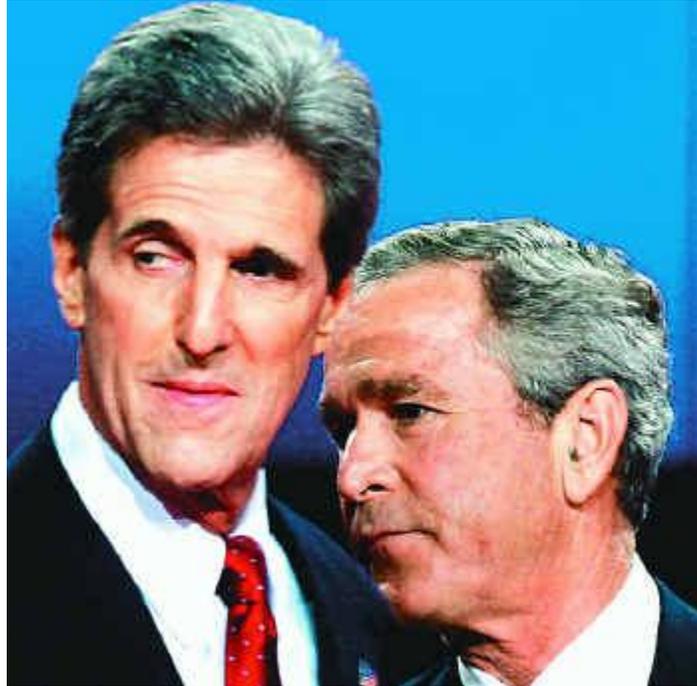


GI SPECIAL 2#C10



“Debate” Photo: JIM BOURG/REUTERS

“You Want The Truth? You Can’t Handle The Truth.”

“We have our little differences, but on one thing we agree 100%. If Americans have to die in Iraq to keep the Empire going, tough shit. We got so many unemployed back here they’ll never be missed. And since somebody has to die for corporate profits and Empire, it sure won’t be our kids. They have other priorities. College. Parties. Getting ready to manage the family fortunes when then get a bit older.

“That’s what being an American leader means.

“Let’s face it, some people are just more important than others, and without a rich, privileged, elite ruling class telling you what to do, how

could you common trailer-trash survive? It's just a division of labor: some die for the Empire, and our class has to take on the terrible responsibility for managing it. That's us. That's what we do. And remember, which ever one of us wins, we win either way.

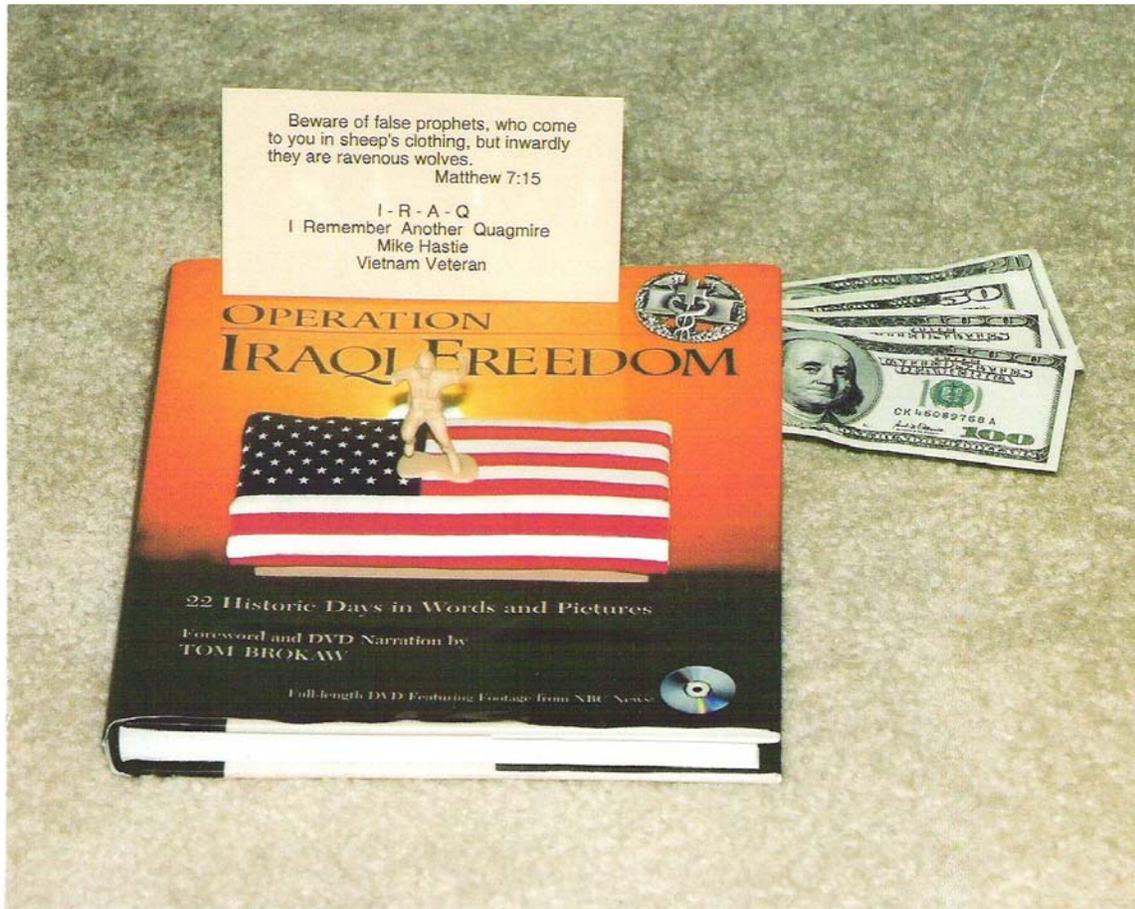
"But then, you already know that, don't you? And you'll take it and like it, won't you? You chumps just keep on playing our game every four years, don't you?"

"What are you going to do, rebel? What a silly idea! You bark when we say bark, and you bite when we say bite, but you'll never turn on your masters.

"I'm George Bush.

"And I'm John Kerry.

"And we approved this message."



W A R: Wealthy Get Richer

Mike Hastie
Medic, Vietnam
1970-71

NEED 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/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

The Death Of Nine Marines; Interview Reveals Some Bases Must Be Supplied By Parachute Drops

[See confirmation in story below about helicopters.]

