

GI SPECIAL 2#92



Drug Causing GIs Permanent Brain Damage

5/26/2004 By Mark Benjamin and Dan Olmsted

WASHINGTON, May 26 (UPI) -- **Six U.S. soldiers have been diagnosed by the military with permanent brain damage from an anti-malaria drug used in Iraq and Afghanistan, and health officials must reassess its safety, a U.S. senator said.**

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., in a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, said the drug, called mefloquine, has "serious risks" that have not been adequately tracked by the Pentagon, the Peace Corps and other government agencies that distribute it.

Feinstein told Thompson she is concerned that "six service members have been diagnosed with permanent brainstem and vestibular damage from being given this

drug despite the fact that alternative drugs might have been chosen to prevent infection."

The FDA last year warned that the drug, also called Lariam, is linked to reports of suicide, though a connection has not been established. It also said some psychiatric and neurological side effects have been reported to last long after taking it.

According to people familiar with the situation, the six service members were diagnosed in recent weeks by doctors at Naval Medical Center San Diego. Its Spatial Orientation Lab, a Department of Defense facility, specializes in balance disorders.

One service member who received a diagnosis is former Navy Reserve Cmdr. William Manors, who became severely ill after taking mefloquine in Iraq and Kuwait while deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Another soldier with a mefloquine diagnosis is a Green Beret who served in Afghanistan.

UPI reviewed a copy of Menisci's medical report from the San Diego lab, which includes the notation, "Lariam induced," with the word Lariam underlined.

Earlier this month, Manors filed suit against Lariat's manufacturer, Swiss drug giant Hoffmann-La Roche, for alleged failure to warn of the drug's risks and marketing a product it knows is unsafe.

Manors said he became mentally and physically ill after taking the drug, at one point taking his gun apart because he was afraid he was going to kill himself. A year after he stopped taking the drug, he still suffers from severe balance problems, trembling and memory loss.

The diagnoses appear to put the Pentagon, and particularly the Army, in an unusual position: Military health officials continue to insist the drug is safe and to prescribe it widely.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Two Task Force 1st AD Soldiers Die Near Kufa

May 31 2004 Combined Joint Task Force Seven Release #040531b

KUFA, Iraq - Two Task Force 1st Armored Division Soldiers died in separate engagements south of Kufa the evening of May 30.

One Soldier was killed when his patrol was ambushed with small arms fire and the other was killed when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his tank during a patrol.

1st AD Soldier Killed, Two Others Wounded In Baghdad IED Attack

May 31 2004 Combined Joint Task Force Seven Release #040531a

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Three Task Force 1st Armored Division Soldiers were wounded at about 6:40 p.m. May 30 when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device south of Baghdad.

The Soldiers were evacuated to the 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad, where one Soldier died from wounds sustained in the attack.

STRYKER SOLDIER DIES OF WOUNDS

May 31, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 04-05-50C

MOSUL, Iraq - A Soldier assigned to 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), under the operational control of Task Force Olympia, died May 30 from wounds following a mortar attack the previous day.

The Soldier had been transported to the 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad following the attack.



An Iraqi policeman jumps off the back of a lorry with one of its tires still on fire following an attack on a convoy along a main highway leading west out of Baghdad.(AFP/Mauricio Lima)

Bomb Kills Two U.S. Soldiers In Iraq

31 May, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

A large bomb has killed two soldiers of the U.S.-led coalition in Baghdad, an army spokesman says.

U.S. Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt told a news conference one soldier was killed immediately by the 500-pound improvised explosive device and a second died later from his wounds.

Kimmit said the attack took place in the last 24 hours. He did not elaborate.

Two British Mercenaries Blown Up In Armored Car

May 31, 2004 By HAMZA HENDAWI, The Associated Press

On Monday, two British civilians working for a security company died when a roadside bomb blew up their armored car near the coalition headquarters in Baghdad.



A man runs past a burning vehicle, one of three that came under attack, on the outskirts of Baghdad. (AFP)

US Probing Attack Beaten Back In Najaf

30 May 2004 Novinite.com (Sofia, Bulgaria)

Shooting broke out in the Iraqi holy city of Najaf where gunmen loyal to Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr agreed a truce with US forces on Thursday.

A battle began when US jeeps approached the city's vast cemetery and Mehdi Army fighters drove them back with rockets. Four Iraqis are said to have been wounded in the clash.

US officials have not commented on the incident.

Japanese Convoy Ambushed

May 31, 2004 GEO.NEWS

A Japanese military convoy was attacked in southern city of Samawa, in which an army vehicle was destroyed; deaths of Japanese soldiers were also feared in the attack.

REAL BAD PLACE TO BE. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A US soldier walks past a piece of vehicle engine following a car bomb on Kindi street, in a western Baghdad neighborhood..(AFP/Marwan Naaman)

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/>

TROOP NEWS

Army Command Locked Up Complaining Soldier In Mental Ward; Stupid Assholes At Walter Reed Caught Lying

5/25/2004 By Mark Benjamin United Press International

WASHINGTON: The Army kept a soldier whistle-blower in a locked psychiatric ward at its top medical center for nearly two weeks despite concern from some medical staff that he be released, according to medical records.

