

## **GI SPECIAL 2#C9**

**ENOUGH**



MSNBC

# **COMBAT-GROUND** **ZERO**

**Sent:** October 25, 2004 4:19 AM  
**Subject:** COMBAT-GROUND ZERO  
**To:** GI Special  
**From:** Soldier, Baquba

I for one will disagree with Bush, or Kerry, or anyone who gets elected to the most powerful office in the world with an inclination to bomb random countries of their choosing.

**I will oppose anyone who thinks that an act of war is the ideal solution to conform helpless third-world countries into corporate/democratic submission.**

“Get the fuck down!!”

This was the last thing I heard before the ringing in my ears subdued the noises around me.

I know this feeling well, it happens every time a rocket propelled grenade explodes a mere ten feet away. First comes the ringing in the ears, then a dull silence lasting only for a few seconds. Suddenly and with much relief, all the noise comes back. You can hear again, and the sound of opposing machine gun fire and cannon blasts from tanks fills the void of the fleeting calm. When your hearing escapes your senses, it only adds to the confusion. They tell you to wear earplugs, but for this reason you don't. Sometimes you need to hear your buddy yelling at you to duck away from a flying piece of explosive ordinance.

There is something about the sudden loss of hearing that adds to the surrealistic ambiance of combat-ground zero. As you kneel down behind the open armored door of your humvee, it's interesting to sit back, for just a quick moment, and realize the perplexity of the violent ballet before you. The tank blasting furiously down garbage-ridden alleyways. Infantrymen running with low profiles behind the makeshift cover of brick walls, leading the sights of their rifles to any arbitrary threat that may pop out.

You remember watching a movie in basic training. What was it called? Didn't they make a video game about it? Oh yeah, *Black Hawk Down*.

For a moment, it reminds you of that action packed war movie. The three story buildings with many windows. The flat roofs made from compressed clay mortar. Soldiers wearing tan uniforms brandishing the American flag on their right arms, running in columns towards a barrage of gun fire. Explosions from Russian-made rockets. Bullets pinging off the pavement. Dust and debris fragmenting off the walls. Complete and utter confusion. It looks like a scene from a Hollywood set. Not real, but not fake either. Good acting, great props. And with the sound off it doesn't feel like you're there. Somehow you feel like a member of the audience, watching a movie being played in freeze framed-slow motion.

Within seconds, it all comes back to you. It's as though the sound makes it real again. Maybe this is all you know, from years of watching television and movies. When I was a child, it's what I thought made a movie great. The big explosions and massive “Booms” of a good action flick set itself aside from that of a cheesy romance.

**But this is serious. Shots are being fired everywhere. You're right in the middle of the kill sack with nowhere to go. The only means of escape is to fight it out. Throw as much lead as you can at the bastards...overwhelming firepower. With terrifying awareness you know that this is for real; there is no Rambo to save the day. You and your buddies are being shot at, and it isn't fun...**

Or is it? Running for cover and throwing grenades and shooting a machine gun and cursing the enemy is what you've been trained to do your whole life.

As a child playing GI Joe in the backyard, imaginary combat was the real adventure. It was a cool tough guy act, and you had the wood-carved guns and action figures to prove it. But when you actually hear a bullet wiz by your ears and see an air born rocket close enough to read the serial number, you can feel The Edge. You sense the impending doom of everything you hold dear in life. Death rides on every searing bullet. You know The End was near, you saw The End spiral by, and it was very real.

Your heart pumps faster than your brain can fire strategic impulses of survival. With every gunshot and explosion, your stomach sinks to your toes and then immediately soars to the back of your throat. Adrenaline shoots into your veins like a magnificent bolt of lightning and brilliant flashes of white fury fill your bloodshot eyes. **For these reasons, I know, combat will get you higher than any drug known to man.**

**As you fire a barrage of shots at the window from where muzzle flash is coming, you realize that this is something special. For good or ill, for what's wrong or right, combat is now and forever will be the abyssal black hole of humanity—wherein lie all that is savage and cruel and terrifying and intriguing. In a firefight, there is no guilt or innocence, no purity or sin. The only thing that matters in this world is what side of the bullet you are on. You cannot think about the moral implications of killing while you're being shot at.**

**But when the dust settles and the smoke clears and dead bodies line the streets, you begin to ask yourself, "Why?" Wiping the sweat from your brow and taking a long sip of cold fresh water, you contemplate the meaning of it all. Did it have to happen, does it ever? What does it prove? Who can proudly claim victory in the face of so much bloodshed?**

You replay the events of the battle that took place no more than an hour ago. You remember the gunmen who were found dead, hiding inside closets of bullet-ridden houses. You remember their cold stares with dark and glossy eyes. Their hands covered in blood as they clutched the clothing around their sucking chest wound.

In between the sporadic gunfire, you remembered seeing soldiers carrying away the wounded from other homes, the mothers crying and the children frightened. You recall someone saying that the wounded gunmen were hiding from us, and that no one should help them, they should be left to die.

**You saw a detainee restrained with his hands tied behind his back. You remember him begging for water, almost in tears. A translator discovered he was running ammunition for the gunmen. It seemed quite brave of him, considering he wasn't a day older than twelve. While pondering the young age of the detainee you recalled hearing a radio transmission confirming twelve enemy kills and eight enemy wounded. All of who were under the age of eighteen.**

**Everyday I read the news I grow more and more frustrated by how this war is perceived by the many. I find myself stewing in disgust to read reports of fellow American soldiers dying in malicious explosions and chaotic urban assaults. As I read more, I find myself cursing even more carnage as revealed through the updated Iraqi death tolls. My mind becomes engulfed in fits of rage as I read the**

**comments of blood mongering political war hawks in Washington who claim that the solution to ending this gruesome debacle is the use of more war. I become confused. Why not give peace a chance?**

It seems that in these dark times, peaceful resolutions are the new heresy and war is the new popular trend. The more blood we spill the safer we are, the better off everyone is.