31 October 2004 By Monte Morin and Tony Perry, The Los Angeles Times

The American death toll was the worst in a single incident since Jan. 8, when nine soldiers were killed as a Black Hawk helicopter crashed west of Fallouja.

A military source who requested anonymity said the nine were killed when a suicide car bomber rammed a Marine convoy just southwest of Fallouja. Insurgents then fired on the convoy, which was towing a disabled vehicle.

Another source said the attack was near Abu Ghraib, slightly to the east of Fallouja.

The Marines' deaths Saturday underscore that moving in convoys is always dangerous and sometimes deadly. In fact, every time military vehicles move in Iraq, it's considered a combat mission.

To decrease the number of military vehicles on Iraqi roads - which they share with Iraqi civilian traffic - Marines have begun doing resupply missions by helicopter. In some cases, they have dropped supplies by parachute to troops in far-flung locations.

It was unknown whether the convoy attacked Saturday was on a resupply mission.

Brig. Gen. Richard Kramlich, commanding officer of the 1st Force Service Support Group, says his unit moves troops, ammunition and supplies "24/7."

"Marines face danger every time they leave the perimeter of this camp," Kramlich said.

Word of the deaths swept through downtown Oceanside [California] on Saturday, casting a pall over the off-duty Marines from Camp Pendleton who congregate in the videogame parlors, T-shirt shops, pizza shops and fast-food restaurants there.

Many of the Marines have served two tours in Iraq. Others are training for deployment into the war zone. Some said they knew some of the dead Marines.

Civilians cannot understand how it affects Marines to learn that nine of their own have been killed, said Pvt. Kyle Johnson, 18, of Exira, Iowa.

"Civilians don't really know, they don't," he said. "Unless they've been there and done that, they can't know. They hear the news and it's a shocker, but they forget about it quickly.

"We hear about it, and it stays with us the rest of our lives."

Many of the Marines are at the infantry school, learning combat techniques that may soon be applied in Iraq. [Time to study Khe Sanh or Dien Bien Phu.]

IED Kills Marine In Ramadi, 4 Wounded

November 01, 2004 WorldNow and KCTV5

BAGHDAD, Iraq The military says a U-S Marine was killed Sunday when a bomb exploded in the central Iraqi city of Ramadi. Four others were wounded.

The U-S command says the Marines were hit with an improvised explosive device. It didn't give other details

Six Iraqis, One US Soldier Killed In Ramadi Fighting

Nov 1 (KUNA) & (Reuters)

Six Iraqis were killed and 16 were injured in fresh clashes with the US forces in the Anbar governorate Monday.

One US soldier was killed in these clashes, according to sources close to the multinational forces in Iraq.

In some of the fiercest fighting in weeks between U.S. troops and insurgents in the rebel stronghold of Ramadi the clashes broke out in the east of the city around 7 a.m. (0400 GMT).

Black smoke could be seen rising from buildings as groups of gunmen fired rocket-propelled grenades and mortar rounds amid heavy U.S. shelling.

Iraqi families began to flee their homes as fighting intensified throughout the morning and **witnesses said they saw a U.S. military vehicle ablaze.**

An Iraqi photographer working for the Reuters News Agency has been killed today too in the governorate.

Convoy Hit In Qaim

11.1.04 Reuters

Insurgents attacked a U.S. military convoy in Qaim, near the Syrian border, using rocket-propelled grenades on Monday, witnesses said.

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME



US marines from 2/5 Marine transport an injured comrade into a Chinook helicopter in Ramadi 100kms west of Baghdad.(AFP/Patrick Baz)

S.A. Family Grieves Over Army Sergeant's Death; "I'll Be Back. Don't Worry"

November 1, 2004 SAN ANTONIO

An Army officer's wife could hear gunfire in the background when her husband telephoned her last week from Iraq.

But Sgt. 1st Class Michael Battles Sr. assured wife Luz that everything was fine and he just wanted to talk a little longer.

The soldier, who had telephoned to Fort Hood to tell his wife he had just mailed a birthday present to son Michael, did not call again the next morning.

Luz Battles kept waiting for the 9 a.m. call that never came and realized something was wrong.

When military officials arrived at her home early the next day, she knew that Battles was dead.

The Department of Defense said Battles, 38, was killed Oct. 28 when a bomb was hurled at his vehicle by a passing motorcycle rider near his Baghdad checkpoint. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood.

Leslie Battles, who at 43 is the oldest brother, told the *San Antonio Express-News* in Monday's online edition. "He told me, 'It's bad over here, but just keep your faith and pray.'"

Michael Battles phoned home almost every day for reports on his son Michael Jr., whose fourth birthday is Thursday.

When his son was born at Fort Stewart, Ga., Battles had been to Korea four times and served in the first Gulf War. He returned to Korea two months following his son's birth on Nov. 4, 2000.

After moving to Fort Hood, he was sent to Iraq. But he planned to retire in 2006.

"He always said, 'I'll be back. Don't worry,'" said the officer's mother, Ernestine Battles.

Former Hoosier Killed In Iraq

November 1, 2004 Associated Press

WAVERLY, Ind. -- A soldier who grew up in Central Indiana was killed during combat in Iraq, the military said.

Army Pfc. Stephen P. Downing II, 30, died Thursday from small arms fire during combat operations in Ar Ramadi.

The Pentagon listed his residence as Burkesville, Ky., but he grew up in Waverly and graduated from Mooresville High School, said Jessica Prichard, a friend of his family.

He was divorced with a 9-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old son.

"His father and stepfather told him they wished they could go in his place, so he didn't have to be there," said Downing's mother, Stella Maynard of Burkesville, Ky. "And he said, 'No. I don't want to be there, but it's my turn to protect you.'"

Downing's father lives in Indiana's Brown County and has a sister in Indianapolis, Prichard said.

Downing is the 29th person from Indiana to have died after being sent to the Mideast since the buildup for the invasion of Iraq began in early 2003.

Resistance Force Of 20 Storms Baghdad Corporation Office; Takes Prisoners

November 1, 2004 By JIM KRANE, BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)

Militants kidnapped [in war it's called "captured.]" an American, a Nepalese and four Iraqi guards in a bloody assault on their office in the capital Monday when insurgents stormed the offices of a Saudi company in the upscale Mansour district of Baghdad, sparking a battle with guards during the evening iftar meal when Muslims break their daylong fast in the holy month of Ramadan, police said.

