband his militia and turn himself in.

But when asked at a news conference how the Americans intended to disband Mr. Sadr's militia given the fact that occupation officials have failed so far to disassemble other major militias, neither Mr. Senor nor General Kimmitt had a direct answer.

The general simply said that illegal militias "will be responded to appropriately."

General Martin E. Dempsey, commander of the First Armored Division, has suggested hiring members of the Mahdi Army into the Iraqi police forces or the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, a national militia. If this were to happen, then the solution would echo the compromise that the Americans made during the siege of Falluja last month, when they turned over control of the city to a militia partly composed of the very Sunni Arab insurgents they were fighting.

In Najaf, a prominent cleric linked to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, an influential Shiite party, gave a sermon at the golden-domed Shrine of Ali in which he told followers that the two main problems in Iraq were the occupation and the presence of terrorism and chaos.

"Because America is not going to give you your rights while you stay at home, you have to show yourself and step forward," said the cleric, Sadr al-Din al-Kubanchi.

Gunmen opened fire on a car carrying Mr. Kubanchi after the sermon, but he escaped injury. **Members of the Mahdi Army arrested a man believed to be one of the attackers.**

Sheik Hussam al-Mosawi, a spokesman for the Mahdi Army, said the militia still intended to honor the truce despite the renewed fighting. He added that the Americans violated the ceasefire by shooting first today. "We shoot back if the Americans start firing," he said.

Celebration Time In Najaf



Madhi Army resistance fighters in front of Najaf's Imam Ali shrine. (Ali Abu Shish/Reuters)

Mortar Lands Near U.S. HQ, Four Wounded

May 29, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

A mortar landed about 400 meters from the headquarters of the U.S.-led administration in central Baghdad on Saturday wounding four people, one of them seriously, Iraqi police said.

The four wounded were employees queuing up at a security checkpoint to get into the Iraqi Housing Ministry, a police officer said. U.S. military had no immediate comment. **Insurgents regularly attack the U.S. headquarters, known as the "Green Zone" with mortars.**

Radio Contact Failing

May 28, 2004 By Ze'ev Schiff, Haaretz

Traffic on Iraqi roads between the various cities is less secure. **The radio contact maintained by U.S. Army forces among various centers is frequently defective.**

If the Americans shut themselves into camps after the establishment of an Iraqi government, the areas between the cities and the camps will remain in the hands of the rebels. Such deterioration is reminiscent of the situation of the French at a certain stage in Indochina.

Six Australian Soldiers Injured In Crash

May 29, 2004 Australian Broadcasting System

Six Australian soldiers were injured when their armored vehicle crashed in Iraq. The troops were treated for lacerations and minor injuries.

The soldiers were part of a convoy and the light armored vehicle crashed 10 kilometres north-west of Baghdad.

The troops from the Darwin-based 1st Brigade are members of the Security Detachment, which protects Australian diplomats in the Iraqi capital.

A car bomb exploded near the detachment's base on Tuesday but there were no Australian casualties.

TROOP NEWS

A Letter From The Heart

From: Pansy Patricia (Mother Of Soldier)

To: GI Special

Sent:, May 25, 2004 1:37 PM

Hello Thomas,

I know it has been a long time since we talked so I just wanted to do a little catching up with you.

I hope you have been okay & not too Busy (yeah right). I wanted to tell you a story & say **Thank you for your news letter & KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.**

Thomas I read a letter in your news letter from a lady, Pat Gunn who was speaking out about her son, Jason Gunn whom was injured in Iraq. Jason is with the 1st Armored division as is my son, Ronnie Scott.

<p>(Jason Gunn was forced to go back to Iraq from a hospital in Germany despite official Army doctors saying he was NOT fit for duty.)</p>

Well, get ready because this is going to be a long story in which you can print with all our names.

Something told me to E mail Pat Gunn. All I thought was, that could have been my Ronnie. I emailed her telling her about Ronnie being in the same unit as her son. I told her how sorry I was about Jason getting hurt & if there was anything I could do to let me know.

We started communicating by email on many occasions to comfort each other. We exchanged pictures of our son's. She e mailed me back & said I have something for you to read Pansy from Jason. Thomas when I read Jason's e mail to his Mom I almost died. Pat by the way is from Philadelphia & as you well know I am in Texas.

Jason's email said Mom you won't believe this but Ronnie Scott is in the next tent to mine. He said Mom he is a very good guy. He is also a very good friend of mine. We could not believe this. You know Gods works in mysterious ways & we believe he brought us together for a reason.