The Army then charged him nearly \$6,000 for the stay at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, billing records show.

"They are definitely retaliating against me," said Army Reserve Lt. Jullian Goodrum, a 16-year veteran of the Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Last summer Goodrum asked for an investigation into the death in Iraq of a 22-year-old soldier in his 212th Transportation Company. He was also quoted in a United Press International article about poor medical care at Fort Knox, Ky., that helped spark investigations in Congress.

Last fall Goodrum sought mental health care at Fort Knox but was turned away -- just days after complaining in the press about poor medical treatment at Fort Knox. "I said I was having problems. I told them I felt like I was having a breakdown right there," Goodrum said. "They did not care. They said leave."

Goodrum then went to see a private doctor who hospitalized him. That doctor alerted Fort Knox that Goodrum had been hospitalized, according to Goodrum's medical records and documents from that doctor. But Fort Knox cut off his pay, terminated his Army medical insurance and threatened to charge him as absent without leave.

Goodrum showed up at Walter Reed hospital in Washington Feb. 9, where doctors admitted him to Ward 54, the locked psychiatric unit.

Walter Reed medical records reviewed by UPI describe Goodrum as "cooperative and polite" when he arrived, but also "anxious and depressed" and "largely preoccupied with concerns about legal charges and financial stressors."

Records show Goodrum progressed well over the next few days. "Patient in bright spirits, good mood, thought processes logical," his medical records say on Feb. 14.

"Denies (suicidal or homicidal thoughts) and has been fulfilling all responsibilities." He was encouraged to take a weekend pass out of the hospital. **Doctors planned to move him to outpatient therapy -- out of the locked ward -- on Feb. 19.**

But records show Fort Knox officials contacted Walter Reed on Feb. 18 and said to keep him in the locked ward.

"Contacted by DCCS at Fort Knox ... who provided additional information and expressed concerns regarding potential discharge of LT Goodrum," the records show. "Currently, **due to legal/admin concerns the patient should remain on ward 54, " the locked ward.** "Patient states that he is doing 'a little bit better' ... **Pt is scheduled for intake (for outpatient therapy) tomorrow, however due to recent admin developments concerning command at Fort Knox this may need to be postponed."**

His records show that Goodrum was held in the locked psychiatric ward for the next 13 days. His health appears to have deteriorated some because of that confinement. "They hurt me, in terms of my recovery. I was doing fine, then 'bam,'" Goodrum told UPI.

On Feb. 21 his record states: "**Per chief of psychiatry patient will need to be (in the locked ward) because he has charges pending ...** Pt voiced concerns regarding his reduction in status, pt stated that he will continue to be cooperative with staff and follow the current treatment plan but does not understand why he was reduced in status."

Walter Reed public affairs officer Beverly Chidel said privacy rules prohibit any comment on Goodrum's case specifically. But she said care at Walter Reed is dictated by patients' medical needs. (Public affairs officer Beverly Chidel is a shit-eating exceptionally stupid liar. "Medical needs" had nothing to do with it.)

But some medical staff at Walter Reed expressed concern that Goodrum was being held. "Several team members have discussed concern that he is (in the locked ward). Serial Mental Status exams have not revealed signs of psychosis, (suicidal thoughts) or (homicidal thoughts)," his records say on Feb. 26.

"As discussed previously, this inpatient hospitalization has been extended due to administrative concerns," the records say the next day. "This treatment could have taken place in an outpatient setting."

Walter Reed released Goodrum from the locked ward on March 2, one day after UPI published a story on allegations that Fort Knox refused to treat him.

On March 2, an addition to Goodrum's medical records states that Goodrum was "a voluntary patient for the duration of his admission." Goodrum told UPI, "That's not true." (These assholes evidently think nobody will prosecute them for their false imprisonment of Goodrum. They better pray they are right. False imprisonment is a felony offense.)

Fort Knox officials have not charged Goodrum with any offense, and **he says the Army still owes him thousands in back pay -- he did not get a paycheck from early November through April. "I've got a mortgage to pay," Goodrum said.**

On Oct. 29, 2003, Under Secretary of Defense David S. C. Chu drafted new health care rules that said soldiers should be referred to private doctors if needed. When Goodrum could not get care at Fort Knox, he went to a private doctor instead. His medical records show that Fort Knox officials considered that "unacceptable."

"They are totally violating their own policy," Goodrum said. He said he has complained about his treatment at Fort Knox to his congressman, U.S. Rep. John J. Duncan, R-Tenn. A spokesman for Duncan said he is aware of Goodrum's complaint but couldn't comment on it.

Goodrum was named the 176th Maintenance Battalion's "Soldier of the Year" in 2001. He has received a host of awards, including the combat action ribbon, and positive reviews from superior officers.

"Lt. Goodrum is a truly outstanding junior officer," reads one performance evaluation from 2002. "In addition to his technical competence, he demonstrates great leadership potential. ... Promote to captain and select for advance military schooling."