One attacker and one guard were killed in the fight, before the insurgents made off with their **captives [now he's got it]**, police said. Police Lt. Col. Maan Khalaf identified the captives as an American, a Nepalese and the four Iraqis. U.S. Embassy spokesman Bob Callahan confirmed that one of the **victims [now he's back to silly crime-scene language]** was American.

"We heard gunfire. I went outside to see what's going on when a man pointed a machine gun at me and said: 'Get in or else I'll shoot at you,'" said Haidar Karar, who lives in the neighborhood.

From his house he saw "at least 20 attackers, some masked and some not." He said some were wearing traditional Arab robes and all were carrying automatic weapons.

Japanese Government Told Stupid Lie; Shell Hit Troop Facility

Nov. 1 Kyodo News

TOKYO, Nov. 1, Kyodo - **A shell that exploded late Sunday is believed to have hit a facility inside the camp housing Japanese troops** in the southern Iraqi city of Samawah, a Japanese government source said Monday.

The government earlier said a large explosion was heard around 10:30 p.m. local time or 4:30 a.m. Monday Japan time near the camp of Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force troops.

Rockets Hit Black Watch Base

1 Nov 2004 By Gavin Cordon, Whitehall Editor, PA News & By JIM KRANE (AP)

The Black Watch came under fresh attack today at their base in the US-controlled sector of Iraq. **Seven rockets landed in the space of an hour** yesterday morning in the perimeter of Camp Dogwood.

The base, 25 miles south of Baghdad, was struck by a series of explosions shortly after 9.30am local time, the Ministry of Defence said.

It was reported that four Chinese-made rockets were fired from positions several miles away.

An MoD spokesman said there were no injuries **and no major damage** to the base. **[Watch those weasel words. Whether damage is “major” or “minor” is in the eye of the commanding officers, and commanding officers are nothing but politicians in funny clothes.]**

U.S. Has Lost Controls Of Roads, Forced To Move Troops By Helicopter: Just Like “At End Of Vietnam War”

Nov 1, 2004 By Jim Krane Associated Press Writer

Helicopter tactics here resemble those that emerged *at the end of the Vietnam war*, when the Viet Cong acquired Soviet-made SA-7 missiles that were able to pick off high-flying choppers. U.S. pilots began flying low and fast, skimming the trees and fields in a technique known as "mapping the earth."

TAJI, Iraq (AP) - The U.S. military is increasingly turning to attack helicopters to battle guerrillas in Iraq, using tactics closer to those from Vietnam or Israel than the Gulf war formations that blasted Iraqi tanks.

The Army is also pushing its fleets of transport helicopters as hard as it can, ferrying U.S. troops and Iraqi leaders by air, rather than letting them drive the country's ambush-prone roads.

When we fly, soldiers don't die," said Col. Jim McConville, who commands the 1st Cavalry Division's aviation brigade.

"We're basically flying as much as we can. And we can't fly them enough."

Since February, McConville's 4th Brigade, headquartered on this dust-blown air base just north of Baghdad, has flown 50,000 combined hours in its nearly 100 helicopters, the highest airborne rate in division history.

"It's an adrenaline rush, guys flying 140 miles per hour just above the trees and firing rockets," said McConville, whose own helicopters have been rocked by rocket-propelled grenades or punched with bullets.

The Black Hawk, which entered service in 1979, has become a taxi for soldiers and contractors hopping from the safety of one U.S. base to another.

"If everyone had a choice no one would drive," said McConville, 45, of Quincy, Mass. "But there's not enough aircraft to fly every soldier who wants to fly."

"The Iraqis are afraid of helicopters," McConville said. **"We think they're pretty deadly. But they think they're a lot more deadly than they are."**

"They'll come in with holes and we'll repair them," said Maj. John Agor, 42, striding through a Taji hangar filled with disassembled Black Hawks and Apaches. "More likely than not we'll put them back into battle that night."

Helicopter tactics here resemble those that emerged at the end of the Vietnam war, when the Viet Cong acquired Soviet-made SA-7 missiles that were able to pick off high-flying choppers. U.S. pilots began flying low and fast, skimming the trees and fields in a technique known as "mapping the earth."

The Army trained pilots to hover behind front lines and blast tanks with long-range missiles. Apache pilots did just that in the Gulf war.

But Iraqi insurgents have no front lines or tanks. After rebels with shoulder-fired missiles took down a pair of helicopters, including a Chinook transport in November that killed 16 U.S. troops, the Army stopped flying at high altitudes.

"We used to hover around. We can't do that now because you get shot down," McConville said. "People thought it was safer to come down low and risk small arms fire and wires."

Apaches and Kiowas operate in street battles much the same way as in the Israeli military: rocketing single cars or buildings sheltering insurgents.

"You try to shoot them in an alleyway or shoot one car that's moving along a street," said Capt. Ryan Welch, 29, an Apache pilot with the 4th Brigade. "It's not something we used to train for."

The Army relies so heavily on its helicopters that some are being flown at rates beyond military recommendations.

Lt. Col. Mike Lundy, commander of the 1st Cavalry's Kiowa regiment, said each of his armed Kiowas flies around 105 hours per month, well over the recommended 65 hours.

Major overhauls normally done every two years are now needed every six months, said Agor, the maintenance chief.

In the case of the Apache, the interval between complete overhauls been pushed back from once every 250 hours to once every 500 hours, said Agor.

"They're Watching Us Right Now. They're Everywhere"

[This is the classic problem for an occupation army faced with a population determined to fight to the finish for their liberty. It's why the war is lost.]

November 1, 2004 Associated Press

NEAR FALLUJAH, Iraq - Scouring turnip patches and dimly lit homes, U.S. Marines on patrol outside the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah search for guns, mortar rounds and rockets in villages where the Marines believe **people smile by day - and launch deadly projectiles by night.**

In a fight without front lines against civilian-clothed enemies, Marines in central Iraq can't easily identify enemies called "The Muj" - short for mujahedeen, or Muslim holy warriors - who boobytrap roads and fire into U.S. bases from nearby hamlets.

"They're watching us right now. They're everywhere, but you can't tell who they are," says Sgt. Alexander Munoz as he leads a 1st Marine Division patrol through one town. "They wave and salute - then they bomb you."

But as the Marines try to calm the area around Fallujah, they say they face a foe who mixes with the local population, threatening unsympathetic civilians into supporting their goals. And collaborating with the Marines can be deadly.

