

GI SPECIAL 2#C37

NEED A RIDE TO THE AIRPORT?



A U.S. Army soldier looks at damaged military truck after a car bomber detonated his vehicle next to a U.S. military convoy on Baghdad's airport road November 30, 2004. U.S. officials had no comment on injuries. (Ceerwan Aziz/Reuters)

Baghdad Cut Off On All Sides: Deadly Airport Road Only Way Out

Dec. 01, 2004 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press, BAGHDAD, Iraq

The driver barreled down the road from Baghdad International Airport, his eyes darting from side to side for signs of trouble. A few hundred yards ahead, a convoy of U.S. contractors stopped on an overpass. Armed men jumped from the vehicles - weapons at the ready.

Three vehicles from the Iraqi National Guard had been struck by rocket-propelled grenades and the contractors stopped to help. Not so the rest of the cars. Fearing the gunmen [poor burnt-out old Reid still babbles about "gunmen." Time to retire him

and get somebody with a minimal grip on reality] may still be around, the driver and dozens of civilian cars and trucks crowded onto an exit road for a quick escape.



U.S. Army soldiers remove a damaged vehicle after a bomb exploded as a convoy of SUVs commonly used by civilian contractors and Iraqi officials drove past on the airport road in Baghdad, December 1. (Ceerwan Aziz/Reuters)

It is a scene repeated with alarming frequency along the white-knuckle 10-mile stretch of highway - known to U.S. troops as "RPG Alley" - which links the center of Baghdad with the airport on the western outskirts of the city.

The U.S. State Department has described the airport road as one of the most dangerous routes in Iraq, and the British Embassy has banned its diplomats from using it because of the high risk of attack.

The situation on the airport road has become a metaphor for the entire Iraq mission. More than 18 months after the fall of Saddam Hussein, the world's most powerful military cannot guarantee the safety of Iraqis, foreigners and its own troops who use one of the country's most important routes.

The four-lane road, much of it lined with scrub brush and palm trees where gunmen can hide, passes through dangerous Baghdad neighborhoods. Insurgents know they can always find plenty of targets - U.S. convoys, Iraqi military vehicles and civilian contractors.

In the latest attack, three people were injured Wednesday when a "vehicle-borne improvised explosive device" - the U.S. military term for a car bomb - detonated as several Sport Utility Vehicles, favored by U.S. and other Western security contractors, were passing by.

One of the vehicles lay overturned in the middle of the road as U.S. troops sealed off the area and two helicopters arrived to evacuate casualties. The blast occurred at the same place where a bomber rammed into a U.S. military convoy the day before, wounding several soldiers and destroying two Humvees.

U.S. military officials do not release full details of attacks on the road, possibly to avoid encouraging the insurgents. [Yeah, right. They have no idea what's going on. "Hey, my sister, did we get that SUV yesterday? I've already forgotten. God, those fiendish American commanders won't tell us what we did. How discouraging!" This is sooo feeble-minded.]

On Nov. 8, the Iraqi Interior Ministry reported that two SUVs were caught in an explosion as a convoy traveled through the Amiriyah district on the airport road. **U.S. officials released no details of the attack.**

The next day, however, CBS and NBC reported that one of those in the convoy was Charles Duelfer, who conducted the fruitless search of Iraq for weapons of mass destruction. Duelfer escaped injury but both networks reported that two of his bodyguards were killed.

Mindful of the risks, drivers have developed their own set of tricks when using the road - chief among them, stay off as much of the route as possible. Those traveling between the airport and the center of the city prefer to maneuver through other streets to minimize their time on the airport road.

Rule Number Two: Drive as fast as possible. Weave around slower-moving vehicles and if possible, don't get stuck in a traffic jam. The next vehicle might be rigged to explode. Experienced drivers glance from side to side for telltale signs of trouble - muzzle flashes, smoke or groups of **men** who may be armed. **[Reid has just tipped the resistance on how to be more successful: use more women fighters and these dimwits won't get it. All they can think about with their two brain cells are "gunmen."]**

And at all costs, avoid tailing American military vehicles or SUVs - the favorite targets.

Despite the increasing dangers, **the airport road has taken on greater importance for foreign diplomats, journalists and Iraqis because the dreadful security situation elsewhere precludes using other routes into and out of the country.**

The main highways west to Jordan and Syria are even more dangerous - especially for foreigners - because of armed insurgents around Ramadi and Fallujah who have kidnapped and beheaded both Iraqi and foreign hostages.

The road south toward Karbala and Najaf passes through a string of insurgent-controlled towns and cities dubbed "the triangle of death" because of the large number of foreigners and Iraqi Shiite Muslims waylaid over the last year.

Another road to the southwest through Kut and on to Basra is considered safer - but only relatively. As the route approaches Amarah it passes through an area notorious for carjackings.

