

GI SPECIAL 3A16:



Everything I Need I Learned From Star Wars

To: GI Special

From: **Soldier, Iraq**

Sent: January 10

Subject: Everything I need I learned From Star Wars

They can not break good people like ourselves. Like Obi Won says "strike me down and I only come back stronger." I have gone through the fire and only come out stronger than steel.

I hope that we are truly unbreakable.

Eventually men find ways to pull themselves down; we become corrupted by greed, ego, women or wine. We go mad, we get complacent, and we grow tired. But while I have some fire left I plan on pushing as hard as I can. For it is the days that I work the hardest, when I drag myself home after a long hours of unselfish work, that I can close my eyes and dream well. Perhaps I am selfish and only quest for the rewards of a blissful sleep. Whatever the motivation, is it excused if the results are pure?

Humor is a survival tool more important than any trait. If we can not laugh the spirit will die. No one should take anything to serious. As long as you respect and even adore the things we laugh about, or if the irony is so intense there is nothing to do but laugh.

Sometimes after a fire fight soldiers can be seen in shock, crying, shaking, and praying, but some like myself laugh. It is all that is left to do. Because you are alive and because you are amazed. Just like tears of happiness and sorrow, there is laughter for two extremes.

This is not the America I was taught about in school, however it is the America that has existed for some time.

Perhaps it is getting worse, and maybe it is just a dip in the roller coaster of events.

Either way I am not going to take it without a fight.

Our country is the most cowardly. We are afraid of everything.

I blame materialism. The more we own the less we are willing to lose.

Break free from your things and find that sacrifice is rewarding. People aren't willing to let go yet. For another Star Wars quote "fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering" That little green muppet was on to something.

I hope you are doing well, your daily challenges are met with victory and you have time for your peace.

Fight To Survive

[Clue: for 100 points: name the entity opposed by Obi Won. T]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

MARINE KILLED IN ACTION SOUTH OF BAGHDAD

January 15, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-01-20C

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq -- A U.S. Marine was killed in action Jan. 15 in Babil Province.

Marine Killed In Al Anbar Province

01/15/05 CJTF7 Release #050115a

Camp Fallujah, Iraq --One Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in a non-hostile accident Jan. 14.

U.S. Copter Down At Mosul

16 Jan 2005 (KUNA) & Aljazeera

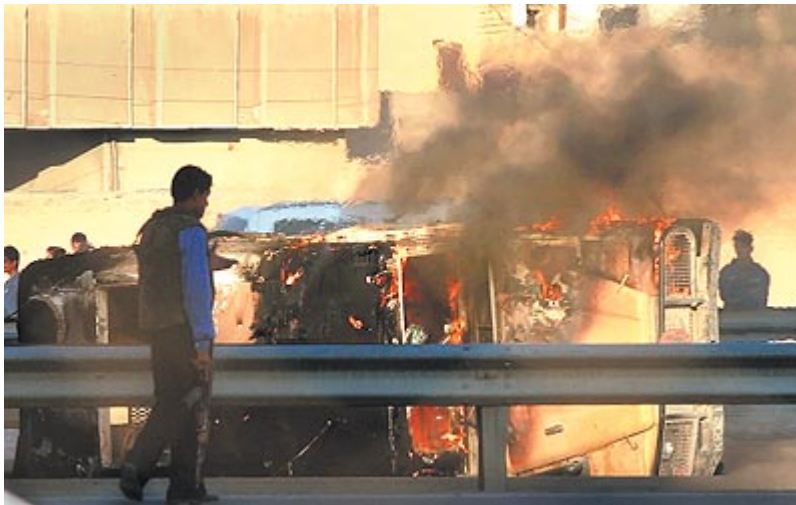
The US forces in Iraq announced on Saturday that one of their helicopter gunships made an emergency landing in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

A statement by the multinational forces, a copy of which received by KUNA, said the helicopter made the emergency landing while extending logistic support to the US troops north of the city of Mosul.

"A helicopter made an emergency landing. Whether it is engine failure or something else, we do not know yet," Lieutenant Colonel Michael Kurilla told reporters on Saturday.