**When I get the chance, I like to watch FOXNEWS for the latest skewed updates and biased garbage.** Yesterday I watched Bill O'Reilly's "Two-Minute Hate" debating on the topic, "The Problems With Islam". Immediately after the show, some neoconservative pundit completely slandered Senator Kerry, hitting him with audacious claims that "John Kerry is not a true Red Sox fan". This completely irrelevant babble went on for a full ten minutes before going to footage of President Bush throwing "The Perfect Strike" during opening ceremonies for the Cardinals.

Anyone with any sense should be able to see the fascist nonsense being proliferated through our conglomerated media, yet still myriads of Americans seemed conned and fooled by this cheap effort of massive lobotomy.

**It would appear that supporting a fictitious war has become the perfect way to display blind loyalty and American pride. Somewhere along the lines, the true ideals of patriotism were molested by the White House hit men. As it stands today, being a patriot only means agreeing with the president and *his* government.**

**I for one will disagree with Bush, or Kerry, or anyone who gets elected to the most powerful office in the world with an inclination to bomb random countries of their choosing.**

**I will oppose anyone who thinks that an act of war is the ideal solution to conform helpless third-world countries into corporate/democratic submission.**

I have been criticized for my anti-war beliefs many times, but I feel solid in my convictions after seeing the devastating effects of war on individual families and communities.

**Albert Einstein once said, "Killing under the pretense of war is nothing but an act of murder." If what Einstein said is true, than I can only hope that we someday atone for our bloody actions through peace, love, and understanding.**

hEkLe  
Baquba, Iraq  
[www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com](http://www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com)

**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.**

# IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

## DoD Identifies Army Death

October 30, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1088-04

**Pfc. Stephen P. Downing II, 30, of Burkesville, Ky., died Oct. 28 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, from small arms fire while conducting combat operations.** Downing was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery, Camp Hovey, Korea.

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## Clashes Erupt In Ramadi; Three US Marines Wounded

31 October 2004 AFP

In clashes and explosions between rebels and US troops in the flashpoint Iraqi city of Ramadi three US marines were wounded.

Doctor Hamdi al-Raoui said that the general hospital in the Sunni Muslim bastion, 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of Baghdad, admitted eight dead Iraqis and 10 wounded in the skirmishes that flared from early in the morning

**An AFP correspondent embedded with the military said that three US marines were injured when a roadside bomb exploded as a convoy was passed through the Sunni Muslim bastion.** The blast happened shortly before 7:30 am.

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## Mortars & Rockets Fired At Black Watch Base

31 October 2004 BBC & Pooled despatch by Padraic Flanagan of the Daily Express in Basra

**Rockets have been fired at the base south of Baghdad used by British troops from the Black Watch battle group.**

There were four explosions at the base, known as Camp Dogwood, early on Sunday but no-one was reported injured.

BBC correspondent Nick Springate, who is with the troops, said those in the base were busy filling sandbags to build up defences.

Two helicopters were patrolling the perimeter of the base, **which also came under mortar fire on Saturday.**

**The troops have faced attacks every night since their arrival on Friday**

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## **British Soldier Found Dead**

10.31.04 Ministry Of Defense

A British soldier was found dead at a military base in Basrah on the morning of 31 October 2004. The investigation into the death is ongoing, but it is not believed to be the result of any hostile act. The next of kin are being informed, and further details will be withheld until that process is complete.

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## **British Forces Attacked In Basra**

31 Oct 2004 Pooled despatch by Padraic Flanagan of the Daily Express in Basra

In the southern city of Basra, the administrative centre for the 8,500 British troops in the war-torn country, terrorists launched attacks on camps and vehicles yesterday.

The Multinational Division Headquarters at Basra's airport also came under rocket fire in the early hours, with two blasts failing to cause casualties or damage.

**And in the centre of the city, insurgents detonated a deadly roadside bomb as a Warrior fighting vehicle was escorting a four-tonne truck overnight.**

The force of the blast blew out the lorry's windows but the driver, a member of the Duke of Wellington's regiment, sped away from the scene, said British Army spokesman Major Charles Mayo.

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## **Resistance Attacks Up; Col. Says "Terrorists At Every Street Corner"**

October 31, 2004 By EDWARD WONG, The New York Times

The number of attacks per day has risen by 30 percent or more since mid-October, at the start of the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, military officials say.

The relentless assaults have driven a wall between the foreign presence here and the rest of the country, with soldiers, diplomats and contractors holed up in their fortified hotels or bases while guerrillas move freely and strike at will.

In Camp Ramadi in Anbar Province, Army commanders with the Second Brigade Combat Team, responsible for controlling the center of the province, reflected on the precarious situation.

Col. Gary S. Patton, the brigade commander, said in an interview that to quell the insurgency, it was crucial to develop effective Iraqi security forces, a strong local government and improved municipal services.