"The people here are against a wall. They help us and they help the Muj," says Munoz as the Marines look for roadside bombs - which the troops call improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

[But as the British troops try to calm the area around Boston, they face a foe who mixes with the local population, threatening unsympathetic civilians into supporting their goals. And collaborating with the British troops can be deadly.

["The people here are against a wall. They help us and they help the American rebels," says Sgt. Williams, as the Fusiliers look for American ambushes, which the British troops call "fighting Indian style." "They're cowards. They hide behind trees and stone walls like Indians and shoot at us, like up at Lexington and Concord, and they won't come out and fight like men," he said.]

[---And so it has ever been with Imperial arrogance and Imperial defeat---]

Civilians escaping Fallujah - with some rebels likely among them - are taking refuge in abandoned houses and schools shuttered during the fighting.

"There has been a large influx of refugees fleeing Fallujah. Overnight, we usually go out and stay in abandoned houses and now we're competing with refugees," says Lt. John Jacobs.

A Marine attack on Fallujah in April was called off after widespread Iraqi protest at reports of civilian casualties, **but not before insurgents sneaked around and attacked the Marines' rear, touching off a dayslong battle outside the city. [NOW we hear about that one!]**

So the Marines are showing their force this time before any upcoming attack on Fallujah, walking through turnip and tomato fields and looking for weapons buried in irrigation ditches **as rebel rockets crash in the area.**

The Marines are on constant lookout for the roadside bombs, often connected by wires to a mobile phone, which when dialed sets off the blast. **Rebel spotters are presumed to be watching.**

The bombs can also be mounted on telephone poles or put in trash, **and the Marines suspect the townspeople often know where the bombs lay.**

"Another way you know of an IED is that the people run away when we pass by," says Munoz. "Especially the kids."

The Marines quietly enter families' walled compounds, shining their flashlights in corners and looking on rooftops.

Adolescent Iraqi boys hold their empty palms to the Marines, indicating they're hiding no contraband.

"Yeah, yeah, I know you don't have anything," says Lance Corporal Brian Davis.

"A lot of these people are very respectful, they give you water," the 27-year old from Kelseyville, Calif. says later. **"But you always have to ask yourself who they really are."** [That's easy. They're Iraqis who want their country back, and the Occupation gone. One thing you can bet on. Iraqis are indeed "everywhere" in Iraq. It's one of the things the place is known for. And they are indeed watching you, and waiting for a time and place of their choosing to strike for their freedom. Time to come home, alive.]

Panicking Command Tries Silly New Tactic; Hey Comedy Central: Pick Up On This One

11/1/2004 By JIM KRANE

In its latest effort to throttle the tenacious insurgency plaguing Baghdad, the U.S. Army has set up a telephone hot line where Iraqis can phone in anonymous tips.

In two interviews with Arabic TV networks on Monday, Brig. Gen. Jeffery Hammond assumed the role of a big city American police chief, squinting into the camera and beseeching Iraqis to phone in anything they know about planned attacks.

"When you see this terrible insurgent about to do something, pick up your phone and call me. I'll do something about it," said Hammond, deputy commander of the 1st Cavalry Division. "We can fight this war together. You can help me fight — in secret."

"The choice is simple," Hammond continued. "You can choose the choice of the insurgent, which is death. Or you can choose the path of the interim government, which is life." [That one will crack up everybody in Iraq. Regardless of point of view, everybody knows the interim "government" is the path of betrayal, corruption, thievery and, if you are a collaborator, absolutely certain death.]

"I understand that you're scared. I'd be scared too," Hammond said. "But someone in Baghdad sees the insurgent, knows the insurgent. Tell me what it is you know.

"The division has received as many as 30 calls per day since setting up the line two weeks ago. **Not all phone callers are helpful. One bold caller last week declared he was a terrorist out to get Americans.** [Talk about a brainwashed reporter, we're supposed to believe the caller says, "Hi, I'm a terrorist?" Out to get the occupation no doubt true. The majority of Iraqis are. They, however, consider themselves patriots fighting a foreign invasion and occupation. They're right about that.]

The 1st Cavalry has no arrests or operations to report that stemmed from phoned-in tips. [Now there's a surprise.]

Hammond said the hot line is part of an Arabic media blitz the division has organized, calling weekly Arabic-only news conferences on its base near Baghdad airport, and appearing on live radio call-in shows in Baghdad.

The more the division reaches out to Iraqi television and radio stations, "there is a corresponding effort to block our attempt," he said.

Hammond said he has received a death threat for serving as a regular guest of a call-in radio program on a Baghdad radio station, as did the show's host.

"We hit a raw nerve," he said. **"It's my ambition to get into all the living rooms in Baghdad and tell our story by putting *the commanding general* on Arab TV."** [Well, so much for all that bullshit about Iraqi "sovereignty. All this idiot asshole does by appearing on TV is prove to any undecided Iraqis the U.S. is still in control, and they need to join the resistance. If there are any left that haven't already done so.]

Welcome To Camp Stop-Loss

10/31/2004 By JIM KRANE, The Associated Press

Even as it builds up its forces here, **the U.S. military has softened one of its more aggressive symbols.**

The Army has renamed 17 of its bases in and around the Iraqi capital, dropping cocky names like Camp Steel Dragon for more benign ones like Camp Honor.

Gone also is Camp Headhunter, Camp Banzai, Camp Warhorse and Camp Gunslinger. Since mid-September, those bases have been renamed camps Independence, Justice, Freedom and Solidarity.

"It's gone from warrior to helper," was how one soldier, who asked not to be named, explained it.

The new names have been given Arabic translations, which have become the official titles that now appear on signs and news releases.

Already, on Camp Victory North, now renamed Camp Liberty, signs declare that travelers have entered Camp Al-Tahreer — or Camp Liberation.

[Coming soon: Camp Clusterfuck, Camp Quagmire, Camp Dien Bien Phu, Camp Sadr, Camp Halliburton, Camp MRE, Camp Stop-Loss, and that old favorites, Camp FTA, under the general campaign designation Operation Iraqi Fuckup.]

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. Send requests to address up top.

TROOP NEWS

GIs Lack Armor, Radios, Bullets: Money Went For Traitor Politicians Pork Barrel Projects Instead; “We’re Eating Our Own Young To Support The War”

Oct. 31, 2004 (CBS) 60 Minutes

Every couple of weeks Karen Preston gets a telephone call from her son Ryan who is serving in Iraq with the Oregon National Guard.