Another officer said the aircraft was an OH-58 Kiowa but could not elaborate on the circumstances that forced it to land. **He added that the two pilots aboard were rescued after they escaped unhurt.**

HOT TIME IN BASRA



An Iraqi policeman looks Thursday at a British army vehicle burning on a Baghdad highway (Reuters photo by Atef Hassan) Jordan Times 1.15.05

U.S. “Senior Official” Says Troops Can’t Guarantee Baghdad Safe From Resistance; Police Station Mortared

January 15, 2005 –AFP

In Baghdad, two mortars struck a heavily fortified police station just outside the Green Zone, home to the interim Iraqi Government and the US embassy, a witness said. Smoke billowed into the sky and police sealed off the street.

As bloodshed mounted, a US general admitted US troops could not guarantee safety across the capital on the January 30 election date. [Or any other minute of any other day.]

A senior American official told AFP that sections of western and northern Baghdad, including the Sunni Muslim Adhamiya district, would probably have low turnout due to insurgent threats.

Voter registration forms were not even handed out in some sections of Baghdad, the official added.

MORE:

OOPS

January 15, 2005 –AFP

Electoral commission chief Abdul Hussein Hendawi said that violence [**translation: resistance control**] in Al-Anbar province, west of Baghdad, and Nineveh province around the main northern city of Mosul had prevented any registration of voters.

Hendawi declined to elaborate on voting arrangements for Al-Anbar, where commission officials acknowledge that they have yet to identify polling stations.

TROOP NEWS

All Portuguese Troops Going Home

January 15, 2005 –AFP

PORTUGAL will withdraw its paramilitary force from Iraq on February 12, after extending its stay to help provide security for the January 30 elections, a government spokesman said today.

Portugal had about 120 National Guard officers in Nasiriyah, about 300 km south of Baghdad, he said. They arrived in Iraq in November 2003 and were due to leave in November 2004, but the assignment was extended by 90 days.

Socialist Party leader Jose Socrates has distanced himself from the government's support for the US occupation of Iraq and said Portugal should be part of a European Union acting as a "counterbalance to a hegemonic power".

Kin Of Marine Who Shot Policemen Say He Is A Casualty Of War

Lalo Madrigal, 19, a friend of Corporal Raya since they were small children, said the authorities were trying to smear his friend by raising the possibility of gang involvement. He said that Corporal Raya was not a gang member but a "proud Mexican" and that most young people in Ceres had friends in gangs.

January 14, 2005 By DEAN E. MURPHY, New York Times

CERES, Calif., Jan. 13 - A surveillance camera captured the gun battle in this small central California farm town in terrifying detail.

A marine on weekend leave from Camp Pendleton on Sunday night instructed a clerk in George's Liquor Store to call the police. When patrol cars arrived, the marine pulled an assault rifle from beneath his poncho and began firing. Both Sgt. Howard Stevenson and Officer Sam Ryno were hit.

The marine, Lance Cpl. Andres Raya, 19, who spent seven months in Iraq last year as a motor transportation operator, then walked to a muddy alley around the corner, a place where he used to pick oranges as a student on his way to Ceres High School. **He slipped from one backyard to the next, telling some residents they were "innocent civilians" and would not be harmed.**

Before the evening ended, as police officers from across the region responded to the shootings, more than 200 rounds had been fired, both Sergeant Stevenson and Corporal Raya were dead, and "small town America," as the police and fire chief here (he has to do both jobs) called Ceres, was desperately debating whether the young marine had deliberately gotten himself killed to escape possible return to Iraq.

The sharply differing viewpoints have spiked tensions between the authorities and many Hispanic residents, some of whom have repeatedly tried to erect a shrine to Corporal Raya on a dirt patch in the alley where he died only to have it removed by the city. At one point, graffiti against the police was splattered on a garage and fence in the alley. On Wednesday night, the authorities blocked access to the alley with barricades.

At a meeting about the killings in the high school cafeteria on Tuesday night, some angry and tearful Hispanic residents accused the police of ignoring their grief.

One woman, Hilda Mercado, said after the meeting that no matter the circumstances, she was proud that Corporal Raya "died like a true Mexican: He died standing on his feet."

Others said there were rumors that Corporal Raya had been trying to surrender, but that the police killed him anyway, something the police dismiss as unfounded.

"There is a general sentiment among some people against authority and against the police," said Father McFalls, who accompanied Corporal Raya's parents and a dozen other relatives to the police station on Tuesday where they prayed at a memorial to Sergeant Stevenson.

Corporal Raya grew up in The Camp, a neighborhood of subsidized housing near the high school where Mexican immigrants, including his father, found shelter for their families while working in the nearby fields.

For many teenagers in The Camp, a job fighting in Iraq is considered a dream ticket to somewhere better, which has made ever more poignant the mystery about why one life from The Camp ended so badly.