**"But it's difficult to do any of that stuff when you're fighting five-meter targets, terrorists at every street corner," he said. "And so our fight right now is to gain some freedom of action."**

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**LOST IN HELL:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Marines of the 1st Division leave their temporary base for a mission outside Fallujah Oct. 30, 2004. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

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## **Powell Says Resistance Winning The War**

Newsweek Nov. 8, Rod Nordland, Babak Dehghanpisheh & Michael Hirsh

**The insurgents, by most accounts, are winning. Even Secretary of State Colin Powell, a former general who stays in touch with the Joint Chiefs, has acknowledged this privately to friends in recent weeks, NEWSWEEK has learned.**

Sgt. Jonathan Scarfe, a broad-shouldered U.S. Marine with a square jaw and a 5 o'clock shadow, is trudging through a small town near Fallujah. On the opposite side of the street, taking his cues from Scarfe's movements, is Hussein Ali Jassim, who commands a small unit of the new Iraqi Special Forces. Scarfe says he trusts Jassim implicitly—which is more than he can say for most Iraqi National Guardsmen, less-trained locals thought to be collaborating with the insurgents. **"The ING guys usually slept outside during the summer," says Scarfe. "When they slept inside, you knew a mortar barrage was coming."**

**The insurgents, by most accounts, are winning. Even Secretary of State Colin Powell, a former general who stays in touch with the Joint Chiefs, has acknowledged this privately to friends in recent weeks, NEWSWEEK has learned.**

**"Things are getting really bad," a senior Iraqi official in interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's government told NEWSWEEK last week. "The initiative is in [the insurgents'] hands right now.**

**Throughout much of Iraq, but especially in the Sunni Triangle at the heart of the country, U.S. troops are unable to control streets and highways, towns and cities.**

Attacks on Coalition and Iraqi forces are now in the range of 100 a day; casualties among Iraqis are far greater.

Just as worrisome, the insurgents have managed to infiltrate Iraqi forces, enabling them to gain key intelligence. "The infiltration is all over, from the top to the bottom, from decision making to the lower levels," says the senior Iraqi official.

**Iraqi Ministry of Defense sources told NEWSWEEK the Iraqi recruits had not been allowed to leave the base with their weapons because American trainers were worried that some of them might defect. "The current circumstances oblige us not to give them their weapons when they're taking vacations, in case they run away with them," said one Iraqi intelligence officer.**

At Sergeant Scarfe's base outside Fallujah, the Marines discovered that the Iraqi Guard commander "was taking soldiers' paychecks and giving them to the resistance," says Lt. John Jacobs. "He was passing information to them and sometimes meeting them in person."

**The commander is now in Abu Ghraib Prison, but many ING recruits later quit, citing fears for their safety. Elsewhere U.S. soldiers have removed machine guns from Iraqi armored vehicles, fearing how they might be used.**



Even the Bush administration official who evinced confidence about the new Fallujah offensive admitted that the new Iraq under the interim government is "not jelling. How can [ordinary Iraqis] support a government that doesn't really exist in many ways?"

### **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE FTA ISSUE OF 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](http://www.ivaw.net))

## **Contractor Says Resistance Cutting Supply Lines To Al-Asad Base: "We're Months And Months Getting Stuff"**

Oct. 31, 2004 By PATRICK PETERSON, THE SUN HERALD

**GULFPORT** - Home for 10 days of rest, Thomas McCabe III soon will return to his job in Iraq, where he works to provide comfortable living quarters for U.S. troops that are waging rolling battles with elusive insurgents.

Insurgents sporadically attack Al-Asad, the former Iraqi air base northwest of Baghdad, where McCabe, a construction contractor, directs a crew of foreign laborers for Kellogg Brown & Root.

"A 122-millimeter rocket came right over my office," said McCabe, who added that attacks come in random clusters but have not decreased.

McCabe has seen little of Iraq. He has traveled to several places, only with heavy military escort. "Nobody ever gets much of an opportunity to go outside the base," he said.

**And attacks on convoys often delay supplies. Toilet paper and cleaning supplies run critically short. "We're months and months getting stuff," he said.**

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# Straws In The Wind

**A job-training program conducted by Navy Seabees near Falluja to teach construction skills to young Iraqis shut down earlier this month when the 30 students stopped coming to work, fearing retaliation.** Oct. 30, 2004 ERIC SCHMITT, The New York Times

American commanders fear that many Iraqi units are penetrated by informants. They are also grappling with cultural differences. With no formal national banking system in place, recruits and other troops need to bring their paychecks home to their families. **"If you have four infantry companies, one is always on leave," a senior American officer said.** Oct. 30, 2004 ERIC SCHMITT, The New York Times

"The logic is: You flatten Fallujah, hold up the head of Fallujah, and say 'Do our bidding, or you're next,' " says Toby Dodge, an Iraq analyst at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. **"The reason for such [threats] is because there are not enough troops, which creates a security vacuum, which fuels the insurgency."** Oct 28, 2004, Scott Peterson, The Christian Science

**Because they consider the roads unsafe, the Marines have begun air-dropping their equipment directly to their destinations in central Iraq.** October 19, 2004 John Hendren and Mark Mazzetti, Los Angeles Times

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## TROOP NEWS

# Illinois Soldiers Murdered By The Government Of The U.S.A.

Along With Prayers, Families Send Armor

October 30, 2004 By NEELA BANERJEE and JOHN KIFNER, The New York Times

**When the 1544th Transportation Company of the Illinois National Guard was preparing to leave for Iraq in February, relatives of the soldiers offered to pay to weld steel plates on the unit's trucks to protect against roadside bombs.**

***The Army told them not to, because it would provide better protection in Iraq, relatives said.***

***Seven months later, many of the company's trucks still have no armor, soldiers and relatives said, despite running some of the most dangerous missions in Iraq***

***and incurring the highest rate of injuries and deaths among the Illinois units deployed there.***

**[Modest proposal: find the officers who told them not to furnish the steel plates. Place them under arrest and guard. Send them to Iraq. Tie them to the roofs of convoy vehicles. Start with the piece of shit below, who thinks war is a "party."]**

Though soldiers of all types have complained about equipment in Iraq, part-timers in the National Guard and Reserve say that they have a particular disadvantage because they start off with outdated or insufficient gear. **They have been deployed with faulty radios, unreliable trucks and, most alarmingly for many, a shortage of soundly armored vehicles** in a land regularly convulsed by roadside attacks, according to soldiers, relatives and outside military experts.