Guard And Reserves Dying At Escalating Rate; Experts Say Laws Of Physics "Conspiring" & "Ordinary Iraqis" Don't Support Occupation

May. 30, 2004 By ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press

American troops in Iraq died in May at a rate of more than two per day, pushing the combined death count for April and May beyond 200, according to Pentagon figures.

For the National Guard and Reserve, whose part-time soldiers make up at least one-third of the 135,000 American troops in Iraq, the trend in casualties during May was especially troubling.

At least 22 citizen soldiers died, nearly one-third of all U.S. losses in May. As a percentage of the month's death toll, that is about double what it had been in most previous months of the war. It also shows that the Guard and Reserve are bearing an increasing combat load.

The most persistent killer, more than a year after President Bush declared major combat over, is the homemade roadside bomb. The military calls it an improvised explosive device. This month, they have killed least 19 soldiers, seven of them National Guardsmen.

"The laws of physics conspire to keep these things hidden once they're emplaced, so unless you figure out through other means where they got put down, you're in trouble," says Michael O'Hanlon, a defense analyst at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank.

Especially troubling, O'Hanlon says, is the continued reluctance of ordinary Iraqis to throw their support behind the American effort.

The Marine Corps in March stopped reporting the circumstances of its casualties in Iraq, so the actual number of deaths by the homemade bombs this month is likely higher than the 19 reported by the Army.

Among the 22 citizen soldiers killed in May was Staff Sgt. William D. Chaney, of the Illinois Army National Guard. **At age 59, he was the oldest soldier to die in Iraq since the invasion began.**

National Guardsmen often are older than their active-duty counterparts, and May's death toll reflects that. A 50-year-old Army Reserve soldier from Shreveport, La., died May 14; a 44-year-old Reserve soldier from Owensboro, Ky., was killed by a suicide car bomber that same day.

Voting With Their Feet: "Stop Loss Is Not Only A Breach Of Contract, It's A Form Of Slavery"

By David H. Hackworth

<http://www.sftt.org/cgi-bin/csNews/csNews.cgi?database=Hacks%20Target%20Homepage.db&command=viewone&op=t&id=67&rnd=812.2739461337202>

Top military managers insist that our all-volunteer Army isn't stretched too thin from this country's heavy and hazardous commitment to hot spots like Iraq and Afghanistan and cooler places in another 131 countries around Planet Earth. **They spout positive numbers like carnival hucksters, hyping enlistment and re-enlistment rates they keep insisting are at an all-time high.**

Except that's exactly 180 degrees out from what hundreds of soldiers have told me during the past few weeks.

"Stop loss is not only a breach of contract, it's a form of slavery," railed a Special Forces (SF) senior noncommissioned officer. "There's a tidal wave of folks getting out. The number of senior SF NCOs leaving is amazing. Our battalion had three of five sergeant-majors retire, and our sister battalion had two of five. The number of master sergeants was well into double digits. I predict that the exodus will devastate the senior NCO corps at a time when experience and stability are most needed."

Despite all the accentuate-the-positive spin coming out of the Pentagon, the anecdotal reports I've received - especially from Reserve and National Guard folks - agree with the SF sergeant and point to a mass exodus that will reach the hemorrhage point by mid-2005.

"Speaking off the record," writes a military wife, "my husband was supposed to come home from Iraq this week but has just been extended another 120 days. His old unit, 3rd Infantry Division, is already seeing an exodus of junior officers. Since their return from Iraq, 35 captains have left the Army for greener pastures. Several more - read: another 15-20 - are due to leave, but who knows whether or not they'll manage to do so before more stop losses and stop moves come down prior to their return to the desert. ...

Between separation from family, no guarantee of tour lengths, no clear mission and consistent pay problems, folks are pretty fed up. If they can get out, which is no small feat, they seem to be doing so while the getting is good."

"Don't use my name," writes a senior sergeant. "I believe we are going to have a massive attrition problem in the Reserve. **I have 24 years in the Army Reserve, and this is my second time in the Gulf. They're talking about reservists having to deploy once every five years. I doubt our civilian employers and families are going to buy into that. I've got to get out when I redeploy if I want to stay married."**

"We're stretched too thin," reports a sergeant. "Our CO (commanding officer) admitted this to us during our tour in Afghanistan. He also admitted that morale is down due to the extending of tours. Yet the Pentagon insists there's no problem with morale. We lost over 75 percent of our unit when we got back. I know other units are having the same problems. If this trend continues, we won't have enough people to defend this country when the need arises."

I'm sure the brass have all the paperwork to back up their propaganda campaign. But as far as the old saw that "figures don't lie" goes, I've been around long enough to know that liars figure and soldiers know the truth. So I'll go with the soldiers.

Scumbag Sassaman Gets Reprimand; Hopefully, Career In Army Ruined

(Past issues of GI Special reported on Scumbag Sassamans' endless boasts that he would crush the resistance with a bloody fist, man, woman and child. Did this former jock think Iraqis were footballs, designed to be tossed off a bridge?

(The shame here is that his lunatic raving obviously encouraged his soldiers to do what they did. And he gets off with no prison time at all.)