But Karen Preston has been worrying a lot ever since last summer when Ryan returned home on leave and showed her these photos of the unarmored vehicles his unit was using for convoy duty in Iraq.

Lacking the proper steel plating to protect soldiers from enemy mines and rocket propelled grenades, they had been jerry-rigged with plywood and sandbags.

"They were called cardboard coffins," Preston says.

There have been more than 9,000 U.S. casualties in Iraq so far – more than 8,100 wounded and 1,100 killed. Nearly half of those casualties are the result of roadside bombs, known as improvised explosive devices or IEDs in military jargon. **Yet the U.S. military still lacks thousands of fully armored vehicles that could save American lives.**

Specialist Ronald Pepin, who serves in Baghdad with the New York National Guard, says, "They have no ground plating. So if you hit something underneath you, then it's going to kill the whole crew, you know? And that's just something you have to live with."

Staff Sgt. Sean Davis from the Oregon National Guard was critically wounded last June when his unarmored Humvee hit an IED outside of Baghdad. He suffered shrapnel wounds, burns, and was unable to walk for six weeks.

Davis said his Humvee was armored with plywood, sandbags, and armor salvaged from old Iraqi tanks.

He considers himself lucky that he wasn't killed in the blast. His friend and fellow guardsman Eric McKinley, who was riding in the same vehicle, wasn't so fortunate. The 24-year-old Army specialist died of his wounds.

His father Tom said his son was supposed to have been discharged from the Oregon National Guard a few months before his death, but was held over because of the war.

McKinley says his son would have stood a lot better chance of surviving had his vehicle been fully armored.

"Our troops need to be protected over there to the best ability that we can protect them and it's not being done," he says.

The Department of Defense denied a 60 Minutes request for an on-camera interview to explain the situation. But responding to a written question about vehicles traveling dangerous routes in Iraq being armored with plywood and sandbags, the Army told us,

"As long as the Army has a single vehicle without armor, we expect that our soldiers will continue to find ways to increase their level of protection." [So, the fucking government says it's not their job to protect the soldiers, the soldiers have to do it themselves? Fine, begin by tying every fucking member of Congress & the Secretary and every Deputy-Secretary in the DoD to the front and back bumper of every fucking truck and humvee in Iraq. Let them do some dying. That's long, long overdue. After all, they're the real enemy, not the Iraqis. Not realistic? If the troops take on Congress and the Pentagon, who, exactly, will stop them? The DC police force? If they ever decide to clean out the DC rats nest, the whole fucking country will cheer them on and back them up 100%. Payback is overdue.]

60 Minutes went to a man more familiar with the problems facing the Oregon National Guard than anyone else – its commanding general, Ray Byrne. **General Byrne was somewhat reluctant to talk when 60 Minutes showed him pictures of his men's Humvees and trucks, armored with plywood and sandbags.**

"If you have nothing then that's better than nothing. The question becomes then again when – when are they going to receive the full up armored Humvees? And I don't have that answer," says Gen. Byrne.

"It distresses me greatly that they do not have the equipment. **I don't have control over it.** The soldiers don't have control over it. The question becomes, 'When is it going to be available? When is it going to be available? When will they have it?'" **[Time the soldiers took "control over it," since the General can't do shit.]**

The Army told 60 Minutes they will have produced 8,100 fully-armored Humvees by March.

However, production is lagging behind the urgent need, and the Pentagon's interim solution is shipping so-called "add-on armor" kits to Iraq, where they are being bolted on to thousands of vehicles.

But most of those add-ons don't protect the bottom of the vehicle, leaving them vulnerable to an explosive device.

And it isn't the only equipment problem facing soldiers in Iraq.

Oregon guardsman Sean Davis told us that his unit was short ammunition and night vision goggles, and lacked radios to communicate with each other.

He says guardsman were using walkie-talkies that they or their families purchased from a sporting goods or similar store. "And anybody can pick up those signals, you know," he says. "And we don't have the radios that we need."

Gen. Byrne says stories about families in Oregon having to go out and buy for their sons and daughters radio equipment, body armor, GPS gear, computers and night vision goggles because they weren't being issued are true.

He said some Guard units are also using Vietnam era M-16 assault rifles, which he calls adequate for state duty but not acceptable for duty in Iraq. There is also a bullet shortage for training, he says.

It bothers him, but **"there's nothing I can do about it," he says.**

"If I was making the decisions, I would readjust," he says. "The soldier on the ground should be a focus. When that's taken care of you can take care of other stuff."

The Army acknowledged to 60 Minutes that there is a shortage of radios in Iraq and a shortage of bullets for training, and says both **are in the process of being remedied.**

[That's the bullshit they were handing out a year ago. Put on the soldiers' grave, "He Died Of A Process."]

There have also been problems with maintenance and replacement parts for critical equipment like Abrams tanks, Bradley personnel carriers and Black Hawk helicopters.

Winslow Wheeler, a long time Capitol Hill staffer who spent years writing and reviewing defense appropriations bills, thinks he knows one reason why those shortages exist, after looking at the current Defense budget. Army accounts that pay for training, maintenance and repairs are being raided by Congress to pay for pork-barrel spending. [There it is, grounds for rebellion in any sane society.]

Wheeler says \$2.8 billion that was earmarked for operations and maintenance to support U.S. troops has been used to "pay the pork bill."

Wheeler, who has written a book called "The Wastrels of Defense," says congressmen routinely hide billions of dollars in pet projects in the defense bill.

And buried in the back of this one, Wheeler found a biathlon jogging track in Alaska, a brown tree snake eradication program in Hawaii, a parade ground maintenance contract for a military base that closed years ago, and money for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial celebration.

By law, these projects can't be cut, so Pentagon bookkeepers will have to dip into operations and maintenance accounts to pay for them.

"They do all kinds of things that adds up to: 'We're basically eating our own young to support the war,'" he says.

According to Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a member of the Armed Services Committee who speaks out against pork-barrel spending, there is a total of \$8.9 billion of pork in this year's defense bill, which would go a long way toward upgrading all the equipment used by the National Guard.

"I don't think that this war has truly come home to the Congress of the United States," McCain says. "This is the first time in history that we've cut taxes during a war. So I think that a lot of members of Congress feel that this is just sort of a business-as-usual situation." [Soldiers in other countries at other times have found armed demonstrations extremely useful in focusing the attention of corrupt traitors in political jobs. Frequently, the politicians have decided to find other occupations and locations, which usually pleases the citizens also. Cases in point: Suharto (Indonesia) and Milosevic (Serbia). The soldiers joined the civilians in getting rid of both.]