The highway north toward Mosul, known to the U.S. military as Highway One, passes through such insurgency-plagued cities as Samarra, Tikrit and Beiji. And the U.S. military describes the situation in Mosul as "tenuous."

That leaves the airport as the "safest" way out of Baghdad.

MORE:

Resistance Cuts Key Iraq-Jordan Highway; Checkpoints & Police Stations Captured

Nov. 30, 2004 By TIM JOHNSON, Knight Ridder Newspapers

A resurgence in armed actions broke out in areas west of Fallujah along a key highway leading to Jordan, just weeks after a U.S.-led military offensive in the city.

Insurgents took over and briefly held nine police stations and highway checkpoints, blowing up two buildings, police said. Drivers reported that insurgents also took control of large sections of the highway leading west out of Iraq, stopping traffic.

Insurgents blew up two badly damaged buildings Tuesday in Khaledia, between Fallujah and Ramadi, a small city on the highway leading to Jordan, police said.

"One of them was a police station. It had been attacked so many times before that one side was collapsed and it had already been evacuated," police 1st Lt. Basam al Kubaisi said. **"The other building was sometimes used by the U.S. Army."**

Insurgents also took over six checkpoints west of Ramadi, al Delemi said.

Raykan Ali, 34, who drives passengers between Iraq and Jordan, said insurgents stopped his vehicle, searched it and took gold jewelry from his passengers.

"I didn't see any policemen on the road. There was some American (military presence), but it was scattered," he said.

Insurgents seized other police checkpoints and stations near the town of Baghdadi, al Rutba and Tanaf, policeman Jomaa A'atia said.

"The insurgents killed one of my colleagues because he didn't give them his car, and they took two cars from the al Rutba police station and confiscated more than 25 weapons," he said.

More:

Airport Road Bomb Wounds 5

01 December 2004 Aljazeera

In Baghdad, a car bomb exploded near a US convoy on the road to the airport, killing the driver and wounding five soldiers, the military said.

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:

2 New York Area Firefighters Killed In Iraq

(New York Times, December 1, 2004) & 11/30/2004 By Erin Mcclam, Associated Press

Two firefighters from the New York area have been killed while serving in Iraq. Christian Engeldrum, 39, of Ladder Co. 61 in the Bronx, was killed when his vehicle came under attack outside Baghdad, and a volunteer firefighter from Cranford, N.J., Stephen C. Benish, 20, was killed while on patrol in Ramadi.

Sgt. Christian P. Engeldrum, 39, who was killed Monday, is the first firefighter or city employee of any kind to die in Iraq since the U.S.-led war began, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said.

Another New York firefighter, Daniel J. Swift, 24, of Ladder Co. 43 in Manhattan, was riding in the same vehicle and suffered shrapnel wounds, Bloomberg said. Swift was in Germany for treatment and was expected to recover.

At the Ladder 61 firehouse in the Bronx where Engeldrum served, a "We Support Our Troops" banner that bore his name was replaced Tuesday with black-and-purple bunting to signify mourning.

Funeral arrangements were pending for Engeldrum, who was survived by a wife and two sons.

ENOUGH. PAYBACK IS OVERDUE. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



A US soldier attends a memorial ceremony for two fallen comrades at a US military base in the restive city of Ramadi, 100 kms west of Baghdad. (11.30.04 AFP/Ahmad al-Rubaye)

Soldiers From Fort Lewis Come Under Fire In Mosul, One Wounded

December 1, 2004 AP, MOSUL, Iraq

U.S. soldiers from Fort Lewis came under fire Wednesday in Mosul, Iraq.

Witnesses said one soldier from the First Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment of the Stryker Brigade was injured in the gun battle.

The shooting erupted as troops traveling through western Mosul on a mission to discuss the January election with Iraqis stopped at a gasoline station. [Well, they got the only kind of “discussion” a foreign occupation understands.]

The witnesses say the attackers fled into a rocky open field and escaped after a half-hour firefight.

Western Mosul is one of the most tense parts of the city, the third largest in Iraq with about 1 million inhabitants.

More Fighting In Mosul; Casualties Not Reported

01 December 2004 Aljazeera

In Mosul, clashes erupted between US forces and Iraqi fighters in the industrial area west of Mosul city. **Casualties among the two sides are not yet known.**

NO JOY HERE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Marines wade ashore while conducting military operations near Yusufiya, south of Baghdad November 28, 2004. (Thaier Al-Sudani/Reuters)

Humvee Destroyed In Latifiya; Casualties Not Reported

01 December 2004 Aljazeera

And in Latifiya, south of Baghdad, a number of US soldiers and Iraqi national guards were injured when a car bomb exploded at a joint checkpoint on a bridge.

A US Humvee was also destroyed in the attack.

Talib al-Janabi, an Iraqi journalist, told Aljazeera that "**casualties are unknown as yet** as US forces have closed all roads leading to the explosion site".