May 26, 2004 By Robert Weller Associated Press

Four soldiers will be reprimanded for forcing two Iraqi detainees to jump off a bridge into the Tigris River earlier this year, a military spokesman said. There have been questions about whether one of the Iraqis died, but Fort Carson spokesman Lt. Col. Thomas Budzyna said no one was killed.

The soldiers, based at Fort Carson, were part of a 3rd Brigade Combat Team led by Lt. Col. Nate Sassaman, a star quarterback at West Point in the mid 1980s, Budzyna said Tuesday.

Budzyna said he had no other information, and **Sassaman did not return a call to his office. (Now we get the real Sassaman: real brave when giving sound bites about killing Iraqis, but too cowardly to answer his phone.)**

Sassaman has been reprimanded for helping others mislead Army investigators about the incident, the Post reported, citing unidentified officers familiar with the situation.

Sassaman told The Associated Press in December that Samarra has been a “thorn in our side,” then vowed to crack down on insurgents.

My Turn: The Homecoming, And Then The Hard Part

**How do you return to the 'real world' when only other soldiers
can understand how you've changed?**

May 31 By Anthony Swofford, Newsweek. Swofford is a veteran and a writer.

In my mother's house there hangs a photo of the two of us taken days after my return from the 1991 gulf war. In the photo, we're both smiling and my mother is crying as I remove a yellow ribbon from a tree in her front yard. The ribbon meant everything to her—my safety and my life, my past and my future, a notice to the world that she had a son at war—and nothing to me.

Ribbons, flags and parades help convince families and the citizenry that our cause is just and that the price paid by the few—death, heinous injury, a long-term psychological disorder—is worth the gain for us all. The soldier appreciates these gestures but knows that flags and ribbons will not save his life.

When the soldier returns on leave, there are many homecomings. He is back in this physical and philosophical space, America: the republic he fought for, ideally. He returns to base, a spit-and-polish space where he must shave daily and shine his boots to glass—chores that have no meaning after combat. And he returns home.

Those who greet him at his home-coming party will have no idea what he has endured. Family and friends must remember that no matter how many hours of war coverage they've watched, how many newspaper articles they've read or how many photos of injured and dead soldiers they've turned away from in shock, their

soldier has lived this war, and he has a reel of these events playing constantly in his head.

Because scenes of combat are constantly available to the soldier does not mean that he is prepared to transfer this horror to his loved ones. Instead, he'll tell stories about the time the movie star or politician appeared for a photo op, his first hot shower in 40 days or the Iraqi children he played soccer with. He won't tell about watching his squad leader get hit in the chest with an RPG, or the day the Humvee in front of his detonated a roadside bomb, killing three men from his company. He won't mention the dead Iraqi children.

The soldier will visit friends from high school. They'll ask him what he really saw, now that his mom isn't around. He'll tell them that he was afraid of death, and they won't know how to respond because they've never had to consider dying in combat. The chasm between the men will be obvious. After the high-school friends depart, the soldier will call one of his platoon mates who is also on leave and attempting to make sense of a changed world, a changed self.

The soldier will sleep restlessly. After a year or longer of sleeping on the desert floor or a cot, a mattress will feel dangerously comfortable. He's used to sleeping with a rifle or pistol; he'll reach for it at night and awake with a start when it isn't there. He'll walk the neighborhood at 3 in the morning. He'll welcome the smell of his mother's breakfast. She shouldn't be surprised when he devours it in two minutes and then leaves for a run. Early-morning exercise is a part of his military schedule, and the solace and fatigue it brings will help him cope with his new reality.

It's likely the soldier will return from leave early. After a week, the parties will be over and he'll have grown tired of the questions: How many Iraqis did you kill? Did your unit get Saddam? He'll call his platoon mates to find out if they, too, are bored and miss each other and if they'd like to meet back at base sooner rather than later.

This will be the soldier's most important return. He'll be living among the soldiers he served with, people who won't ask how many Iraqis he killed because they know and don't care whether the number is zero or five. He'll be safe.

And now the government that spent years and thousands of dollars preparing the soldier for war should take responsibility for his physical and mental health.

The post-war saga of physically and psychologically injured American soldiers is nearly always a bureaucratic sinkhole. In "Home to War," author Gerald Nicosia narrates the embarrassing treatment Vietnam vets received from the Veterans Administration. Agent Orange and posttraumatic-stress disorder killed and paralyzed veterans for many years before the VA began to treat them. Currently, veterans of the first gulf war are battling to receive benefits for the multiple ailments known as gulf-war syndrome.

The soldier's family must give him time—allow him to share his experiences at his leisure, or never. But the government must act immediately on his return from battle. This responsibility is not just to the soldier, but to his family and the citizens in whose names he fought.

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 RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

WELCOME TO AL-MAJAR---HAVE A NICE DAY



A militiaman loyal to resistance Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr in al-Majar, 25 kms south of al-Amara. (AFP/Essam Al-Sudani)

Kill Senior Iraqi Official

Baghdad, May 31 IRIB News Computer Center

A senior official of a main Sunni Islamic party was shot and killed as he was driving home late on Sunday, the deputy head of the party said on Monday.