As time went on we kept communicating with each other. We exchanged phone numbers & have talked on a weekly basis. **Then I get this call that Ronnie was had hurt his leg in Iraq & was sent back to Germany.**

I immediately emailed Pat about Ronnie. She & I was on the phone constantly with each other. Pat has given me so much information on what to do in a situation as this because her & her husband Jerome had gone to Germany when Jason got hurt. Ronnie's injury was not life threatening & they will be doing surgery on him sometime in June in Germany. I am thankful that Ronnie injury was not worse.

WE WERE LUCKY as some were not.

[Before Ronnie was wounded] One morning my husband got up to check E mails & he said you have an instant message from Ronnie.

Well, much to my surprise it said I am in the states on business here is my number, please call me. Thomas I looked at that area code & said it is the same as Pat's. I did not know what was wrong.

So I called Ronnie.

He was in Philly escorting his best friend & gunner, Sgt. Brud J. Cronkite who had gotten killed back to California to his family for burial.

I gave the phone to my husband & I called Pat from my cell & said Pat are you sitting she said YES, well Ronnie is in Philly can you believe that. Pat said for what & I explained to her the situation. She said I am only minutes from him & left work. She went immediately to Ronnie bringing him good old USA food, a hamburger with fries. He was so glad.

Ronnie & Pat were so glad to meet each other, Pat being Jason's mom & Pat being there for me as a Mom since I could not be there.

She told Ronnie that her & Jerome were going to pick him up that night to take him to get him something to eat. The co-workers that Pat work's with, were giving her money to help Ronnie out & to say THANK YOU for all the hard work that the soldiers have done & are doing in Iraq for the American people. I cried, she cried & we all cried.

That night Pat & Jerome took Ronnie to Outback steak house for a steak. Pat asked Ronnie when was the last time you had an American cooked steak?

He said 2 years. Pat said Pansy he savored every bite that he ate. We just laughed.

So you see Thomas I always told my children going up, "Out of something bad comes something good".

This is true to this case.

I hated that Ronnie had to make such an awful Journey as this one, but I know Sgt Brud Cronkite would have wanted it this way & Ronnie would not have it any other way. It is the **"Brotherly"** thing to do, since he thought of Brud that way.

As far as Pat & I go we will be friends sight unseen in our hearts bonded forever, even if we never meet each other.

I would like to take this opportunity to say, **Thank You Pat & Jerome for being there for my son when I could not be there. I cannot ever say thank you enough.**

Thank you God for putting Pat in my life.

My prayers continue daily for her son, Jason & all others in Iraq. I just hope & pray that this war is over soon so we can all be together once again.

Pat is a spokes person speaking LOUD & STRONG for our soldiers overseas. She is doing a great job & may God continue to give her the strength to continue until all our soldiers are brought home.

Thank you Thomas for your news letter. It has done more good than you will ever know.

As always in my heart, thoughts & prayers

Pansy

Army Caught Faking Story About Tillman Death; No Enemy Forces Were Present

5.29.04 By JAY COHEN, Associated Press Writer, FORT BRAGG, N.C.

According to an Army investigation, Tillman was shot to death on April 22 after the friendly Afghan soldier in Tillman's unit was mistakenly fired upon, and other U.S. soldiers then fired in the same direction.

"While there was no one specific finding of fault, the investigation results indicate that **Cpl. Tillman probably died as a result of friendly fire while his unit was engaged in combat with enemy forces,**" Lt. Gen. Philip R. Kensinger Jr. said in a brief statement to reporters at the Army Special Operations Command.

But an Afghan military official told The Associated Press on Saturday that Tillman died because of a "misunderstanding" when two mixed groups of American and Afghan soldiers began firing wildly in the confusion following a land mine explosion.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the Afghan official said, "(There) were no enemy forces" present when Tillman died.

Prior to Saturday, the Army's most complete account of Tillman's death came in his Silver Star citation, which said he was killed after his platoon split into two sections for what officials called a ground assault convoy. Tillman was in charge of the lead group. **When the trailing group came under mortar and small arms fire, the Army said Tillman ordered his team to return.**

"Through the firing, Tillman's voice was heard issuing fire commands to take the fight to the enemy on the dominating high ground," the citation said. "Only after his team engaged the well-armed enemy did it appear their fires diminished." (They just made all this bullshit up out of thin air!)

The Afghan official gave the AP a differing account.

"It was a misunderstanding and afterwards they realized that it was a mine that had exploded *and there were no enemy forces.*"

Missing Guardsman Found Dead In Nassau Woods

May 29, 2004 News 4 Jax

A missing National Guardsman just home from Iraq was found dead Friday.

Ponte Vedra resident Jason Bonts, 25, had not been seen since May 19 -- about one week after returning for deployment.

A work crew in Nassau County found Bonts' pick up truck in the woods just off County Road 108 near Hilliard. Deputies then discovered his body nearby.