Fighting In Falluja; Casualties Not Reported

01 December 2004 Aljazeera

In Falluja, clashes erupted on Tuesday evening in several neighbourhoods between US forces and Iraqi fighters in the Julan neighbourhood.

U.S. Troops Still Dying In Ramadi Amid “Relative Peace, Tranquility”

(Los Angeles Times, December 1, 2004)

Although the assault on neighboring Fallujah has stemmed the flow of militants, daily insurgent attacks still make Ramadi one of the most lethal spots for American troops in Iraq. Officers refer to Ramadi’s “relative peace and tranquility.”

Another U.S. “Commander” Commits Another War Crime In Falluja: Raids Neutral Red Crescent Centre

[Scumbags like this were born 60 years too late. They would have had a great career working for Hitler or Stalin. For awhile.]

01 December 2004 Aljazeera

Abu Ayub al-Isawi, a witness to the fighting, told Aljazeera that US forces called on Falluja families through loudspeakers to head towards the Red Crescent centre in a house in al-Shurta neighbourhood.

"US forces then surrounded the Red Crescent centre after people had arrived there to receive aid supplies, preventing anyone from exiting it," he said.

"The forces locked the house's external gate and treated all the people inside, including the Red Crescent employees, very badly. There was an atmosphere of extreme rage among the citizens."

He added: "US forces later allowed only women, children and males, aged under 15 and above 55, to get out."

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

British Troops Attacked In Iraq;

01/12/2004 Breaking News.ie

British troops came under fire again today at their temporary base in Camp Dogwood, Iraq.

Three rockets packed with explosives landed and exploded in quick succession at 3pm (midday Irish time). There were not **believed to have been** any casualties. **[What, it's a matter of "belief?" They don't actually know?]**

More Notes From A Lost War; "We're In Here For The Long Haul"

November 29, 2004 By John F. Burns The New York Times

Early on in U.S. military planning, commanders knew that a campaign to wrest Falluja from the insurgents would necessitate an offensive here, but limitations of logistics, air power and troops dictated that the two offensives be staged sequentially.

As U.S. commanders turn their concentration toward the area of sullen towns and villages that straddle the southern approaches to Baghdad, they face a battle that is in many ways as crucial to their hopes as Falluja has been. **And they enter a battleground where the burning enmity for America are at least as intense.**

Without a major success here, the battle for Falluja, 80 kilometers, or 50 miles, to the northwest, could come to be seen as a Pyrrhic victory, one that reduced much of the city to rubble, cost more than 50 U.S. combat deaths and prompted many insurgents to move on and regroup for yet more chapters in an ever-lengthening war.

Like many U.S. officers these days Colonel Ron Johnson, 48, a native of Duxbury, Massachusetts, who is the commander of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit **makes no pretense, after the insurgents' crushing defeat in Falluja and a series of raids in recent nights that have captured dozens of suspected "bad guys," as U.S. soldiers call the insurgents, that the day when America can withdraw its troops is on the horizon.**

"We're in here for the long haul," he said.

Still, the mood among marine officers is cautiously upbeat, **and the belief, as put to reporters embedded for the offensive, is that the war can still be won. [There's a really ringing statement of confidence!]**

Early on in U.S. military planning, commanders knew that a campaign to wrest Falluja from the insurgents would necessitate an offensive here, but limitations of logistics, air power and troops dictated that the two offensives be staged sequentially.

One disadvantage of the staggered timing was that it gave the Falluja rebels a ready refuge. [And there's one more reason the war was lost a long time ago.]

24-Year-Old Father Leaves Behind 3 Sons, Pregnant Wife

December 1, 2004 HOUSTON Local 2 News

A Stafford family is in mourning Wednesday after a loved one lost his life while serving in Iraq.

Relatives said Joe Guereca Jr., 24, died Tuesday during his second tour in Iraq. He had recently been in Texas on leave from duty in October.

The soldier was the father of three boys and his wife was expecting their fourth son in January.

Guereca graduated from Dulles High School in 2000.

TROOP NEWS

GI Threatens Suicide Over Return To Iraq: “He Would Be Forced To Kill More People”

[THANKS TO LOU P WHO E-MAILED THIS IN:]

November 30, 2004 By FRANK WASHKUCH Jr. Connecticut Post

STRATFORD — A serviceman, apparently distraught over the prospect of being sent back to the war in Iraq, threatened to kill himself as he stood naked and screaming outside his house.

Police took the man into custody at his Fernwood Drive house. He was taken for treatment to Bridgeport Hospital.

Dispatched to investigate a report of a possible suicide attempt Thursday, officers saw the man naked with blood on his body in front of the garage area, police said. As officers approached, the man yelled at them and ran back into the house, according to police.

After struggling with officers, the man told police that he was scheduled to be sent back to Iraq in January, but didn't want to because he would be forced to kill more people, police said.