**"War is a come-as-you-are party," said Lt. Gen. C. V. Christianson**, the Army's deputy chief of staff for logistics, in an interview yesterday. "The way a unit was resourced when someone rang the bell is the way it showed up.

Before the 103rd Armor Regiment of the Pennsylvania National Guard left in late February, some relatives bought those soldiers new body armor to supplant the Vietnam-era flak jackets that had been issued. **The mother of Sgt. Sherwood Baker, a member of the regiment who was killed in April, bought a global positioning device after being told that the Army said his truck should have one but would not supply it.**

And before Karma Kumlin's husband left with his Minnesota National Guard unit in February, the soldiers spent about \$200 each on radios that they say have turned out to be more reliable - although less secure - than the Army's.

<b>Only recently, Ms. Kumlin said, has her husband gotten a metal shield for the gunner's turret he regularly mans, after months of asking.</b>
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"This just points to an extreme lack of planning," said Ms. Kumlin, who is 31 and a student. "My husband is part of the second wave that went to Iraq."

**For years, under what is called the Tiered Resourcing System, new equipment went to those most likely to need it - the active Army - while the Reserve and the Guard got the hand-me-downs.**

"In addition to personnel shortfalls, most Army Guard units are not provided all the equipment they need for their wartime requirements," said Janet A. St. Laurent of the General Accounting Office in testimony before Congress in April. **Ms. St. Laurent noted that many Guard units had radios so old that they could not communicate with newer ones, and trucks so old that the Army lacked spare parts for them.**

The Army says it is on schedule to armor all its Humvees in Iraq by April 2005. **[Modest proposal: all armored Humvees go to enlisted troops, none to any officer until all enlisted troops have them. Same for Occupation Hq personnel. Bet that would speed things up, or at least redistribute casualties in a useful and constructive manner for the six months between now and April 2005.]**

But the glaring problem for soldiers and families remains the vulnerability of trucks. In a conventional war there would be a fixed front line and no need for supply trucks to be armored. But in Iraq, there are no clear front lines, and slow-moving truck convoys are prime targets for roadside attacks.

**Of the Illinois National Guard units now in Iraq, none of the 11 units has suffered as many casualties as the 1544th Transportation Company. Of the approximately 170 men and women in the unit, 5 have been killed and 32 wounded since the unit arrived in Iraq in March and began delivering supplies and mail and providing armed escort to civilian convoys.**

Three of the soldiers died during mortar attacks on their base south of Baghdad. The other two were killed when roadside bombs exploded next to their unarmored trucks.

**Soldiers' relatives said that they expected the Army to outfit the trucks better than they themselves could have, after being told by the military that the steel plates proposed by the families would shatter if hit.**

**But in fact, most of the trucks in the unit have nothing more than the steel plates that the families offered to have installed in the first place, said Lt. Col. Alicia Tate-Nadeau, a spokeswoman for the Illinois Guard. [Which means these Illinois soldiers were murdered by the U.S. command, not by the "enemy."]**

**The Army considers the 1544th's vehicles armored, a word that has a broad and loose meaning in the Iraq conflict.**

There are three categories of armored vehicles, Colonel Tate-Nadeau said. The "up-armored" ones come that way from the factory and provide the best protection for soldiers. Then come vehicles outfitted with "armor kits," or prefabricated pieces, on the chassis.

**The last option consists of "whatever the soldiers try to do themselves, from large sheets of metal on their trucks to sandbags on the floor of the cab," Colonel Tate-Nadeau said. [Which kind does Colonel Tate Nadeau ride in? Or is he sitting on his fat, worthless ass in Washington DC safely fighting the battles of the Pentagon dining room?]**

**"If we're one of the richest nations in the world, our soldiers shouldn't be sent out looking like the Beverly Hillbillies," said the mother of one soldier in the unit, who, like many parents, *asked not to be identified for fear of repercussions for their children.* [That's what it's come to. Their children may be killed by command incompetence, and the parents are frightened if they come forward to complain, their children may be punished by the same command. That is truly unacceptable. Revolutions have started over smaller grievances. Payback is way overdue.]**

**According to figures compiled by the House Armed Services Committee and previously reported in The Seattle Times, there are plans to produce armor kits for at least 2,806 medium-weight trucks, but as of Sept. 17, only 385 of the kits had**

been produced and sent to Iraq. Armor kits were also planned for at least 1,600 heavyweight trucks, but as of mid-September just 446 of these kits were in Iraq.

Specialist Benjamin Isenberg, 27, of the Oregon National Guard, died on Sept. 13 when he drove his unarmored Humvee over a homemade bomb, the principal weapon of the insurgents, said his grandmother, Beverly Isenberg of McArthur, Calif. The incident occurred near Taji, the town north of Baghdad where the 18 reservists refused to make a second trip with fuel that they say had been rejected as contaminated.

"One of the soldiers in his unit said they go by the same routes and at the same times every day," said Mrs. Isenberg, whose husband is a retired Army officer and who has two sons in the military and another grandson in the Special Forces who was wounded in Iraq. "They were just sitting ducks in an unarmored Humvee."