Kahtan Al-Rubaie, who was in charge of the Iraqi Islamic party's radio and television interests, was attacked by four gunmen as he was leaving Baghdad for his home in the town of Mahmudiya, party deputy Iyad Al-Samarrai said.

Bomb Gets 5 Basra Cops

May 31, 2004 By MARIAM FAM Associated Press Writer

Roadside bombs exploded in the southern city of Basra, where five policemen were injured.

With Siege Lifted, Fallujah Transforms Into Islamic City-State

May 26, 2004 By Hamza Hendawi, Associated Press

FALLUJAH, Iraq — With Marines gone and central government authority virtually nonexistent, Fallujah resembles an Islamic mini-state.

“After all the blood that was shed, and the lives that were lost, we shall only accept God’s law in Fallujah,” said cleric Abdul-Qader al-Aloussi, offering a glimpse of what a future Iraq may look like as the U.S.-led occupation draws to a close.

The departure of the Marines under an agreement that ended the three-week siege last month has enabled hard-line Islamic leaders to assert their power in this once-restive city 30 miles west of Baghdad.

Some were active in defending the city against the Marines and have profited by a perception — both here and elsewhere in Iraq — that the mujahedeen, or Islamic holy warriors, defeated a superpower.

With the departure of the Marines, the position of the U.S.-appointed civil administration has been weakened in favor of the clerics and the mujahedeen who resisted the U.S. occupation. That is a pattern that could be repeated elsewhere in Iraq after the occupation ends June 30, unless other legitimate leaders come forward to replace those tainted by association with the occupation.

The city’s estimated 300,000 residents are known for their religious piety.

On Tuesday, the mujahedeen expanded their “clean up” campaign. About 80 masked, armed men, accompanied by local police, forced hundreds of street hawkers at gun point to clear out from the streets and confine their businesses to designated areas.

The masked men later moved to the city’s used car market and “persuaded” dealers to move away from the city center because they were blocking traffic. In both cases, the police stood by without intervening.

The mujahedeen are clearly profiting from the hero status they acquired during the April battles against the Marines.

There is even talk of building a museum dedicated to the “struggle” against the American occupation. Money has been collected in recent weeks to help the families of those who died in the fighting, said by the locals to number 1,000 “martyrs.”

MORE:

“A Rebel Town”

Doug Lorimen Green Left Weekly, May 26, 2004

According to the May 17 Los Angeles Times, US field commanders believe that most of the former Iraqi army officers who now command the 1800-member Fallujah Protective Army were involved in organizing armed resistance to the US occupiers in central Iraq over the last 12 months.

“Today, Fallujah is for all intents and purposes a rebel town”, the LA Times observed. “This once-obscure city ... is now an inspirational ground zero for militants in the Middle East, the place that beat back the marines.”

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Bush “Lurching In A Panic”

30 May 2004 By Justin Huggler and Rupert Cornwell, Independent Digital (UK) Ltd

The appointment of Iyad Allawi as Iraq's interim Prime Minister this weekend was being seen as an American-backed coup which wrong-footed Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations envoy supposed to be putting together the interim government which will wield "sovereignty" after 30 June.

The appointment of Mr Allawi is the culmination of a series of spectacular U-turns that has given President George Bush and his administration the appearance of lurching in a panic from one flawed policy on Iraq to the next. Since last November every decision seems to have been taken with an eye to one political event alone: Mr Bush's bid for re-election this November.

When it revised its plans last November, the US said that it would use heavy weaponry, including fixed-wing aircraft, to destroy what Mr Rumsfeld called "foreign fighters and dead-enders". That approach has been tacitly dropped, as the last thing likely to win the "hearts and minds" of ordinary Iraqis.

Having spent two years cold-shouldering the United Nations, Washington appeared to have no choice but to place the destiny of Iraq largely in the hands of Mr Brahimi, an Algerian Sunni, whose views on Israel are anathema to many in the US government. The way he has been outmanoeuvred, however, may bedevil relations with the world

body once more, and complicate the passage of the UN resolution on Iraq so desperately needed - not least by Tony Blair - to heal international rifts.

For the hawks in the Pentagon one of the key geo-strategic goals of the invasion of Iraq was to secure a new desert "aircraft-carrier" in the Gulf, once US forces were withdrawn from Saudi Arabia. There was talk of American forces pulling out of the populated areas of Iraq within months, and establishing up to five permanent bases in desert areas granted to them by a grateful Iraqi administration. So unpopular is the US in Iraq that all public mention of such plans has ceased.

Since the uprisings against the occupying forces there has been less talk among Washington's neo-conservatives of a "democratic" Iraq as a model for the region, a policy particularly passionately espoused by Mr Wolfowitz. Officials now speak merely of a stable and secure Iraq. Next week's G8 summit, which will be dominated by Iraq, was originally to launch a "Greater Middle East Initiative" bringing reform to the Muslim world.