The man, who said that he had been drinking, told officers that "he just wanted to die," police said.

After Stratford Emergency Medical Services transported the man to Bridgeport Hospital, he attempted to grab a guard by the throat before he was subdued and placed in restraints, police said.

Officers recovered a kitchen knife, a pair of metal clamps, green ropes and suicide notes covered with blood from the house, according to police.

Shocking News: Pentagon Truly Desperate: Officers Might Have To Spend A Whole Year In Iraq!

November 29, 2004 by Tom Regan, *csmonitor.com*

Faced with the problem of protecting upcoming elections and securing former insurgent stronghold, the US military tells NBC it will need between 10,000 and 11,000 more troops in Iraq. NBC-TV reported Monday night that this will "temporarily" bring the total number of US forces in Iraq to 150,000. As a result many soldiers and marines who were scheduled to leave Iraq this month will have to stay longer, while other troops will be sent to Iraq earlier than scheduled.

<p>The Baltimore Sun reports that the Army is hard pressed to find enough officers for staff jobs in Iraq and Afghanistan and will double the length of their tours in those countries from 179 days at present to a full 12 months.</p>

Other extraordinary steps ordered or under consideration include pulling officers out of military schools or delaying entry into such programs. They could also curtail family oriented programs such as the one that allows soldiers to extend their tours at a stateside base so their children can finish their senior year in high school.

The Army is struggling to fill hundreds of staff jobs for majors and lieutenant colonels in war zone headquarters and in the past month began stripping majors and lieutenant colonels from their Pentagon billets and ordering them to Iraq and Afghanistan.

It's Official: 10,400 Troops Fucked, Can't Come Home; & Two More Battalions Off For Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

[THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: IRAQ ELECTION PREDICTION: BUSH WINS BY 3 MILLION VOTES]

December 1, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1232-04 & By DAVID STOUT, New York Times & By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

Today the Secretary of Defense approved a request by the Commander of Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF) to extend two Army brigades and a Marine Expeditionary Unit operating in Iraq.

The Secretary also approved the Commander's request for two additional infantry battalions to deploy to Iraq.

The increase, which will raise American troop strength in Iraq to about 150,000 - the highest level since the war began in March 2003.

The United States Army's 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, the 2nd Brigade 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas and the United States Marine Corps' 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa, Japan, will be extended beyond their current rotation dates.

The decisions were to be announced later Wednesday. Members of two battalions of the 82nd Airborne, and their families, were notified of the decision Tuesday, the official said. The battalions were given what the Army calls a warning order, alerting them that they will be going.

This extension also includes the 66th Transportation Company, Kleber Kasern, Germany. The length of extension varies between the units. Two battalions from the 82nd Airborne Division will deploy to Iraq for an **anticipated duration** of approximately 120 days to support security efforts during the election period. **[These are the same geniuses who “anticipated” the troops would come home in 2003.]**

This approved request adds an additional 1,500 active duty soldiers, and **extends approximately 10,400 active duty combat forces, which includes 2,300 Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit off of the ESSEX Expeditionary Strike Group.**

This extension is in conjunction with the current force rotation, and will increase the U. S. forces in theater from 17 to 20 brigades, increasing the force size in Iraq to approximately 150,000 personnel during the election period.

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.

Florida Marine Buried At Arlington

(Washington Post, December 1, 2004, Pg. B2)

More than 100 family, friends and fellow Marines gathered at the Old Post Chapel at Arlington National Cemetery to mourn Capt. Patrick Marc M. Rapicault, 34, who lost his life in Iraq. Rapicault, of St. Augustine, Fla., was the 97th service member killed in Iraq to be buried at Arlington.

Arkansas Soldier Dies

November 30, 2004 CAMDEN (AP)

A soldier from Camden has died from wounds sustained while serving in Iraq, the soldier's father said.

Michael Smith died Saturday at age 24 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington DC.

His father, Donald Ray Smith of Camden, told the Camden News that his son had not been conscious in his two weeks at Walter Reed. Smith had been treated at a military hospital in Germany before being flown home.

The father said Smith was serving with the 39th Infantry Brigade near Baghdad when he was shot in the head by a sniper. The soldier was riding in a Humvee on patrol when he was wounded.

Donald Smith said his son was a computer whiz and planned to attend college when he completed his military service. He said his son never succumbed to peer pressure and was a good child and a good man.

A military funeral will be arranged by Reddick Funeral Home of Camden.

The Widows Of War Deaths In Combat Ricochet Here At Home

(USA Today, December 1, 2004, Pg. 1)

As if by ricochet, each American service man and woman killed in combat leaves behind a trail of secondary casualties: spouses, children, parents. The widows and widowers of war dead are among the conflict's walking wounded. Amid heavy fighting in recent weeks, the toll is rising.