[Blinding flash of the obvious: The enemy is in Washington DC running the government, not in Iraq. One of the best reasons for bringing the troops home now is to protect us from the enemy here, and assist in disposing of them.]

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.

## A Matter of Survival; Letter From A Soldier

28 October 2004 By George Sprague, Concord Monitor

*(The writer, who lives in Hillsboro, is a member of a National Guard unit serving at Camp Anaconda, a large logistical support area about 45 miles north of Baghdad.)*

When I was home in New Hampshire on leave last month, a lot of people approached me to tell what a good job we're doing here in Iraq.

I appreciate the support, but I don't need the media or those people to tell me what I see every day. We are not getting the job done.

People ask me, "How's it going over there?" Cities have been overrun and are in a state of lawlessness. My job brings me into the streets. I see these things as they happen. They aren't just headlines for me.

**All we are doing here is treading water, and at this rate we can't keep afloat much longer. I'm just a simple man, but I can see that everything this administration has done with Iraq has been dead wrong.**

We appreciate your support, but we can't see those yellow ribbons from here.

I ask that you let your vote show your support. **I don't know what you go to bed thinking, but I go to bed wondering not how many more years of this administration I can handle but how many more days I might survive.**

**GEORGE SPRAGUE**  
Balad, Iraq

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## **Pushed Into Iraq: From: Letters From The Home Front**

October 25, 2004 by Tom Engelhardt, Mother Jones

*Larry Fall*

I am a Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist and Vietnam Combat Veteran with the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service. By the way, here's a bit of insight which I'd like to share regarding military strength.

I have spoken to military personnel in the active duty Navy and Regular Army who had planned on making their branch of service a career. **In the past year there is a strange R.I.F. (reduction in force) that's taking place.**

Apparently more recruitment money is being directed to the Army with emphasis to filling those slots critical to Iraq. **As most people in the know realize, the Army is having difficulty meeting their recruitment numbers. The Navy and career-minded Army personnel are having their available promotional slots reduced. So, they have one of three choices....**

1. Remain on active duty without anymore promotional opportunity in their field (which most won't do).
  2. Exit the active duty military at the end of their enlistment.
  3. **Transfer from blue to green (Navy to Army) or if in the green into the critical occupations for Iraq. Maybe you are aware of this already, but one can get a sense of the back-door draft mentality at work.** I am also aware that the Navy, for example, is doing more with fewer sailors; that is, the carriers and other vessels have far fewer personnel than a few years ago and are being pushed to maintain operations. All this doesn't paint a rosy picture.
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# Unlawful Orders

**From:** David Honish, Veterans For Peace  
**To:** GI Special  
**Sent:** Friday, October 29, 2004 8:13 PM  
**Subject:** Unlawful Orders

**Yeah, what ever happened to the concept of it being one's duty to question and/or disobey unlawful orders?**

While in the Texas NG Academy OCS program, my choice of topic for an essay assignment was that the **INSTANT AND UNQUESTIONED OBEDIENCE!** sign over the door to the barracks was made obsolete by the idiotic and suicidal waste of troops in WWI.

I further expounded that the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials and the fallout of the My Lai Massacre reinforced my viewpoint, which was in fact Army Regulation.

The sign remained in place inspite of my pointing out the obvious conflict with Army Regs.

I was later booted out of the program 2/3 of the way through it when the Tac Officers decided to amuse themselves by ordering everyone to get crew cuts. I declined to do so, citing that I was already in compliance with the haircut reg AR 600-20, and that they were exceeding their authority under the regs by unlawfully ordering crew cuts.

**You can guess how well that went over with a bunch of dumb TX redneck good ole boys, one of whom openly lectured us that "God is number one in the chain of command." Participation in Christmas Chapel Services and caroling was mandatory, Army Regs & The First Amendment to the contrary notwithstanding.**

**So what was the outcome? Smart ass who cites regs gets the boot. Dumb alcoholic redneck who passed the course was court marshaled within a month of graduation.**

At annual training he got drunk & amused himself by shooting a flare in a barracks full of sleeping troops. No fatalities, a few serious burns. The first sergeant tried to help cover the newly minted 2LT's ass & told him to beat it before the MP's showed up. Too drunk to have the sense to do as he was told, he was picked up by the MP's who found him arguing with a tree when they arrived. The **ONLY** black male in the class was predictably passed in spite of still showing up with dirty boots & wrinkled uniforms 2/3 of the way through the program.

The least bright fellow in the class, who passed only by extensive peer tutoring and a bit of cheating on tests, was seen about 10 yrs later on the evening news as a Major flying CH-46's in Bosnia.

Sleep safe America, your National Guard is drunk.

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

## 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.**

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## **The Resistance Up Close And Personal & Soldiers Who Don't Believe In The Mission**

October 16th, 2004 by Barzou Darahahi, Guerrilla News

**In moments of candor, beyond the watch of their commanders, many soldiers express grave doubts about their mission here.**

**The graffiti on the wall says: “Long live the resistance. Long live the holy warriors. The occupier will leave, by God. Traitors and spies beware.”**

At one stall, 13-year-old Allawi Ali Haydar sells videos showing battle of footage of guerrillas fighting American forces and Iraqi National Guard. **In the bloody videos, the Mahdi Army militiamen open fire on Americans from alleyways and fire rocket-propelled grenades across outdoor markets in Sadr City. They sell briskly.**

On another street, on another day, a joint U.S. Army-Iraqi Police checkpoint slows traffic to a halt. Pfc. Isaac Staley, 30, of Springfield, Oregon, tries to make the best of a tough situation.