Thanks to the Iraq shambles, compounded by the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal, the project is virtually dead in the water. Last week USA Today reported that a draft document for the summit says: "Change should not and cannot be imposed from the outside." *This phrase is likely to strike Middle Eastern states as particularly ironic.* A regional conference to promote democracy has also been scaled back.

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.

Take Two

The belief in the possibility of a short decisive war appears to be one of the most ancient and dangerous of human illusions."

Robert Lynd

"Name me an emperor who was ever struck by a cannonball."

Charles V of France

They Got That Right

May 26, 2004 by Sanjay Suri, antiwar.com

Iraq could be heading for a far worse situation in weeks ahead, the [International Institute for Strategic Studies](#) (IISS) warns in its annual report published Tuesday. The IISS, one

of the world's leading institutions for strategic relations, paints a bleak picture for Iraq and for the United States in Iraq.

Leading decision-makers are expected to take close note of IISS projections. The institute was correct last year in its assessment of the consequences of the invasion of Iraq.

"Our conclusions turned out to be accurate because we did not have access to intelligence," Gary Samore, director of studies at the IISS told media representatives at the launch of the report.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Army Knew Abu Ghraib Prisoners Were Innocent, Kept Them In Prison And Tortured Them Anyway: Shitbrain General Kimmitt Caught In Biggest Lies Yet

May 30, 2004 By DOUGLAS JEHL and KATE ZERNIKE, New York Times

Hundreds of Iraqi prisoners were held in Abu Ghraib prison for prolonged periods despite a lack of evidence that they posed a security threat to American forces, according to an Army report completed last fall.

The unpublished report, by Maj. Gen. Donald J. Ryder, reflects what other senior Army officers have described as a deep concern among some American officers and officials in Iraq over the refusal of top American commanders in Baghdad to authorize the release of so-called security prisoners.

General Ryder, the Army's provost marshal, reported that some Iraqis had been held for several months for nothing more than expressing "displeasure or ill will" toward the American occupying forces.

Military has offered little public explanation of the process of deciding who should be released and who should remain in prison.

In Baghdad this week, the top American military spokesman in Iraq offered a vigorous defense of the procedures used by American commanders for determining which Iraqi prisoners should be freed.

"We don't put them in Abu Ghraib to detain them for a period of time or to detain them until proven innocent," said the spokesman, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt. "They are deemed to be a security threat by a judge through multiple sources of evidence. It's that simple. *"If they were innocent, they wouldn't be at Abu Ghraib," he said.*

In interviews, senior Army officers have described senior officers on General Sanchez's staff as having been the major obstacle to releasing prisoners from Abu Ghraib.

The officers have said in particular that Brig. Gen. Barbara Fast, the top Army intelligence officer in Iraq, often ruled last fall against the release of prisoners, even against the recommendation of a military police commander and military intelligence officers at the prison.

"The percentage of persons that were released because they've served their time — that percentage is zero," said General Kimmitt when he was asked this week about the reasons for the releases. "The number that were released because they were innocent? That number, too, is zero. Persons are held at Abu Ghraib because they are determined to be security threats, imminent security threats here in country."

A confidential report in February by the International Committee of the Red Cross said that "military intelligence officers told the I.C.R.C. that in their estimate between 70 percent and 90 percent of the persons deprived of their liberty in Iraq had been arrested by mistake."

In one incident described in detail by the senior Army officer, an aggressive roundup in September brought 57 Iraqis into custody. But a review by military intelligence officers at Abu Ghraib determined that only two had intelligence value and that the rest should be freed.

An American general at the headquarters in Baghdad overruled that decision, and dictated that all 57 Iraqis be kept in custody.

General Urged Use Of Dogs At Prison

May 26, 2004 R. Jeffrey Smith, The Washington Post

WASHINGTON -- A U.S. Army general dispatched by senior Pentagon officials to bolster the collection of intelligence from prisoners in Iraq last fall inspired and promoted the use of guard dogs there to frighten the Iraqis, according to sworn testimony by the top U.S. intelligence officer at the Abu Ghraib prison.

According to the officer, Col. Thomas Pappas, the idea came from Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, who at the time commanded the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay, and was implemented under a policy approved by Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, the top U.S. military official in Iraq.

He also said Miller had indicated the use of the dogs "with or without a muzzle" was "OK" in booths where prisoners were taken for interrogation

He said he recalled speaking to one dog handler and telling him "they could be used in interrogations" any time **according to terms spelled out in a Sept. 14, 2003, memo signed by Sanchez.**

US Frees Palestinian Envoys In Iraq After A Year In Abu Ghraib

30 May 2004 Reuters

Two Palestinian diplomats have been released from notorious Abu Ghraib prison after a year in US custody in Iraq.

The Palestinian charge d'affaires, Dalil al-Qusus, has called his colleagues' ordeal a flagrant violation of diplomatic norms.

"I went to Abu Ghraib to meet them yesterday. I saw the cells. Ninety men held in one barracks," said Dalil al-Qusus on Sunday.

"The Americans have no respect for diplomacy. When they came out it was emotional. They said they thought they would never make it out."