Friends and family had mounted an all-out search, concerned because Bonts left home without medication he's supposed to take everyday. ***They said he has been depressed since coming home from Iraq, and they were more worried about him now than when he was deployed.***

An autopsy will be performed to determine how Bonts died.



Army Rape Survivor Treated Like Shit

5.31.04

Letter To The Editor, Army Times

I would like to offer advice to fellow leaders regarding sexual assault from the standpoint of both a victim and leader.

I must advise victims to report a crime if they seek justice, but I believe they should be aware of the treatment they may receive within their chain of command.

I am one who regrets reporting my assault. My assailant was a non-American soldier. Initially, my chain was fantastic and I was treated well, but **after I returned from deployment, I found myself constantly running into stone doors.**

A victimized military dependent has many forms of aid available and receives medical follow-ups with privacy and dignity. **I had a hard time getting an initial exam and couldn't be tested for disease at the time.**

I was advised that sick call would help, but that meant explaining, in front of others waiting at sick call, that I had been assaulted.

Legal follow-up has been such a runaround; I may as well post a billboard that I was raped.

There are no military advocates available to guide us through the process of recovery. In essence, my rape recovery has been a do-it-yourself project. I am a seasoned and resourceful senior NCO and paratrooper. I figured out the hard way that to get medical care or find out about my case, I had to get used to telling strangers what happened, again and again.

I wanted to stay in country and continue my mission after the assault, and I worked very hard to show I was OK, even though I had nightmares and lacked sleep. I also had a great mistrust of everyone around me, but I hid it.

Leaders need to not let their victim-soldiers founder on their own after their rapes. Someone should guide them to medical care, through legal procedures and through counseling. In other words, someone needs to be a victims' advocate.

Victims still can be great soldiers, but continued victimization after the rape is demoralizing.

My leader book now will contain a list on resources for sexual-assault victims, in case any of my soldiers goes through this. **I know, as a leader, it is right to report a sexual assault, but as a victim, I regret doing so. No soldier should ever feel that way, be they male, female, enlisted or officer.**

Sgt. 1st Class Laurie Emmer
Fort Bragg, N.C.

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/>

Witless Clowns In Command

May 28, 2004 by David Leigh, Guardian/UK

The horrors of American military conduct are being documented every day.

But one aspect of the leaked US report into prison abuse in Iraq has been little noticed. General Taguba, head of the investigation, painted a picture of an army which can be not only brutal, but is also riddled with incompetence.

Some of the details in his dossier read dismayingly like a chapter from Catch-22, Joseph Heller's second world war black comedy about the lunatics and shysters who held men's lives in their hands at a fictional military base.

What is one to make, for example, of the way Captain Leo Merck is said to have behaved? **Captain Merck, in charge of a military police unit, is alleged to have spent his time in Iraq taking "nude pictures of female soldiers without their knowledge".**

His colleague, **Captain Damaris Morales, is ticked off for failing to train his troops. One of them proved unable, it is alleged, to get out of his vehicle without accidentally letting off his M-16 rifle. Taguba dryly notes: "Round went into fuel tank."**

The commanders were at each other's throats. General Janis Karpinski was barely on speaking terms with Colonel Thomas Pappas from military intelligence, who had ousted her from control of the Abu Ghraib cells. "There was clear friction and lack of effective communication," says Taguba. "No clear delineation of responsibility between commands, little coordination at the command level."

He found General Karpinski was disturbed, he said, and that she seemed unwilling to accept that any problems were caused by poor leadership. **She claimed she visited the prison regularly but did not do so, and saw very little of her individual soldiers. Battalion commander Jerry Phillabaum was "extremely ineffective". His unit had to be run day-to-day by the major below him, as "numerous witnesses confirm", but he was allowed to continue nominally in charge.**

The general's two staff officers, Major Hinzman and Major Green, were "essentially dysfunctional". Despite complaints from demoralized colleagues, they stayed in post. The legal officer, judge advocate Lt Col James O'Hare, "appears to lack initiative and was unwilling to accept responsibility for any of his actions".

It was, perhaps, unsurprising that armed soldiers wandered round the prison in civilian clothes; that logbooks were filled with "unprofessional entries and flippant comments"; that they "wrote poems and other sayings on their helmets"; that old friendships replaced the military chain of command.

Those disheveled non-saluters at the bottom of the pile - ex-truck drivers, chicken processors and car mechanics - received no training in the guarding of prisoners.

They were under-manned, thanks to the incompetence of their superiors. They were provided with few comforts, were too hot, and under constant mortar attack. They were bitter because they had been prevented from going home, as promised. This too was due to the incompetence of their senior commanders, who failed to predict the upsurge in violence last year.