**The Iraqi police radio crackles out an all-points bulletin: “A guy with a beard named Mohammad,” says the dispatcher, a description which could fit hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. “If you see him, detain him.”**

**In moments of candor, beyond the watch of their commanders, many soldiers express grave doubts about their mission here.**

**They’re under frequent fire, with mortar rounds and rockets narrowly missing their base. They’ve seriously curtailed patrols and rarely venture off their base in unarmored vehicles. They suspect the same people who smile at them during the day are the ones firing rocket-propelled grenades at them by night. They’ve grown to mistrust everybody, fear everybody.**

**“It’s more of an insurgency than a war,” says U.S. Army Capt. Jeff Mersiowsky, of Tucson, Arizona. “Don’t trust anyone, not even the 10-year-old kid on the street. You’re not nervous when you’re out there on the street. You’re nervous when you’re at the base thinking about being out there.”**

**They wonder what it means to win this thing, what the endgame is. “We’re walking a very fine line here,” says one Sergeant. “The people are either actively supporting the resistance or tacitly supporting them by not diming them out.”**

**The kids dominate the sewage infested streets. The kids scrawl graffiti on its walls. With feckless disregard for their own lives, the kids pick up rocket-propelled grenades and engage in running battles with American soldiers and Iraqi National Guard.**

**“Iraq is for sale,” says one piece of graffiti. “Please see lyad Allawi.”**

Nearby on Dakhel Street in Sector 55, seven funeral tents have been raised for seven “martyrs” of Mahdi Army. All died three nights earlier in battles with the U.S., the locals tell me. The relatives of the deceased sit on plastic chairs and greet each other mournfully, sipping sweet, dark-brewed tea and wiping tears.

Suddenly, a truckload of young men pulls into the square. They wear black shirts, wave black and green flags and sing religious songs. They dance in circles, jump up and down. They hold portraits of Moqtada Sadr. More pick-up trucks of joyous young men pour in.

“God is great! Oh, Ali,” they sing. Some of the older mourners turn away.

“It’s a goodbye party,” says a young man who gave only the nickname Abu Mahdi. “We are seeing our friend off as he goes to heaven.”

**His friend was Ali Nasser Hadid Mussawi, 28. A few hours before he died, his best friend was killed by Americans during a gun battle. Others had urged him not to**

**go out and fight that night. "I told him, 'Your friend just died,'" Abu Mahdi said. "Now is not the proper time.' But he said, 'Indeed, now is the proper time.'"**

A little down the pockmarked road past blue and white Mercedes bus riddled with bullet holes sits rests, I spot a smiling Mahdi Army fighter giving orders. He gives his name only as Ali "Abu Hossein," and says he's 24. He's got perfect teeth and an infectious laugh.

He leads a group of lively, pumped up young men out for a night of what passed for fun in Sadr City -- resetting remote control bombs that failed to detonate during the previous night's battles with American soldiers.

"Inshallah," or God-willing, he says, "there will be more fighting tonight."

I can't help but feel sorry for them. They are little more than lost children, some of them as young as 12.

**As the plant the remote-control bombs, I notice a group of Iraqi police stand not 20 feet away. They refuse to speak to me. "The police are with us," says Ali.**

**"Or, they are afraid," jumps in another young man, among several listening to our conversation.**

Ali and his merry band of warriors ask me if I'd like to join them, to cover their heroic feats in tonight's battles. Inshallah, I say, next time.

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## **Poll Finds Guard Members Say Not Trained, Equipped For War**

October 16, 2004 WASHINGTON (AP)

Members of the military and their families say the Bush administration underestimated the number of troops needed in Iraq and put too much pressure on inadequately trained National Guard and reserve forces, according to a poll released Saturday.

**Only four in 10 of the Guard members and reservists questioned said they were properly trained and equipped.**

**Less than a third, 30%, said they thought veterans were getting the healthcare they had been promised.** And although 57% said that Pentagon-ordered extensions of service beyond enlistment dates were proper, 39% said they were not.

**MORE:**

### **RUNNING ON EMPTY**

## Mobilized US National Guard and Reserve, Oct 2001 – Sept 2004

Compiled by the Project on Defense Alternatives

Month	10/01	11/01	12/01	1/02	2/02	3/02	4/02	5/02	6/02
Army NG & Res	13931	16218	18515	23606	25731	28389	28670	31431	34478
Navy Reserve	5448	8500	9193	10008	10597	10597	9934	9011	8760
USMC Reserve	612	1110	1468	3135	4387	4396	4392	4265	4096
Air NG & Res	19643	29036	30628	33550	36723	35981	37160	37404	36773
CG Reserve	2450	2223	2108	1904	1831	1830	1770	1635	1485
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41392</b>	<b>57087</b>	<b>61912</b>	<b>72203</b>	<b>79269</b>	<b>81193</b>	<b>81926</b>	<b>83746</b>	<b>85592</b>

Month	7/02	8/02	9/02	10/02	11/02	12/02	1/03	2/03	3/03
Army NG & Res	36914	36741	35360	30702	24677	29927	64741	123448	150071
Navy Reserve	6882	6494	6148	5594	5330	4269	5476	6933	9494
USMC Reserve	3846	3789	3807	3718	3843	3856	8729	14727	20089
Air NG & Res	30923	26348	21421	17009	16544	15005	14627	19906	33365
CG Reserve	1215	1096	944	698	679	759	1051	3069	3792
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79780</b>	<b>74468</b>	<b>67680</b>	<b>57721</b>	<b>51073</b>	<b>53816</b>	<b>94624</b>	<b>168083</b>	<b>216811</b>