Al-Qusus called the detentions a blatant disregard for diplomatic immunity in the name of US President George Bush's war on terror.

The diplomats' odyssey began on 28 May 2003 when employees arrived at the embassy in the morning. Al-Qusus fled when he saw the Americans rounding up people.

He later learned that the Americans had arrested the two diplomats and 10 other people, including embassy security guards and Iraqi gardeners.

He said the two diplomats were handcuffed and surrounded by barbed wire outside the embassy building, where a soldier described them as "terrorists".

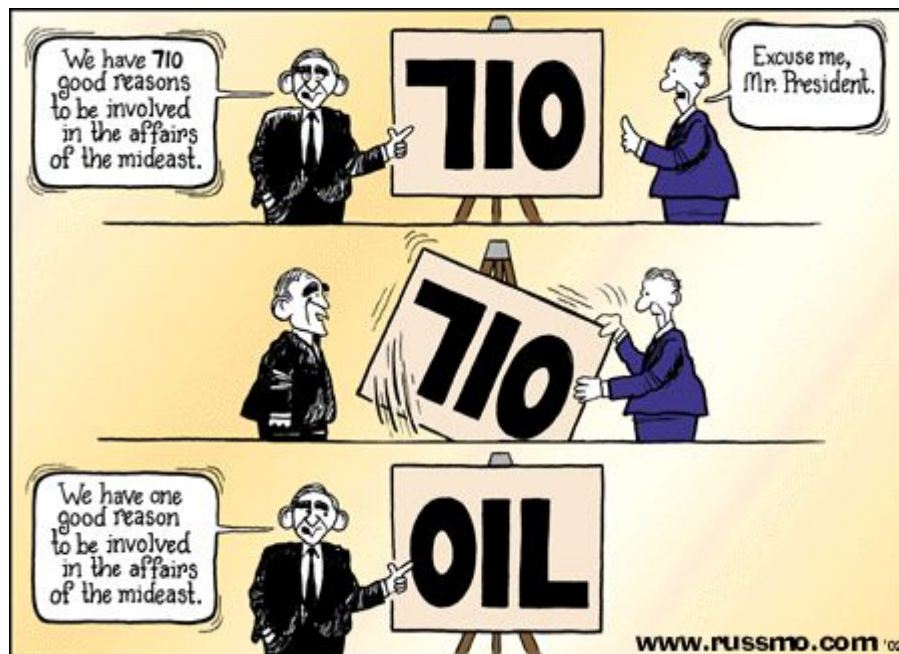
DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Analysts Say U.S. Threat Warning Is Butt-Covering

May 26 By Caroline Drees, Security Correspondent, WASHINGTON (Reuters)

A vague new U.S. warning that al Qaeda may be planning a massive attack smacks of political campaigning, not just a call for heightened vigilance, analysts and former government officials say.

One former national security official in the Bush administration told Reuters: "This is more butt-covering than anything else."



Candidates' Iraq Policies Similar But Republicans Say Iraqis Don't Want U.S. OR UN Occupation

May 25 By ADAM NAGOURNEY and RICHARD W. STEVENSON, The New York Times

When it comes to Iraq, it is getting harder every day to distinguish between President Bush's prescription and that of Senator John Kerry.

Neither has supported a deadline for removing United States troops.

Mr. Kerry has called for the establishment of a United Nations high commissioner to oversee the political development of Iraq and the rebuilding efforts.

Administration officials have been dismissive of Mr. Kerry's idea of putting a United Nations high commissioner in Iraq. They have argued that the Iraqis do not want the United Nations in power any more than they want the United States in power.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Taliban Raids Kill 4, One A Norwegian Soldier

May 25, 2004 KABUL, May 26 (Online)

Taliban militants on motorcycles killed an Afghan soldier in an attack on troops guarding a shipment of aid in an impoverished southeastern province, while a rocket attack farther west killed two people, officials said.

Militia ambushed the convoy carrying tractors and generators Saturday as it drove toward Waza Khwa, a remote town in Paktika province, about 170 miles southwest of the capital, Kabul.

Provincial police chief Abdul Rahim Khan said "Taliban opened fire on the vehicle carrying the soldiers," Khan said. "One of them was killed and another was wounded."

He said the assailants — about 20 men on motorbikes — retreated after a 30-minute gunbattle.

Abdul Hakim Latifi, who claims to speak for the Taliban, said two of its fighters were wounded in the shooting. **Latifi said two more Afghan soldiers were killed Sunday night in a rocket attack near Tirin Kot, the capital of Uruzgan province, about 250 miles southwest of Kabul.**

A Norwegian occupation soldier died Sunday in a rocket attack in Kabul also claimed by Latifi for the Taliban.

Police Officer Killed In Kabul

KABUL, May 31 (Xinhuanet)

A low-ranking police officer was killed as unidentified gunmen attacked his car in the capital city last night, a spokesman of Interior Ministry said Monday.

"Unknown attackers sprayed bullets on a Toyota car in Khairkhana district around 9:30 pm last night killing a policeman Nasir on the spot," Lutfullah Mashal told Xinhua on telephone.