No one disputes that incompetence went far higher than the six who started torturing inmates on suggestions from private-enterprise interrogators, and also, it appears, merely to amuse themselves.

During the inquiries, the overall commander in Iraq, Lt Gen Ricardo Sanchez, made a scapegoat of one general, claiming that lack of clear standards, proficiency and leadership "permeates the brigade". But the evidence laid out suggests military incompetence went far higher and wider than that.

One reason for the alarming level of incompetence appears to be that many officers and foot-soldiers are not professionals. They are two-week-a-year reservists. The 320th military police battalion, at the heart of the abuse scandal, was a reserve unit based near Scranton, Pennsylvania. *Karpinski, in charge of the brigade, was a corporate management consultant in civilian life.*

Phillabaum, in charge of the battalion, was a reservist. **The company commander, Captain Donald Reese, who "failed to properly supervise his soldiers", was a salesman.**

And, as Naomi Klein has pointed out on these pages, many troops were from the poorest parts of rural West Virginia. They had often joined the reserve to pay their way through college, or to get medical care.

The present US administration, led by defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, is trying to exploit these 200,000 army reservists, to get a smaller, lighter, cheaper, full-time army, as well as seeking to privatize many jobs out to commercial firms.

Says Lt Gen James Helmly, the army reserve should be seen as a good business deal: "The cost for 100 active duty soldiers to maintain readiness for a year is approximately seven times greater than that of 100 army reserve soldiers."

Cheap they may be. But this motley collection of part-timers have now sparked the worst US military scandal since Vietnam.

Like several other Rumsfeldian fantasies, it seems the idea that US neo-imperial soldiering can be conducted painlessly and on a grand scale leads to disaster when it comes into contact with reality on the ground.

Tank Driver Gets Speeding Ticket

Army Times 5.31.04

The news Web site Ananova reports an **Austrian soldier taking part in an anti-terrorism exercise recently was pulled over by police for speeding as he raced through a village in a 25-ton tank at 40 mph, 10 miles an hour over the limit.** Military training, police determined, was no excuse for jeopardizing citizens with an armored behemoth.

The soldier, not identified in the report, had to pay the ticket out of his own pocket, which should serve as a strong deterrent to other tankers who might think about zipping through the village of St. Michael in military vehicles. Although the ticket won't look good on the soldier's driving record, the good news is that the fine was only about \$15.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Angry Relatives Swarm Convoy As U.S. Frees Hundreds From Abu Ghraib; "The American People Are Just Like Us...Without Any Power"

May 29, 2004 By Jackie Spinner and Bassam Sebti, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, May 28 The U.S. military freed more than 600 detainees Friday from Abu Ghraib prison, the largest release since officials announced their intention to cut the population in half and send people home to their families.

Hundreds of Iraqis packed the shoulder of the highway outside the prison, waiting for relatives and loved ones to emerge from behind the barbed wire and thick stone walls. Mothers and wives clutched the pictures and identification numbers of their detained sons and husbands, hoping that they would match those on a list of prisoners to be released.

"My husband is not a criminal and he is still here," said Rajaa Abdullah, 53, whose husband's number was on the list. "Where is justice? Where is the freedom that Bush claims he brought to the Iraqis?"

Heifa Naser, 50, Abdullah's sister-in-law who had waited in vain for the number of her husband, interrupted with tears and a choked voice. "We hate them," she said. "If I can, I'll kill them by myself, but I know I can't. We have only tears, and that's all. **We like the American people, but the problem is their government. They are just like us,**

without any power. We saw them carrying banners and having demonstrations against the war."

As a caravan of U.S. soldiers passed in front of her, Naser shouted in Arabic: "May God curse you."

The U.S. military has released more than 2,000 prisoners in the past month and plans to free another 800 by June 30, when occupation officials are scheduled to turn over limited authority to an interim Iraqi government.

When relatives, some of whom had been waiting since dawn, caught sight of the first bus, the crowd surged across the highway, blocking traffic as they chanted, "Jihad for the sake of the victimized," "American is the enemy of God" and "Death for America."

Prisoners waved frantically from the bus windows and cried out in joy. Suddenly, three of the buses stopped in the middle of the road, and the relatives started running toward them while U.S. soldiers yelled at them to stay back. The soldiers fired warning shots into the air, but the crowd kept surging toward the stopped vehicles.

The prisoners began spilling out of the buses and into the arms of their family members. They cried and hugged one another, the long embrace of people who had not known whether they would ever hold one another again.