British Gulf Veterans' Say Hurt Soldiers Treated Like Shit

30 November, 2004 BBC News

"I don't trust the MoD now," says Damien, "I went to war and did my job. I received an injury, came back and they have left me to my own devices."

Soldiers on sick leave after serving in Iraq have told a BBC programme of their anger at not receiving proper medical or financial support from the Army.

Lance Corporal David McGough, 22, was discharged without a pension when military doctors contested his claims of post traumatic stress, despite the fact he twice attempted suicide and scrubbed his body with bleach.

Paratrooper Damien Mason, 20, whose service was cut short by severe head injuries which left him epileptic, also says he has had insufficient help.

Another soldier, who asked not to be named, told BBC ONE's Real Story that he was funding specialist care for his burns himself, while another serviceman with gun shot wounds said the MoD had been apathetic towards his case.

Yorkshire paratrooper Damien Mason, 20, needed brain surgery in a Kuwaiti hospital after his helicopter came under fire while helping soldiers on the ground in Al Majar Al-Kabir.

Currently on sick leave in Flixton, near Scarborough, Damien is now an epileptic but has had just one visit from an army welfare officer.

His father has had to give up work to look after him and has arranged most of his son's hospital visits himself.

"I don't trust the MoD now," says Damien, "I went to war and did my job. I received an injury, came back and they have left me to my own devices."

The programme also hears from a widow whose husband committed suicide aged 44, after returning from five months in the Gulf with the territorial army.

Sandra Mahoney weeps as she recalls finding her husband, Peter, slumped dead in his car in the garage of their home in Botcherby, on the outskirts of Carlisle

"He put his uniform on for the last time, shaved all his hair off. He got up early and it was just like he was going back to Iraq.

"But he'd turned the engine off after filling the car with exhaust fumes and he just sat and went to sleep."

Donna, who has been left to bring up the couple's four children, says families of soldiers should be sent information about post traumatic stress disorder.

"If I'd known more then I could have helped him more."

AWOL Soldier Arrested In Birmingham

30/11/2004 DeHavilland Information Services

An Iraq war veteran who went missing this morning has been arrested in Birmingham on suspicion of firearms offences.

Police had appealed for friends and relatives to help find Irish Guard Lance Corporal James Piotrowski after a military rifle was stolen from an Army barracks.

Two women and a man have been arrested on firearms offences in connection with the investigation.

At a press conference this morning, West Midlands Police said they were concerned for the safety of the 21-year-old soldier, who is based at London's Wellington barracks

Lance Corporal Piotrowski, from the Northfield area of Birmingham, served three months in Iraq at the height of the conflict and was described as "a brave and caring soldier".

The soldier, believed to be in possession of a standard issue Army SA80 rifle, was arrested in the Dudley Road area of the city.

Army Admits No Money To Buy Toilet Paper For Troops; (Bush's Asshole War-Profiteer Buddies Took It All)

December 1, 2004 BY JEANNE MILES Staff Writer, The Caledonian-Record, LYNDON VERMONT

Another 70 soldiers have been ordered to deploy to support the U.S. war in Iraq.

The Vermont National Guard announced Monday that members of the 1st 172nd Battalion headquartered in St. Albans will leave in early January to train at Camp Shelby, Miss. This advance leadership team will be joined by 350 more soldiers in February.

Members of a support group for these soldiers and their families will gather Sunday afternoon at the Lyndonville Armory to fill Christmas stockings for the troops. Chris Charron, one of the organizers, said the stockings will be filled with such items as hand wipes, candy and toilet paper.

"We've heard there is a shortage of toilet paper at Camp Shelby," Charron said Tuesday. "Each stocking will contain a roll of toilet paper."

Master Sgt. Jill Hicks, assistant public affairs officer for the Vermont National Guard said such a shortage could be highly possible with the number of soldiers at the camp and with a limited amount of money for supplies. {"Limited" by who? What the fuck is she talking about? Halliburton got billions, assholes in Congress pay themselves a fortune in salaries, and money is "limited?" Only when the enemy is in Washington DC running the government, not in Iraq! How much more of this will people take? Even the Ukrainians know when to kick ass, and they lived for 50 years under a dictatorship run by the same kind of rich, privileged arrogant, greedy, money grabbing scum we have in DC right now.]

"If families are hearing it, it must be true," Hicks said. [Duh!]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Allawi “Government” Forces Wilting Under Relentless Attacks; Bush Stooge Says U.S. Troops Have To Stay Another 10 Years!

November 30, 2004 Richard A. Oppel Jr., James Glanz, New York Times

Mosul, Iraq – Iraqi police and national guard forces **[translation: forces working for the U.S. Occupation]** whose performance is crucial to securing January elections, **[translation: crucial to pulling off rigged “elections” for a government of traitors loyal to the U.S. occupation]** are foundering.