Month	4/03	5/03	6/03	7/03	8/03	9/03	10/03	11/03	12/03
Army NG & Res	149689	146218	138896	135625	131996	127746	123367	132667	154194
Navy Reserve	11997	11688	10061	8320	5401	3957	2180	1695	1519
USMC Reserve	21194	21276	20808	19191	18267	12567	11000	10003	6742
Air NG & Res	37222	36173	34103	31547	27381	24424	19865	18455	20112
CG Reserve	4428	4337	4043	2543	1898	1771	1193	1178	1179
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>224528</b>	<b>219692</b>	<b>207911</b>	<b>197226</b>	<b>184943</b>	<b>170465</b>	<b>157605</b>	<b>163998</b>	<b>183746</b>

Month	1/04	2/04	3/04	4/04	5/04	6/04	7/04	8/04	9/04
Army NG & Res	164416	155028	151745	148460	145401	130912	123695	133697	141961
Navy Reserve	2000	2280	2680	2629	2526	2694	2904	3762	3938
USMC Reserve	6764	5410	5115	5080	5046	9387	11097	11371	11581
Air NG & Res	19757	18368	14329	12781	11355	11701	11472	11270	11071
CG Reserve	1057	1578	1607	1537	1559	1542	1546	1546	1515
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>193994</b>	<b>182664</b>	<b>175476</b>	<b>170487</b>	<b>165887</b>	<b>156236</b>	<b>150714</b>	<b>161646</b>	<b>170066</b>

Source: monthly Department of Defense Press Releases available at *DoD News Releases Archive*:  
<http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/archive.html>

Project on Defense Alternatives

Contact: Carl Conetta: [cconetta@comw.org](mailto:cconetta@comw.org)

# British Government Says War Over; Now Families Have To Pay To Send Gifts To Soldiers

Oct 31 2004 By Kevin Hurley, Mirror.co.uk

**FAMILIES of Black Watch troops posted to Iraq are being charged by the MoD for sending morale-boosting gifts to their loved ones.**

**When the Black Watch were on their first tour of duty in Iraq last year, Army bosses covered the cost for relatives to send parcels from home to cheer up our boys.**

**Now the penny-pinching MoD have stopped the service because, astonishingly, they claim we are no longer at war in Iraq.**

Yesterday, disgusted relatives of Black Watch troops condemned the decision as our boys spent their second day in Iraq's terrorist-infested Triangle of Death.

Families are being charged up to £10 [about \$17 \$ U.S.] a time to send packages from the UK. The blanket decision applies to all British troops sent to Iraq. Jim Buchanan, 57, from Arbroath, Angus, whose two sons are in the Black Watch, said: "The troops have already come under attack - so what's that if it's not a war zone?"

**"Things I send out there like letters, food, cigarettes and photos mean the world to them. "The Government has a cheek to ask us to pay for this when Ministers are enjoying an expenses bill of £78million."**

**Last week the Sunday Mirror revealed how British soldiers are being paid less during the war in Iraq than they get on routine maneuvers in Europe.**

**[Since the war is officially over, no doubt all British soldiers can head immediately for the nearest border out of Iraq. And the resistance will provide an escort, all the fuel they need, guides, food, and children throwing flowers, and happily kill anybody, including their officers, that tries to stop them, unless the troops beat them to it.]**

**“Well Major, jolly good thing the war is over, otherwise one might well think there is more to this than the odd vehicular accident. Perhaps this is one of their quaint native customs.”**



Britain's Major Robin Lindsay (L) and the Commanding Officer of Britain's Black Watch Lieutenant Colonel James Cowan (2nd L) inspecting the remains of a vehicle near the

village of Abd Al Karim Farah, south of Baghdad, October 31, 2004. Military sources said there were no casualties in the vehicle explosion on Sunday. REUTERS/Giles Penfound/MoD/Handout

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **A Deadly Road: “We Don’t Have The Bodies Necessary To Go In There.”**

October 30, 2004

By Edmund Sanders / Los Angeles Times

Last month, a joint force of 3,000 U.S. and Iraqi forces began sweeping through northern Babil, arresting more than 200 suspects and beefing up the U.S. presence. About two weeks ago, a U.S. raid in Yusufiya netted Mahmoud Janabi, brother of Abdullah Janabi, who is believed to be a top insurgent leader in Fallujah.

**But military officials said they’ll need additional troops to take more aggressive action, such as invading a vast area of palm groves in the southwestern portion of the province, known as Jafr Sakhr, where many tribal leaders are believed to be hiding. Past attempts to invade the area have met with heavy resistance.**

**“We don’t have the bodies necessary to go in there,” said Maj. Dan Whisnant, an intelligence officer in Mahmudiya.**

Military responsibility for northern Babil has bounced to various Army and Marine units over the past year, some of which stayed only a short while and were called away to fight elsewhere, such as Fallujah.

**“We’ve haven’t had a sustained presence in this area for a long time,”** Johnson said. “It’s taking us a while to figure out who’s who.”

**Military officials said a lack of troops has made it impossible to secure Highway 8. Insurgents and criminals openly set up checkpoints along the corridor, attacking mostly Westerners and those who work with them.**

U.S. officials say the attacks are chiefly designed to scare away outside forces that might attempt to interfere with the locals’ criminal enterprises.