Mohammed Ghanim, 28, of Diyala, a province northeast of the capital, hurried toward his relatives, stopping briefly to say that he was detained because he was a former police officer. **"I did not do anything bad to them," he said before rushing off. "The spies informed about me, and I'll give them a lesson because I know them well." (Good place to start.)**

Ahmed Ali said conditions inside the prison improved dramatically after the abuse scandal broke. Ali said his relatives brought him a local newspaper during a visit and showed him the pictures of the soldiers humiliating the detainees. "Their treatment changed after the pictures were shown on TV and newspapers," he said.

Abdul Aziz Mohammed, who also was released, held out bruised hands and wrists with large, dark rings where he said he was handcuffed. **"Look at my hands," he said. "They are full of the torture signs. Look at my arm. They beat me because they were bored, and they found me a good toy to play with."**

Hasan Ali stood with two relatives who had come to greet him. His family members peppered him with questions about his treatment at Abu Ghraib.

"They cut off the food for two days because I did not want the sandbags to cover my face," he said. "They made my friend naked and get in a big hole in the yard not far from the tents. But after the pictures were published, the treatment really changed.

"They are bad people," Ali said of his American captors. "The whole world watched their scandal."

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

Kurdish General In Kirkuk Killed

29/05/2004 ABC Radio Australia News

Police in Iraq say the Kurdish chief of the civil defence force in the northern oil centre of Kirkuk and his family have been killed in a drive-by shooting. They say attackers opened fire on General Saber Mohammed Saber's car in the city centre.

The Fiasco Kid Rides Again; Lt. Col. Dithers As Resistance Infiltrates And Organizes

5.27.04 By Michael M. Phillips, Wall St. Journal

Husaybah, Iraq: **LESS THAN TWO WEEKS** after graduating from a U.S.-run police academy, almost the entire police force here walked off the job to protest having to work side-by-side with American troops.

Some patrolmen headed back to work yesterday, but with Iraq's resumption of sovereignty fast approaching, **the Marines occupying this city are scrambling to figure out whom—if anyone—they can trust to keep the streets safe and the insurgents at bay.**

The Marines' predicament here reflects the ad hoc approach American commanders seem to be taking toward the June 30 transition—which itself is partly a reflection of the Bush administration's ambiguity about how much control Iraqi authorities will have over coalition military operations.

In the meantime, the situation on the ground remains fluid, and improvisation is a constant.

Fourteen patrolmen appeared at the Husaybah station house yesterday, the third day of the police walkout. Marine Lt. Col. Matthew Lopez, commander of the Third Battalion, Seventh Regiment, which occupies a string of towns near the Syrian border, gave the rest of the 110-man force until today to return to work or be fired for dereliction of duty. Meanwhile, Capt. Dominique Neal, the officer in charge of the Marine outpost here, turned over the police station—and the prime security role—to another U.S. creation, the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps.

‘Under no circumstances are you to give the police station back to the police—they’re useless,’ Capt. Neal told Lt. Col. Ahmad Aziz, the Civil Defense Corps’ Local chief.

In Karabilah and other nearby towns, the police have proven reasonably reliable, from the Marines’ point of view. **But in Husaybah, a city of some 100,000 people, relations quickly soured.**

The police and Marines conducted a handful of joint patrols and a platoon of Marines set up temporary camp at the base. But their rooftop guard posts apparently brought tensions to a head: Neighbors complained they let the Marines and police see into their homes and yards, giving women no privacy. **Cops claimed the neighbors threatened them as a result—and that insurgents threatened them simply for working with the Americans.**

The patrolmen signed a petition demanding that the Marines leave the police station, leading to a tense meeting Monday night among Capt. Neal, Iraqi Police Col. Hamid Muhammad Mokhlef and Abboud Muhammad Mecheme, an elderly man selected to speak for the neighbors.

After a tour of the roof, Capt. Neal and Mr. Mecheme agreed the Marines would provide residents with materials to build screens in front of their outhouses. **In private, Capt. Neal berated the police chief for failing to control his own men. Lt. Col. Lopez later vowed to arrest any senior police officer who organized the walkout, and docked top officers half their \$380 monthly salary.**

Tuesday, as rumors spread around town of an imminent insurgent attack on Marines at the police station, Capt. Neal threw his lot in with the Civil Defense Corps. He told Lt. Col. Aziz his men could immediately assume control of the police station; if the police came back to work they would be moved to some other inferior facility. That night, insurgents fired a couple of desultory shots at the station, and defense-corps troops fired hundreds of rounds in return.

It was a remarkable turnaround for Lt. Col. Aziz, who had had rough relations with the Marines. A few weeks earlier, he had accused the Americans of beating his men when they refused to raid a house occupied by four women. Lt. Col. Lopez countered by holding up a photo of the women in front of an array of bomb-making equipment and the next day, Capt. Neal was furious with Lt. Col. Aziz for failing to stop some 1,000 demonstrators from besieging the Marine base to protest the arrests.