It is not a comforting thought for families with loved ones in Iraq, who lack armored vehicles, radios or things they need to stay alive. It's on Karen Preston's mind every time she talks to her son.

Specialist Pepin on the New York Guard says, "It's kind of like an act of faith. When you get in your vehicle, you just hope, you know. Say a little prayer before you go out."
[The Lord helps those who help themselves.]

More:

There It Is:

In recent interviews, **Marines with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, which took charge of Ramadi in early September, said guerrillas had killed the 12 Marines in a roadway ambush while they were riding in unarmored or very lightly armored vehicles.** 10/31/2004, Edward Wong, The New York Times

More:

Lack Of Vehicle Armor Keeps Troops On Edge

Nov. 01, 2004 BY HAL BERNTON, The Seattle Times

SEATTLE - (KRT) - For Sgt. Joseph Bryson, driving an unarmored 10-ton truck across Iraq was like Russian roulette. In 15 months of duty, a bomb went off next to his rig and several bullets narrowly missed as they whizzed in through an open side window.

"The lack of armor was a big concern," said Bryson, who returned home to Okanogan, Wash., in August along with the rest of the 1161st Transportation Company of the Washington Army National Guard. **"Multiple trucks had bullet holes, in the seat, in the windshields and the cabs."**

The hazards of driving Iraq roads in unarmored trucks have been evident for more than a year, prompting many units to sandbag the floors of their cabs and weld on extra steel plating, dubbed "hillbilly armor."

Only in recent months has the U.S. military moved to systematically upgrade the truck fleet, which ferries food, fuel and ammunition to 135,000 troops.

"When our troops will get those armor kits is hard to say - *it's going to be determined on need,*" said Master Sgt. Jeff Clayton, a spokesman for the Washington National Guard. [Classic lifer bullshit double-talk. Who the fuck in Iraq doesn't have a "need" to not be dead or have missing body parts? Perhaps the Master Sgt. would care to answer that question? Perhaps he would care to explain it personally to the families of the dead? Simple question, asshole: who, from your elevated position as "spokesman for the Washington Nation Guard," does *not* have a "need?" And who the fuck elected you spokesman anyway? Maybe it's time the troops chose their own "spokesman" who isn't a brass kisser with a mouth full of idiocy and a brain full of shit. Most Sgts will raise hell and the

dead to advocate that their troops get what they need, right now. Not this one. He's making bullshit politician-type excuses.]

"Our son called us a week before he was killed and told us that they were exceedingly vulnerable in these unarmored Humvees, and were going to get ambushed," said Brian Hart, of Bedford, Mass., whose 20-year-old son, John, died in an ambush a year ago this week. [How about it Sgt. Did he have a "need?"]

Bryson said in the months that followed, the unit's truckers thought about fortifying the cabs with steel. **But, Bryson said, the unit could not secure metal or welders to tackle the task. And there were fears the added weight might increase the chance of mechanical breakdowns in hostile territory.**

So, the convoy trucks ventured out each day with unarmored cabs. They used sandbags to fortify the floor of the cabs, and attempted to scout for hostile forces with rifles poked out of the side windows. [And too many died. One was too many.]

The Unknown Soldiers

10.21.04 Interview of Gene Bolles by Lakshmi Chaudhry, senior editor Alternet

Gene Bolles has seen more than his fair share of human suffering. **Two years in Landstuhl Regional Medical Center – the U.S. military hospital in Germany that receives all injured soldiers evacuated from Iraq and Afghanistan – is no doctor's dream job, especially not if you are a neurosurgeon who specializes in brain and spinal injuries – the kind that can destroy a 19-year-old kid's life.**

Many of these soldiers are not included in the numbers put out by the Pentagon for soldiers wounded in action in Iraq, which is right now around 7,500. Is there an important distinction between combat and non-combat related injuries?

Bolles: Well, you should probably look up a military manual to get the definitions exactly right, but here's how I understand it: Say you're on duty, something blows up or you get shot, that's what they call a combat injury. **But if you get in a truck accident or a Humvee rolls over you, that's defined as non-combat. So you can get a Purple Heart for the former and not for the latter.**

And yes, we don't hear about the non-combat injuries and illnesses. I've seen figures that are now upwards of 30,000. I know that at least 20,000 have been air-evacuated into the Landstuhl system. These are also people who have suffered doing what we as a country are asking of them. As to why they're not recognized, they seem to be of lesser importance in that they're not mentioned. I don't think that's fair.

So what is at stake in this undercounting of the casualties in Iraq – in not making clear what the toll of the war has imposed on our soldiers?

Bolles: I really don't know why it's not out there for all of us to see. The question is why isn't our news media reporting this night after night so the American people can know about it. If you know about it, then why isn't CNN or NBC pushing this stuff?

What you see on TV and what you see in reality, is like night and day. **The embedding of the journalists seemed to sterilize the war. When I heard them report, it was like it was a football game. The true effects of war are just awful.**

Do you get the sense with this administration that even talking about the costs of the war is equivalent to challenging it?

Bolles: I think wars should be challenged because they're absolutely devastating. The way it's made out is that if you're against what's happening in Iraq, you're against the present government or against the soldiers. And no, it doesn't have to be that way at all.

Why does the government make these differentiations? Why do they not talk about the reality of war? I suspect it's because they don't want upset all of the people who may then turn against the war. This is a war that has been debatable from the beginning.

My personal feeling is that the average soldier doesn't go to war because of the country. The reality is that the reason why they fight is the community that they've been a part of in the military. They don't look at the rationale or reason for war with that degree of depth. It's more about their buddies.

But maybe now we're seeing some cracks. Depending on how this ends up – maybe not if the war ends better than we expect – but I suspect we're going to see a lot of anger among the GIs and veterans when they come back.

How have these very emotional years affected you?

Bolles: I think about it a lot when I go to bed at night. I can't get it out of my head. It haunted me then and it haunts me now – the horrific, horrific injuries that these young people will now have to deal with for their rest of their lives.