While Bush administration officials say the training is progressing and that the Iraqis have proved tactically useful and have fought bravely in some instances, **local American commanders and security officials say both Iraqi forces are riddled with problems.**

In the most violent provinces, they say, the Iraqis are so intimidated that many are reluctant to show up and do not tell their families where they work, have yet to receive adequate training or weapons, present a danger to American troops they fight alongside and are unreliable either because of corruption, desertion or infiltration.

Given the weak performance of Iraqi forces, ***any major withdrawal of U.S. troops for at least a decade would invite chaos, a senior official at the Interior Ministry, whose name could not be used, said in an interview last week.***

South of Baghdad, where U.S. troops are still trying to drive out insurgents after the recent offensive in Fallujah, **American officers warn their own troops to be prepared to “duck and cover” to avoid stray shots fired by Iraqi recruits.**

In the northern city of Mosul, almost the entire police force and large parts of several Iraqi national guard battalions deserted during an insurgent uprising this month. Iraqi leaders **[translation: U.S. Occupation command]** were forced to use guard battalions of Kurdish soldiers to secure the city, kindling ethnic tensions with Arabs. Police stations in western Mosul have perhaps several hundred officers in an area that is supposed to have several thousand.

For those brave enough to come to work, “right now, all they’re doing is looking out the window and making sure the bad guys aren’t coming to get them,” said one U.S. military official in Mosul, who did not want his name to be used.

In a telephone interview on Saturday, Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, the U.S. commander overseeing training of the Iraqi security forces, acknowledged the shortcomings in the Iraqis' performance, particularly by the police in Mosul and in Anbar province, which stretches west from Ramadi to the Syrian border. **[Petraeus is the showboating clown who used to give media press conferences in his fancy dress uniform bragging about he had pacified Mosul. Haven't heard much of that out of him lately. Now he's got a different line of idiot bullshit.]**

[Here he goes.] U.S. military and Iraqi government officials, he added, are taking steps to address the weaknesses. **Police training courses are being toughened to "focus much more on survival in a very lethal environment," he said. Police are also being provided larger weapons and more secure police stations. [Wow! Why didn't they think of that in Vietnam? Oh? You say they did think of that in Vietnam? And that they had blowhard generals just like Petraeus in Vietnam too? Who were just as full of shit? How did that end?]**

In addition, there will be greater efforts to ensure that Iraqi police will be backed up by other Iraqi security forces and U.S. troops. **"You can't have them feeling that if they're surrounded, no one's coming to the rescue," he said. [Really? But if they're surrounded, no one is coming to the rescue. Oh, I got it, Petraeus will show up wearing all his medals and go "boo!" Or maybe show them some video clips of his fancy ceremony when he got back to the USA after "pacifying Mosul."]**

Places like Mosul are a particular worry for U.S. commanders, [oops] who so far have been unable to slow the insurgents' campaign of intimidation. In the past 11 days, the bodies of at least 69 murdered **[translation: executed as traitors]** Iraqis have been found around Mosul, some with notes attached condemning their work with Iraqi forces **[translation: work with the U.S. occupation to betray their country]** or with their military identification cards placed atop their corpses.

Many of the young Iraqi troops feel they are marked men, even without combat. To prevent insurgents from discovering their identities, many lie to everyone, wives and family included, about their real jobs. **[Nothing new here: American traitors who were working for the British Empire did the same thing in the USA in 1776-83, and a whole lot of them ended up dead in ditches too. That's why thousands of those traitors ran off to live in Canada. They knew they were "marked men." Gee, all those people we always thought were U.S. patriots must really have been "terrorists" and "George Washington dead-enders."]**

In an interview, one member of the Iraqi 36th Commando Battalion, an elite group trained by the American Special Forces, said that he tells his wife he is a firefighter, offering her nothing more to explain weeks-long absences. Another commando said he tells his family that his business requires frequent travel to the Syrian border. Some commandos, from the south, say they tell family members their factory foreman in Baghdad won't let them come home.

"I don't tell anyone," said the Iraqi commando who tells his wife he is a firefighter. "Just my brother, and he doesn't tell anyone because they will attack me."

MORE:

Occupation “Electoral Commission” Runs Away From Mosul U.S. Controls One Building, A Few Police Stations

BAD PLACE TO BE. COME ON HOME NOW.



U.S. Army 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry soldiers return fire during a gun battle with insurgents in **Mosul** Dec. 1, 2004. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

MOSUL, Nov 28(AFP):

Iraqi officials say holding elections in parts of Iraq's main northern city of Mosul may not be possible, with policemen afraid to wear their uniforms and voter registration offices yet to open.

A virtually nonexistent police force and the daily killing of Iraqi soldiers and national guard have raised serious concerns as to whether residents of this ethnically mixed city would be able, let alone willing to vote on January 30.