“We ebb and flow almost hourly,” trying to figure out which Iraqi security force is the best bet,” Lt. Col. Lopez acknowledged. Right now, the Marines are betting heavily on the Civil Defense Corps in Husaybah, giving them the police force’s assault rifles—and implicit control over the cops.

But a predawn visit to the station early today suggests that wager may face long odds. In another sign of how fluid—and tenuous—the situation is, a Marine patrol that stopped by to see how things were shaping up encountered only some newly minted police officers on duty, most lounging inside the building. No Civil Defense troops were to be found,

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Defense Analyst Says U.S. Objectives Already Defeated In Iraq; “No-Win Situation”

May 31, 2004 By Vince Crawley and Rick Maze, Army Times staff writers

Anthony Cordesman, a defense analyst, warned the Senate Foreign Relations Committee May 19 that U.S. objectives already have been defeated in Iraq, and the only question remaining is how much more damage will ensue.

Cordesman, with the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said **the current situation “is close to a no-win situation for the U.S.”**

“There was never a time when neoconservative fantasies about the Middle East were anything but dangerous illusions,” Cordesman said. ***“Those fantasies have killed or wounded thousands of American and coalition allies, and now threaten the U.S. with a serious strategic defeat.***

“It may not be possible to avoid some form of defeat, but the U.S. must make every effort to do so” by “junking the neoconservatism within the office of secretary of defense, the vice president’s office and the [National Security Council] and coming firmly to grips with reality,” he said.

Cordesman said prolonged fighting in Fallujah and Najaf “are perceived in much of Iraq and the Arab world as a serious U.S. defeat.” Insurgents “do not have to win battles in a tactical sense,” he said. “They merely have to put up a determined-enough resistance.” “A year into the war after the war, far too many U.S. officials are still in a state of denial as to the political realities in the Middle East,” Cordesman said.

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.

Things Fall Apart

May 27, 2004 Sidney Blumenthal, The Guardian

Washington, just weeks ago in the grip of neoconservative orthodoxy, absolute belief in Bush's inevitability and righteousness, is in the throes of being ripped apart by investigations.

Things fall apart: the military, loyal and lumbering, betrayed and embittered; the general in the field, General Sanchez, disgraced and cashiered; the intelligence agencies abused and angry, their retired operatives plying their craft with the press corps, seeing dangerous truths; the press, hesitating and wobbly, investigating its own falsehoods; the neocons, publicly redoubling defence of their hero and deceiver Chalabi, privately squabbling, anxiously awaiting the footsteps of FBI agents; Colin Powell, once the most acclaimed man in America, embarked on an endless quest to restore his reputation, damaged above all by his failure of nerve; everyone in the line of fire motioning toward the chain of command, spiralling upwards and sideways, until the finger pointing in a phalanx is directed at the hollow crown.

Sidney Blumenthal, a former senior adviser to President Clinton, is Washington bureau chief of Salon.com

Keep Our Slaves Safe

May 28, 2004 by Reggie Rivers, the Denver Post

(Former Denver Bronco Reggie Rivers is the host of "Drawing the Line" Wednesdays at 8 p.m. on KBDI Channel 12, Denver, Colorado.)

Our military is one of the last bastions of slavery in the United States.

At the moment, our slaves are stuck in a combat zone, getting killed and maimed, and there's nothing they can do about it except hunker down and pray.

Yes, our slaves signed up of their own free will, but most of them were as misled about their job as the rest of us were about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

And I don't think "slave" is too strong a word to describe someone who is not permitted to quit his job no matter how dangerous it becomes or how much he hates it. For most of us, the 13th Amendment abolished slavery and guaranteed that we have the right to withhold our labor. It doesn't protect soldiers.

Our armed forces recruiters are quite adept at making military service appear beneficial (it mostly is) and safe (it's not). The threat of war is minimized, because few rational people actually want to fight.

According to Chalmers Johnson, author of "The Sorrows of Empire," almost half of our enlisted forces are between 17 and 24 years of age, and they were lured into military service with promises of education, job training, escape from poverty, medical benefits and the chance to operate some cool, high-tech equipment.

Johnson wrote: "A real deterrent to recruitment is the possibility that a new soldier will find himself or herself in combat. Roughly four out of five young Americans who enlist in our all-volunteer armed forces specifically choose non-combat jobs"

So our kids get bombarded with formal and informal recruiting messages - and they sign up. **One day, they find themselves sitting in a Humvee in Iraq, with their best friend lying dead on the floor next to them, and they suddenly realize the deception of their recruitment and the shackles of their slavery.**

They just want to go home, but they can't. And domestically, we continue to trot out the tired mantra that supporting the troops means supporting the war.

If we truly care about our young slaves, we should do everything we can to get them out of harm's way.