And I don't know if I'll ever stop thinking about them. I just feel a tremendous sadness – and that's just the way it is. I just hope everything in the world can be done to make what they have left for the rest of their lives as positive as possible. **I sometimes fear that once they come back – with all the injuries and damage – they'll be forgotten about very quickly.**

British Government Tries To Shut Up Soldiers Wives; “Blair Is A Murderer”

11.1.04 Ananova Ltd & 10.31.04 By Paul Hutcheon, Scottish Political Editor, Sunday Herald

British troops in Iraq are being asked to tell their families to stop criticising the Government, a regiments campaign group said.

Jeff Duncan, spokesman for the Save Our Scottish Regiments Campaign, said a number of wives at the regiment's HQ in Warminster, Wiltshire, had received the edict.

Mr Duncan said: **"I took a call from one wife who was very upset because she said her husband, who is a soldier in the Black Watch in Iraq, had been told to tell her not to speak to the media.**

"And she said many of the other Black Watch wives had been told the same. **Orders have come from the top.**"

Mr Duncan said: **"The MoD trying to gag the wives is ironic really considering they are betraying the troops by planning to scrap their regiments.**

"If ever there was a time for the Black Watch wives to say pretty much what they damn well like it is now."

The Ministry of Defence is thought to be angry that "winning the peace" in Iraq is being undermined by soldiers' relatives attacking the government's handling of the war, particularly in regard to troop redeployments.

It is understood that senior officers in the Black Watch, acting on suggestions made in Whitehall, have advised soldiers to silence their wives.

He added that the curb on talking to the media proved the government wasn't interested in revealing the truth about the conflict. **"The fact that the wives are being bullied says a lot about free speech and the desperation of the government," he said. "They should be ashamed of themselves. Wives have every right to speak their mind."**

Duncan says the soldiers' spouses believe their husbands are being mistreated at home and abroad. "Quite legitimately, they have been voicing their displeasure at the fact that while the Scottish soldiers are being sent to trouble-spots in Iraq, their numbers are being cut at home," he said.

SNP Leader Alex Salmond described the attempt to gag soldiers' wives as an "outrage", adding that his party would be tabling questions to find out who authorised the move.

"This is a disgraceful action by a Labour government under pressure," he said. "It shows opposition to Blair's illegal and ill-thought out war in Iraq is forcing them to suppress debate. Rather than scaring the families of soldiers into silence, the government should be listening to their concerns."

Yesterday hundreds of demonstrators, including parents of two British soldiers killed in Iraq, marched in Glasgow to call for the withdrawal of troops. Rose Gentle, whose son Gordon was killed in a roadside blast near Basra while serving with the Royal Highland

Fusilliers, was joined by Reg Keys, father of Royal Military Police lance corporal Tom Keys, who was killed in June last year.

Rose Gentle blamed the Prime Minister for her son's death, saying: "Tony Blair is a murderer, he sent my son to get murdered and I don't want him to murder any of the other boys."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Controls Al Qaqaa Arms Depot

October 31, 2004 By JAMES GLANZ, The New York Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Oct. 30 - More than a year and a half after hundreds of tons of powerful explosives vanished at Al Qaqaa, the former weapons facility, the scene on Saturday was of a ransacked and largely denuded moonscape, ruled by the mujahedeen.

They appeared to be in at least temporary control of the sprawling site, setting up checkpoints, conducting surveillance and even detaining visitors who did not suit the fighters' inscrutable purposes. [Hey Wong, be careful about calling Iraqis "inscrutable."]

On Saturday, two British armored vehicles patrolled the distant fringes.

It was the men wearing the filigreed headcloths and nurturing a **hatred of Westerners [This guy is a real racist asshole. They hate occupiers, they get along fine with "Westerners" who also hate Bush and the Occupation]** who were running the place on Saturday. **Two employees of The New York Times drove over the berms in an all-terrain vehicle, but were questioned by a mujahedeen scout** who suddenly arrived at the place where they were taking the first known pictures of the gutted bunkers - their metal doors torn off and stolen, their dark bellies empty - since soon after the invasion began early last year.

The scout drove off, but as the two employees, both Iraqis, left Al Qaqaa, they encountered a mujahedeen checkpoint at a river crossing. The employees, Q. Mizher and a companion who asked not to be identified, were blindfolded, then searched, and driven to a safe house in the surrounding desert where they were interrogated for more than two hours. **Their captors wanted to know whether Mr. Mizher was working for the British troops who had recently entered the area from the south.**

If they were working for the troops, Mr. Mizher was told, they would be killed. If they were not helping the British, they had nothing to fear.

Mr. Mizher repeatedly assured his captors, truthfully, that he was an Iraqi journalist who had come to take pictures of the site and see the place where the explosives had once been secreted away. Eventually, he persuaded them. Both employees are now safe in Baghdad.

The first sign of trouble came when the mujahedeen scout pulled up in a truck and asked what Mr. Mizher was up to.

He decided to leave immediately, but it was already too late: six or seven mujahedeen were waiting at a riverbed crossing. All but one of them were masked, their headcloths wrapped menacingly across their faces. **[They go to classes to learn how to wrap “menacingly,” as distinct from “carefully” or “attractively.”]**

The British armored vehicles were nowhere to be found. Mr. Mizher and his companion were taken, blindfolded, to the safe house and **relentlessly questioned** by what appeared to be a higher-ranking mujahedeen officer. **[Watch that heavy breathing now.]**

This man had served in the Iraqi Army - fortunately for Mr. Mizher, who had been a captain in the army himself. He mentioned the names of several former high-ranking army officers in the area of Al Qaqaa, and the mujahedeen seemed to soften. **[Only semi-relentless at this point.]**

After they had checked his cameras, phones, identification and vehicle registration and satisfied themselves with the interrogation, the mujahedeen drove both employees back to a place near the fjord and let them go.

The mujahedeen never said why Al Qaqaa was still so important to them. *They simply melted away into the desert.* **[Really? Not just around the next building in their vehicle? They probably take “melting” lessons too. The drama is overwhelming.]**

Resistance Plays Whack-A-Mole With Marines: "The End Of America Will Be In Falluja"

NEAR FALLUJA, Iraq, Oct. 18 By DEXTER FILKINS, NYTimes

Mr. Shawket spoke while sitting in his car at a temporary American checkpoint the marines erected on the main highway just outside the city. In recent days the marines have stepped up their patrolling around the city and moved in closer, in hopes of disrupting the guerrillas and drawing them into the open.

To that end, small teams of marines have been moving along the east-west highway that connects Falluja to Baghdad, setting up checkpoints, searching cars and then moving on after 15 or 20 minutes. The aim is to surprise any insurgents who might be traveling with guns, but it is also a safety precaution, the marines say.