Duraïd Kashmula, governor of Ninevah province, speaking to AFP late Friday, said members of a preparatory committee sent from Baghdad by the independent electoral commission, the body charged with overseeing national elections, left Mosul in the wake of the recent violence and that no date has been fixed yet for their return.

US and Iraqi forces have occupied the provincial building and key police stations in the city as they conduct raids on suspected insurgent hideouts.

The governor himself has been the target of several assassination attempts in recent weeks, according to the US military. His movements are restricted.

Another Pipeline Blown Up



01 December 2004 Aljazeera.Net

An explosive device was detonated on Tuesday in northern Iraq, setting ablaze a pipeline transporting crude oil to al-Masyab thermal power station, south of Baghdad, Aljazeera has learned.

Leader Of Collaborator Party Killed

01 December 2004 Aljazeera

In Hibhib, northeast of Baquba, a senior leader of the Islamic Dawa party, Abd al-Amir Hasan, was killed when armed men opened fire on him.

Four Occupation Guards Killed In Samara

1 December 2004 Focus 1 News, Baghdad.

Four military servicemen from the Iraqi National Guard have been killed during an attack today North of Baghdad, AFP informed, citing medical and police sources.

The military servicemen were killed today afternoon in an attack in Samara suburbs, at 125 km North of Baghdad.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“An Environment Where You Are Almost Universally Despised”

An Interview with Chris Hedges by Sarah Ruth van Gelder Winter 2005 Issue yes magazine

I think that part of the tragedy of Vietnam is that we blame the wrong people for the war. It's not the fault of the 19-year-old kids who were sent there. It's the fault of the politicians who sent them.

YES! editor Sarah Ruth van Gelder asked Chris Hedges to draw on his years spent in war zones to reflect on the experiences of young Americans now fighting in Iraq.

CHRIS HEDGES: Iraq is a particularly bad situation for combat soldiers and Marines because it is classic insurgency warfare. It's very similar to what soldiers and Marines experienced in Vietnam, what Israeli soldiers experience in Gaza and on the West Bank, and what the French experienced in Algeria.

You have an elusive enemy . You're not fighting a set organized force, the way we were, for example, in the first Persian Gulf War. So you very rarely see your attacker, and this builds up a great deal of frustration. **This frustration is compounded by the fact that you live in an environment where you are almost universally despised.**

I think that part of the tragedy of Vietnam is that we blame the wrong people for the war. It's not the fault of the 19-year-old kids who were sent there. It's the fault of the politicians who sent them.

And years after the war, people who should be culpable -- the Henry Kissingers, the Robert McNamaras -- are our elder statesmen writing big thick tomes about diplomacy or their years of government service.

I grew up in a farm town where almost everyone went to the service, including almost all my relatives. They're good, decent, hard-working people who believe what they're told - - who believe in patriotism, who believe in the country, who believe in the goodness of the state.

When they get into a situation like Vietnam or Iraq, they suddenly realize how they have been manipulated and used. When they come back and try to speak out about that, the message is so painful and unpalatable to those who prefer the myth that many people not only don't want to hear them, but shunt them aside.

So on the one hand, I think we need to listen closely to what they say, and on the other hand, we need to remember who is ultimately accountable for these wars; it's not the kids that are over there, it's the people who sent them.

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.

Why The War Is Lost: Beating Up 5 Year Old Kids Won't Work; Iraq Will End As Vietnam Did:

November 18, 2004 by Martin Van Creveld, LewRockwell.com.

In international life, an armed force that keeps beating down on a weaker opponent will be seen as committing a series of crimes; therefore it will end up by losing the support of its allies, its own people, *and its own troops*.

The end result is always disintegration and defeat; *if U.S. troops in Iraq have not yet started fragging their officers, the suicide rate among them is already exceptionally high.*

That is why the present adventure will almost certainly end as the previous one did. *Namely, with the last US troops fleeing the country while hanging on to their helicopters' skids.*

Martin Van Creveld is professor of history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. ***He has written a number of books that have influenced modern military theory, including *Fighting Power*, *Command in War*, and most significantly, *The Transformation of War*. He is also the author of *The Rise and Decline of the State*.***

As of 2004, Moshe Dayan is remembered, if he is remembered at all, mainly as the symbol of Israeli military power on the one hand and as one of the architects of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Agreement on the other. In 1966 [when he traveled to Vietnam to see the war] he was fifty-one years old.

Some people claim that the US won the War in Vietnam, to which I can only say that I strongly disagree.

In the whole of South Vietnam there was not a single road that was really safe against the Viet Cong. Nor was there anything to prevent the enemy from returning even to those places that had been most thoroughly "cleansed" and "pacified."

Others argue that Vietnam differed from Iraq, saying that it was essentially a conventional war that was lost because the American civilian leadership failed to provide its Armed Forces with proper strategic direction. It is of course true that there are considerable differences between the two.

Still, recalling Dayan's observations, I think there are three main reasons why the similarities are more important.