OCCUPATION REPORT

So Much For That "Sovereignty" Crap; Iraqis Fail To Regain Control Of Oil Revenue

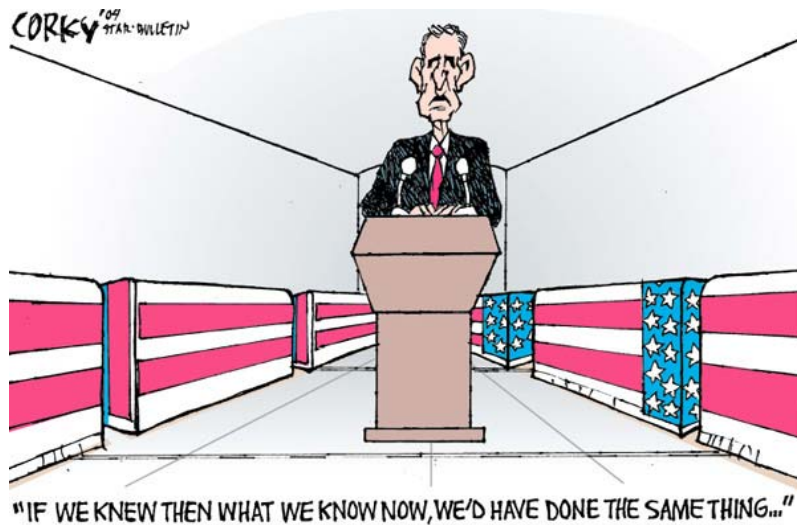
May 24, 2004 Al Jazeera

The latest Iraqi attempts to recover control of the country's oil revenues from the United States appear to have hit a dead end with a special delegation being rebuffed in its bid secure UN help.

The delegation has been in New York in a bid to petition the UN to exert pressure on US occupation authorities, who currently preside over Iraq's oil output.

It includes Hamid al-Bayati, a deputy in the Iraqi interim foreign ministry and a spokesperson for the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq. **In New York since last week its members have so far failed to get an audience with UN officials.** The control of Iraq's oil revenue has been controversial ever since the US-led occupation of Iraq in 2003. **The US has imposed secrecy on oil deals, exportation, and use of revenues. Iraqi officials have previously asked for access to oil revenues, but have been turned down by the occupation Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) headed by Paul Bremer.**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Coming Soon: Clench-Fisted Pregnant Suicide Bombers In Winter Clothing

May 20, 2004 <http://www.kurtnimmo.com/>

Time magazine reports the following absurdities:

A lightly classified intelligence bulletin circulated Thursday to 18,000 U.S. law enforcement bodies is headlined "Possible suicide bomber indicators," and was distributed via the Bureau's secure Law Enforcement Online (LEO) Intranet.

Is there a difference between lightly and heavily classified intelligence bulletins? I bet there is. The lightly classified ones are designed to scare the jelly beans out of gullible Americans.

It warns local badge-carriers to look for obvious signs of trouble – people wearing heavy, bulky jackets on warm days, smelling of chemicals, trailing wires from their jackets -- as well, more subtle ones, such as tightly clenched fists. Someone who never shows his palms could be gripping a detonator rigged to go off when a button is released. "If you shoot him, you 're still not safe because his hands relax and the bomb explodes," says a counter-terrorism official.

These would be stupid terrorists, especially here in the Southwest where the temperature is now in the mid-90s. Bulky coats? Please. The would-be terrorist may as well wear a big cardboard sign saying "I'm an idiot" or "Call 911, I need to be taken to the nuthouse."

The FBI bulletin also notes that suicide bombers may disguise themselves in stolen military, police or firefighter's garb, or even as pregnant women. So don't call the police or fire department if your house is on fire. It might be one of Osama's zombies.

Stay clear of pregnant women. In fact, just find yourself a big hole and pull the dirt in on your head. Maybe if you wrap yourself in fifty pounds of duct tape the shrapnel will simply bounce off.

Prison Report's Missing Pages Include Reference To Rumsfeld

5.27.04 By GREG JAFFE And DAVID S. CLOUD, Wall St. Journal

WASHINGTON--U.S. officials said that among documents regarding the Iraq-prison scandal that the Pentagon failed to give Congress is one described as a "draft update for the Secretary of Defense" on interrogation rules.

The date and contents of the document referring to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld are unknown. But Col. Thomas Pappas, the senior intelligence officer at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison, has suggested in testimony to Army investigators that it discusses a set of rules to guide interrogations in Iraq and suggests that military police should "support interrogations," said a U.S. official.