**“They tasted the money and now they are trying to protect it,”** Whisnant said. **“They don’t seem to care that much about (Islamic law). They care about driving**

*nice cars and good clothes."* [If true, the Occupation ought to be celebrating. No religious fanatics here, they're following their role models in the White House.]

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## Fuel Truck Captured, Driver Killed

31 Oct 2004 (Reuters)

**Gunmen killed the driver of a Turkish fuel tanker on a highway north of Baghdad and stole his truck with his body inside, police said on Sunday.**

They said the incident happened on Saturday night near the village of Ishaqi, about 80 km (50 miles) south of Baghdad. Witnesses in the area corroborated the police account.

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## Two Occupation Guards Killed Near Baghdad

31 October 2004, Focus 1 News

Baghdad. **Two servicemen from the Iraqi National Guards were shot near Baghdad** after an attack on their car from unknown source, Reuters informed. Iraqi Ministry of Interior stated that the attack came from three different cars, each carrying at least four attackers. All of the attackers managed to escape.

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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

### Gasp, Can It Be True?

October 31, 2004 By Bradley Graham and Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writers

**"The insurgents may have calculated that their success does not now require an elaborate political and socioeconomic vision of a 'free' Iraq," said Ahmed S. Hashim, professor of strategic studies at the Naval War College and a consultant to Abizaid's Central Command.**

***"Articulating the desire to be free of foreign occupation has sufficed to win popular support."*** [That's why they pay him the big bucks, announcing shit 90% of the troops in Iraq figured out last year.]

W. Patrick Lang, a former Army colonel and Middle East specialist in the Defense Intelligence Agency, said the insurgents were pursuing "a strategy of isolation of the occupier."

**MORE: Here's How The Iraq Resistance Puts Exactly The Same Ideas:**

## **Lies Will Get You Nowhere!**

October 30, 2004 Abu Assur, Al-Moharer

**We hear these days many high ranking US military, defense analysts, political experts, and field generals who always - or often - require the condition of anonymity talk about American blunder in Iraq.**

What happened! What exactly is happening in Mesopotamia? Aren't we almighty? Aren't we the most powerful military in the World? Isn't the Lord of the Armies with us? What is going on in Iraq?

**The mightiest army elements in documented history are being hunted like turkeys on the Mesopotamian plains.**

**The Army, which can destroy this whole planet many times with the WMD, it has amassed, is fighting ghosts. This corporate army defending the US way of life, a beacon for humanity (Abu Ghraib!) is on its knees begging for help, asking for extra troops from countries which hardly exist on the map or we never heard of before like Fiji, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Moldavia, and others, through bribes, tricks and schemes for a desperate coalition of the billing.**

**How come the US can't win its glorious battle against these bare footed people, draped in sheet clothes-Dishdashas-living in mud houses?**

**These big shots imprisoned in their cultural and linguistic ghettos, declare that the war in Iraq was not well planned. There are not enough troops! Abizeid -Tarzan-shouts we are in trouble in Iraq! Sanchez, Abu Ghraib torture hero, blames his mercenary army failures to the lack of spare parts. Iraqi climate it is said to make all US high sophisticated equipment null. Dust storms are the number one enemy. The Iraqi soil, and the mud engulf Abram and Bradley tanks. **Impossible to catch or eradicate, the insurgents vanish away.****

**What these US visionaries forgot was the fabric of the Iraqi people. They never read Iraqi glorious history. They never thought that Iraqis would fight to safeguard their identity, their religion, their culture and their honor. Iraq never accepted to be ruled by foreigners.**

Computer plans speak the language you want to talk to them. **US war planners never added to their plans words like, honor, dignity, pride, freedom, martyrdom, soil, faith, courage, because these words don't exist in these people dictionaries or mentality. This is why Iraq war is lost to the US.**



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

## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

**UNCONQUERED. UNCONQUERABLE**



A Palestinian youth hurls stones at an Israeli army APC, during clashes in the occupied northern West Bank city of Jenin. (AFP/Saif Dahlah)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org). The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

**Cheney Calls Iraq, Afghan Wars  
“Brilliant”**

## DERANGED PIECE OF SHIT



American psycho Cheney at campaign stop in Wilmington, Ohio (AP Photo/Laura Rauch)

Oct 29 AP

MONTOURSVILLE, Pa. - Vice President Dick Cheney said Friday the invasion of Iraq will go down in history, along with the war in Afghanistan, for its "brilliance."

At an airport rally at a hangar in Montoursville, Pa., Cheney said the U.S. invasions of "Afghanistan and Iraq will be studied for years for their brilliance."

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## Bush Orders Iraq Violence Report Kept Secret

September 30, 2004 By DANA MILBANK and MIKE ALLEN, The Washington Post

**The Bush administration, battling negative perceptions of the Iraq war has curtailed distribution of reports showing increasing violence in that country.**

**USAID said this week that it will restrict distribution of reports by contractor Kroll Security International showing that the number of daily attacks by insurgents in Iraq has increased.**

On Monday, a day after the Washington Post published a front-page story saying "the Kroll reports suggest a broad and intensifying campaign of insurgent violence," a USAID official sent an e-mail to congressional aides stating: **"This is the last Kroll report to come in. After the Washington Post story, they shut it down in order to regroup. I'll let you know when it restarts."**

# **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

Riffat Hussein, head of strategic studies at Pakistan's Quaid-e-Azam University, told AFP "**Militarily the country is under the control of the warlords and Karzai's government does not run beyond Kabul.** Right now it's virtual warlord rule whether you look east, west, north or south of Kabul. Agence France Presse 19 October 2004

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<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>,

[www.williambowles.info/qispecial](http://www.williambowles.info/qispecial)

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