"We move so they don't hit us with mortars," said Sgt. Eugenio Mehjia, a 25-year-old marine who was at one of the posts.

Still, for all of the aggressiveness shown by the marines, the effectiveness of the new tactic seemed uncertain. Long lines of cars, full of unhappy Iraqis, queued up before the checkpoints. As the marines checked passing cars, two large explosions erupted off the scrub nearby. Whether they were the result of insurgents' mortars or American jets was unknown.

As the afternoon sun ebbed toward the horizon, the one clear thing seemed to be the difficulty of the marines' mission. They have found neither weapons nor insurgents but have managed to antagonize a number of Iraqis, whose opinions of the American military now could hardly be more hostile.

"The end of America will be in Falluja," said Ghazi Muhammad Ibrahim, whose car lay idle on the roadside, shot up, he said, by the marines at the checkpoint. "That small city."

DEJA-VU ALL OVER AGAIN: IRAQI OIL PIPELINE BLOWN UP



November 01, 2004 Sky.news

Saboteurs have blown up an oil pipeline in northern Iraq, in what officials say was a large explosion.

"It was big," the official said, adding that the explosion was in Riyadh, southwest of the oil centre of Kirkuk.

The Iraq-Turkey export pipeline and other domestic pipelines pass in the area.

Baghdad Deputy Governor Killed

November 01, 2004 By JIM KRANE, Associated Press Writer

The deputy governor of Baghdad province, Hatim Kamil, was killed when gunmen opened fire on his car in the southern Doura neighborhood, Iraqi authorities said. Two of his bodyguards were also wounded in the attack, officials said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

A War They Can't Win

October 30, 2004 Charley Reese, Antiwar.com

"An uptick in airstrikes and other military moves points to an imminent showdown between U.S. forces and Sunni Muslim insurgents west of Baghdad – a decisive battle that could determine whether the campaign to bring democracy and stability to Iraq can succeed."

The above quotation is the lead paragraph of an Associated Press dispatch. Note the last part of that sentence: "a decisive battle that could determine whether the campaign to bring democracy and stability to Iraq can succeed."

That's bull. In counterinsurgency warfare, there is no such thing as a "decisive battle." Of course the heavily armed American forces can win every single stand-up battle they fight in Iraq. Of course they can take Fallujah or any other city they wish to take. Americans won every stand-up battle they fought in Vietnam, but who won the war? The Vietnamese communists.

It would profit us to think about how the Vietnamese communists managed to win the war while losing every battle. In sum, they wore out our will to fight.

They were home and had no place to go. We were foreign invaders tethered to a 12,000-mile supply line. The people of Vietnam supported them because they, like most people, resent foreign invaders. The people of America came to the point where they withdrew their support because they discovered that they had been lied to by the U.S. government and because, in the end, they didn't really care whether Vietnam was communist or corrupt.

Everything in the above paragraph applies to Iraq, with one exception. In Iraq, we are tethered to a supply line that is only about 8,000 miles long. But we are the

foreign invaders, and the insurgents, most of them, are at home and have no place to go. The people support the insurgents, not us. Furthermore, the Iraqis want us out more than we want to stay. Fewer than half of Americans think the war was a good idea, and as American casualties mount, as they inevitably must, eventually Americans will decide that they don't care whether Iraq is a dictatorship or a democracy.

As I said, we can win the battle of Fallujah. But let me tell you what we can't do: We can't win the battle of Fallujah without great destruction and civilian casualties, and that will create more insurgents than we kill. There is not a finite number of insurgents whom we can kill and declare victory. The number of insurgents ebbs and flows depending on events. When we kill an Iraqi, we place upon his family a burden to get revenge. The nature of Iraqi society is large, extended families interconnected with many tribal groups. There is no way we can kill Uncle Mohammed without his sons, brothers, nieces and nephews – and, indeed, his tribe – being obligated to avenge his death.

It is our presence in Iraq that is the source of the insurgency. As with Vietnam, the insurgency will end when we leave, and not before. We are in a war we can't win.

At first glance, the insurgent might seem to be at a tremendous disadvantage, but he is not. He has no need to attack us in strength. All he needs to do is kill an American now and then; set off a bomb now and then; rain down mortar shells now and then. It is the persistence of these attacks – mere pinpricks, from a conventional military point of view – that gives him victory, for as long as he can keep them up, we can't claim victory.

Our tactical intelligence in Iraq is a miserable failure for the same reason it was in Vietnam. We can't tell the good guys from the bad guys. We can't know if our translator, our Iraqi spy, or our Iraqi clerk is really on our side or on the side of the insurgents. Their country, their language and their culture are alien to us. For 13 years, our spies failed to penetrate it, and they are still failing.

I don't want to seem a gloomy Gus, but **we should face the fact that we are very good at conventional warfare and lousy at counterinsurgency. There is no light at the end of this tunnel, and staying the course is stupid and futile.**

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

The World Has Lost Iraq's Oil

October 5th, 2004 by Youssef M. Ibrahim, USA Today

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The costs and benefits of America's occupation of Iraq vary, according to proponents and opponents, except when it comes to oil exports.

The U.S.-led invasion has resulted in the loss of an average of 2 million barrels a day of Iraqi oil from world markets. That is a significant number with huge consequences for economies around the globe.

Instead of rosy promises by the neoconservatives of the Bush administration who pushed for the invasion — partly on the premise that they would turn it into America's private gasoline-pumping station — the contrary has occurred.

The world has lost Iraq's oil. The impact is slowly taking its toll as the price of everything related to petroleum rises (from the food on the supermarket shelves to the gasoline in your car to the plastic chairs on your lawn).

The reason oil prices have been hovering around \$50 a barrel now is that most of these Iraqi exports disappeared just as oil consumption began to skyrocket around the world.

Pipelines and oil terminals from the northern fields near Kirkuk to the southern export terminals near Basra are being blown up daily by various groups of insurgents. At last count, the northern pipeline that carries oil to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan has been blown up 37 times in 12 months. Terminals in the south have been attacked at least 10 times, in effect shutting down all exports of crude oil.

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

“Handful” Show Up For Registration

November 1, 2004 By JIM KRANE

A handful of Iraqis showed up for the first day of voter registration in central Baghdad on Monday. **They refused to allow TV cameras to film them for fear of future retaliation.**

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