First, according to Dayan, the most important operational problem the US Forces were facing was intelligence, in other words the inability to distinguish the enemy from either the physical surroundings or the civilian population.

Had intelligence been available then their enormous superiority in every kind of military hardware would have enabled them to win the War easily enough.

In its absence, most of the blows they delivered - including no fewer than six million tons of bombs dropped - hit empty air.

All they did was make the enemy disperse and merge into the civilian population, thus making it even harder to find him.

Worst of all, lack of accurate intelligence meant that the Americans kept hitting noncombatants by mistake. They thus drove huge segments of the population straight into the arms of the Viet Cong; nothing is more conducive to hatred than the sight of relatives and friends being killed.

Second, as Dayan saw clearly enough, the campaign for hearts and minds did not work.

Many of the figures being published about the progress it was making turned out to be bogus, designed to set the minds of the folks at home at rest.

In other cases any progress laboriously made over a period of months was undone in a matter of minutes as the Viet Cong attacked, destroying property and killing "collaborators." **Above all, the idea that the Vietnamese people wanted to become Americanized was an illusion. All the vast majority really wanted was to be left alone and get on with their lives.**

The third and most important reason why I think Vietnam is relevant to the situation in Iraq is because the Americans found themselves in the unfortunate position where they were beating down on the weak.

To quote Dayan: "any comparison between the two armies was astonishing. On the one hand there was the American Army, complete with helicopters, an air force, armor, electronic communications, artillery, and mind-boggling riches; to say nothing of ammunition, fuel, spare parts, and equipment of all kinds. **On the other there were the (North Vietnamese troops) who had been walking on foot for four months, carrying some artillery rounds on their backs and using a tin spoon to eat a little ground rice from a tin plate.**"

That, of course, was precisely the problem.

In private life, an adult who keeps beating down on a five year old - " even such a one as originally attacked him with a knife" - will be perceived as committing a crime; therefore he will lose the support of bystanders and end up by being arrested, tried and convicted.

In international life, an armed force that keeps beating down on a weaker opponent will be seen as committing a series of crimes; therefore it will end up by losing the support of its allies, its own people, and its own troops.

Depending on the quality of the forces - " whether they are draftees or professionals, the effectiveness of the propaganda machine, the nature of the political process, and so on - " - things may happen quickly or take a long time to mature. ***However, the outcome is always the same. He (or she) who does not understand this does not understand anything about war; or, indeed, human nature.***

In other words, he who fights against the weak - " and the rag-tag Iraqi militias are very weak indeed -" and loses, loses.

He who fights against the weak and wins also loses.

To kill an opponent who is much weaker than yourself is unnecessary and therefore cruel; to let that opponent kill you is unnecessary and therefore foolish.

As Vietnam and countless other cases prove, no armed force however rich, however powerful, however, advanced, and however well motivated is immune to this dilemma.

The end result is always disintegration and defeat; if U.S. troops in Iraq have not yet started fragging their officers, the suicide rate among them is already exceptionally high.

That is why the present adventure will almost certainly end as the previous one did. Namely, with the last US troops fleeing the country while hanging on to their helicopters' skids.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Jordanian Body, Drivers Held By US Command

2nd December, 2004 Big News Network

U.S. forces have been holding two Jordanian drivers and the body of a third for a month at a military base near Fallujah, officials said Tuesday.

Amman's daily al-Dustour quoted Jordanian Member of Parliament Fawwaz al-Zuhbi as saying U.S. troops had shot and killed a driver, Murad Mahmoud, and were holding his body as well as his brother and another Jordanian driver for unknown reasons.

The Jordanian drivers were transporting cars to Iraq when they were attacked by the U.S. forces, he said.

Zuhbi said the Jordanian Foreign Ministry was in contact with the U.S. Army command in Iraq to retrieve the body and secure the release of the other two drivers.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Worth Checking Out:

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/textbookdisclaimers/index.htm>

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Afghan Crooks Tell U.S. To Fuck Off; They Want Their Opium Crop

(London Financial Times, December 1, 2004, Pg. 10)

The Kabul government warned the United States and Britain against spraying herbicide on opium poppy fields in Afghanistan, saying this would constitute an affront to national sovereignty.

CLASS WAR NEWS

Millions Of Italians Strike Against Billionaire Government

December 01 2004 John Hooper in Rome, The Guardian

Millions of Italians stopped work yesterday in protest at the economic policies of Silvio Berlusconi's government.

A nationwide half-day stoppage crippled public transport and shut factories and banks. Alitalia cancelled more than 100 flights.

Government departments and post offices were shut all day. Doctors and nurse also staged an eight-hour strike, though emergency services were maintained.

Mr Berlusconi was voted into office largely because Italians believed the billionaire-turned-politician could bring his Midas touch to bear on Italy's sclerotic economy.

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