It isn't clear if the draft document ever reached the defense secretary. **Congressional investigators want to review it to see if Mr. Rumsfeld was involved in crafting or at least approving tough interrogation rules for prisoners in Iraq.**

Congressional staffers raised concerns last week that they hadn't received 2,000 pages of the 6,000-page Army investigation into the prison-abuse scandal, conducted by Maj. Con. Antonio Taguba. Yesterday, the Pentagon acknowledged it inadvertently failed to give the Senate Armed Services Committee a full copy of the report. (If you believe that I've got another one for you. A U.S. invasion of Iraq will be welcomed by Iraqis throwing flowers because they want the U.S. Empire to run their country.)

Several members of the Senate Armed Services Committee are focusing on whether senior Pentagon officials played a role in putting in place coercive interrogation practices that later figured in the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib.

Also missing are three documents relating to a visit in late summer by Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller's to Iraq to provide suggestions on improving interrogations, officials said. They include Con. Miller's written report about a visit to Abu Ghraib, and briefings he delivered upon entering and leaving Iraq, officials said. At the time, Gen. Miller was overseeing the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and is currently in charge of all U.S. detention facilities in Iraq.

Senior U.S. officials have testified that neither Mr. Rumsfeld nor his senior staff members were formally briefed on the results of Gen. Miller's visit.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Four GIs Killed In Zabul

May 29, 2004 KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

Four American soldiers were killed in action in a troubled province of southern Afghanistan at the heart of a stubborn Taliban-led insurgency, the U.S. military said Sunday.

The soldiers died in Zabul province on Saturday, Master Sgt. Cindy Beam said in an e-mailed statement. She gave no further details.

Received:

Troops Held In Squalor

From: "J"
To: GI Special
Sent: May 25, 2004

Subject: gulf war vet

I found a story on the web about sick, wounded U.S. Troops held in squalor. **I'm a air guard serviceman and I also have some serious medical problems**, are you doing any more articles or stories on gulf war II vets?

Thanks J

REPLY:

First, there are stories on this problem in some past issues of GI Special, which can be found at <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> Future issues will report on this as more information becomes available, so we'll make sure each issue is sent to your email address. GI Special is also available in PDF format if you prefer.

Second, please check out: <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> The current issue has an article on some of the problems with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder soldiers coming back from Iraq have experienced.

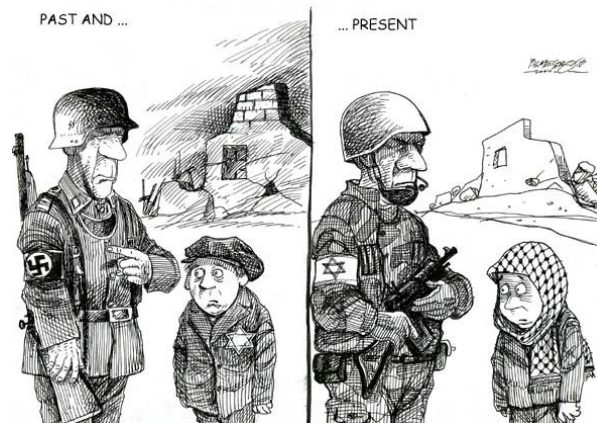
If you have something to say about this problem, Traveling Soldier is the place to write and express your opinions. I help out with that publication, and can assure

you that your confidentiality will be completely respected and your privacy protected. Your name will not be used unless you wish it to be.

Traveling Soldier is designed to be a place troops can say whatever is in their minds about any abuses or ill conditions you or others are experiencing.

Respect and Solidarity, T.

To: GI Special
From: Max Watts 5.29.04



Kleine Zeitung, Austria

THE CARTOON ABOVE FROM GI SPECIAL IS INCOMPLETE. THE "PAST" PANEL - TO MAKE SENSE -MUST SHOW THE SOLDIER POINTING "TO THE AUSCHWITZ GAS CHAMBERS"

(WHERE THE JEWISH BOY IS TO GO, FOR HIS SHOWER AND GAS). THIS IS THE MORE "TO THE POINT" AS THE AUSTRIAN PAPER "KLEINE ZEITUNG" PROBABLY WILL NOT TELL ITS READERS THAT THE NAZI SOLDIER UNDER WAS OBEYING ORDERS OF SUCH GOOD AUSTRIANS AS EICHMANN AND A. SCHICKELGRUBER, LATER KNOWN AS ADOLF HITLER.

AUSTRIAN PAPERS OFTEN TEND TO FORGET THAT THESE WERE LEADING, SENIOR, AUSTRIANS, NOT GERMANS.

FURTHERMORE- SO FAR - THE SHARON GOVERNMENT ONLY SHOOTS, BUT DOES NOT GAS, SOME (NOT ALL) PALESTINIAN CHILDREN. AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE. EXAGGERATION CAN MISLEAD.

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