Troops Call In Air Strikes To Quell Rebels

May 26, 2004 By Noor Khan, Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — **American troops caught in a gunfight with Afghan militants called in air strikes, the U.S. military said Wednesday**, in fighting that an Afghan commander said killed some 20 Taliban rebels at a newly discovered camp in the south. The battle occurred Tuesday in the Arghistan district of Kandahar province, about 120 miles southwest of the capital, Kabul, provincial military commander Khan Mohammed said.

American spokesman Lt. Col. Tucker Mansager said a U.S.-led patrol encountered a group of militants in the area after nightfall. **Engaged in a firefight, the troops called in warplanes “for a show of force.”**

“When that did not work, (the planes) used precision ordnance,” Mansager told reporters. “Based on the fact that the engagement ended immediately after that, it would appear that it was successful.”

Khan said three Afghan soldiers were injured in the three-hour gunfight.

The clash appeared to be the most deadly since American-led forces and insurgents stepped up operations in the spring, fueling a spiral of violence that has left more than 350 people dead this year and cast a shadow over plans for national elections in September.

Operation in Spin Boldak Goes Bad; Resistance Kills Many U.S. Allied Soldiers

May 26, 2004 Geo TV (Pakistan)

SPIN BOLDAK: U.S. troops are reporting a large-scale battle against Taliban in Spin Boldak in southern Afghanistan.

In fighting 12 Afghan soldiers were killed and four vehicles were destroyed, a Taliban spokesman Latifullah Hakimi told Geo TV on satellite telephone. Taliban fighters have successfully left the area and regrouping for attacking the coalition forces, he further said.

Received:

From: [Bruce McPhie](#)

Sent: May 31, 2004

Subject: Viet Nam Newsletter # 29

So far, more than 22,932 people worldwide have signed the petition, initiated by Len Aldis of the Viet Nam-Britain Friendship Society to seek compensation for the Vietnamese victims of the chemical weapons used in the American War. Please sign, if you haven't already, and also invite all your friends and contacts to do so.

www.petitiononline.com/AOVN/petition.html

The Letter That Didn't Get Published In Rochester, N.Y.

By Anna Bradley

Dear Editor,

I read your 5/18 article about the frantic efforts of local parents to shield their children from the gruesome images on the evening news with a great deal of sadness-and alarm. The experts, it seems, think it's best to "protect" children by keeping them ignorant.

Ignorance protects no one.

I grew up in the shadow of World War II, and in the blue white glow of the ever-on television set. My family watched TV, and we especially watched the evening news. Every night, over dinner, Walter Cronkite. What I saw then, as a five year old, remains with me to this day.

It was the Hungarian revolt of 1956. Guys in street clothes lurking in doorways, with pistols and rifles and Molotov-cocktails taking on Russian tanks. I wasn't frightened, I was thrilled. Wow, who are these really brave people?

My dad told me they were Hungarians; he explained why they were fighting the Russians. We had a map pinned to the wall of the kitchen, and I learned a little geography. This is Hungary, this is Budapest--miles and oceans away from me, but also the homeland of several of the families on our street.

The images were gruesome. I remember a truck piled high with wounded insurgents flying a makeshift flag- a bedsheet with a Red Cross marked out in the blood of the wounded. I also remember the "good-guy" insurgents lynching a Communist official in a public square. My dad said that, in war, even good people can do terrible things.

So, was I traumatized? No, I was educated. I learned some geography, some history, and I learned, deeply and forever, that there is no way that some great power can run tanks into some smaller, weaker country and expect anything but what we have now in Iraq.

Their kids will try to kill ours. Our kids will try to kill theirs. Our kids may “win”, as the Russians did in Hungary. Tanks and planes and superior firepower may win the war, but the hearts and minds will always be with the skinny kid in the doorway, waiting his chance for a shot at that tank.

That's not trauma. That's the truth.

Sincerely yours,
Anna Bradley
360 South Goodman Street
Rochester, New York 14607
585 473 5112

(THANKS TO MW WHO EMAILED THIS IN:)

JUST SAW BRITISH (NOT HOLLYWOOD) MEGA FILM: “TROY”

ACHILLES, WHO HOMER DID NOT MAKE INTO INTELLECTUAL, STARTS TELLING HIS (FUTURE) GIRL-FRIEND BRISEUS (TROYAN) ABOUT WHY HE FIGHTS.

SHE IS SHOCKED TO LEARN HE IS NOT A DUMB BRUTE.

BUT --- ACHILLES WAS A MEMBER OF THE (GREEK) RULING CLASS, OF THEN AND AT THAT PARTICULAR MOMENT IN HUMAN HISTORY BRONZE AGE, HI TECH WEAPONS WERE VERY EXPENSIVE--RESERVED FOR "HEROES"

THESE "HEROES" HAD TO (USUALLY, NOT AGAMMENON) DO THEIR OWN FIGHTING. GOT KILLED, TOO.

ACHILLES SAYS: “SO THEY'LL REMEMBER OUR NAMES”

WELL.. POOR HECTOR ! We know what trojans are...

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