"Somewhere along the line, somebody let this young man down, and what it did was just domino right back into our neighborhood," said Frankie Haney, who lives near the alley and saw some of the shooting. "I feel the government owes us answers."

Corporal Raya's friends and family say they are also looking for answers, but they are deeply offended by the presumption among some in Ceres that the blame lies solely with him.

In an interview Thursday, his father, Tomas Raya, said the family was especially saddened at the thought that he might not be given special military honors at his funeral on Friday. "It is very painful," said Mr. Raya, who works in a canning company. "He served his country. He loved his country as we do."

Lalo Madrigal, 19, a friend of Corporal Raya since they were small children, said the authorities were trying to smear his friend by raising the possibility of gang involvement. He said that Corporal Raya was not a gang member but a "proud Mexican" and that most young people in Ceres had friends in gangs.

"He shouldn't be known as a cop killer," he said. "No one is saying glorify what he did, but it should be understood. The best way to look at it was he was a casualty of war."

Though Corporal Raya had no adult criminal record, Mr. Madrigal said the marine had sparred with the police as recently as October when several officers stopped him near Ceres High School during a home leave, and Corporal Raya insisted the officers show him "more respect" now that he was a marine.

MORE:

How Many More Will It Take—How Many More Will Have To Die? BRING THEM HOME NOW!

January 11, 2004 Jack Dalton. Jack Dalton is a disabled Vietnam veteran and coeditor of the web publication, the Project for the Old American Century

Andreas Raya, a Marine that had been to Iraq once, and was scheduled to go back to Iraq a second time, has committed suicide--by forcing the police to shot him in front of a convince store in Ceres, Ca.

According to his family, he was "different" when he came back from Iraq. He had changed. This is something that those of us that have seen war up close and personal know about. Seeing humanity at its worse does things to you, and it does not always go away.

Sgt Kevin Benderman has refused re-deployment to Iraq. 22 others in Kevin's unit have also refused to deploy by either going AWOL, or, as with two, attempt suicide. After recovering from the suicide, "one of the two packed up his entire family and went AWOL"--this information was sent to me by Kevin's wife, Monica earlier today.

While the Tsunami disaster is horrible, to say the least, there is still a "disaster" taking place in Iraq. People are dying in wholesale numbers there, mostly children, and now, like what happened when so many came back from Vietnam, even more will die when they come back home—and by their own hands.

There is a solution—Bring Them Home Now! If you really want to support the troops, that is the way to do it—just Bring Them Home Now! We do not need, nor do we want any more incidents like with Andreas Raya—dead by their own hands as a result of the horrors of war. And bring them home we must!

War is the cowards' response to the perils of peace, and it is they, the cowards, who always send others to fight, kill and be killed in the wars they start.

As a veteran, as an American citizen, I fully support those who refuse to deploy to this Bush Co war in Iraq. I remember years ago when so many Vietnam veterans came back and then killed themselves—we must not let this happen again!

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.

Enid Woman's Son Improving But Serious In Maryland; "Get This Thing Over And Let God Take Over."

1/15/2005 By Tippi Rasp, Staff Writer, The Enid Oklahoma News & Eagle

A U.S. Marine and son of a local woman is improving in a Maryland hospital but remains in serious condition after a Jan. 3 land mine explosion in Iraq.

John Tate Jones, 27, is recovering at National Naval Medical Hospital in Bethesda, Md. Doctors were forced to amputate one of his legs just below the knee. Doctors are carefully watching Jones' other leg, which also received serious wounds, said longtime family friend Jacque Wagner of Enid. Jones' condition was worsened by a bacterial infection he picked up before he left Iraq, she said.

The setbacks have included the infection and an allergy to one of the antibiotics Jones was taking.

"If everything keeps going well he's going to live," Wagner said. "We didn't know that the first week and a half."

Jones is a member of the 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. Jones was riding in a Humvee with another Marine when it ran over a land mine. After the explosion, Tate said her son was taken by helicopter to an American military hospital in Germany where he underwent six hours of surgery.

Jones went to school at St. Paul's Lutheran School and Waller Junior High School. He attended an Edmond high school.

His mother said this was her son's first tour of duty in Iraq, but he had served in Bahrain. He had been in Iraq since August and was scheduled to come home in February, she said.

Tate had said her son was "a Marine through and through."

Cards and letters of support can be sent to Staff Sgt. John Jones in Room 22B at National Naval Medical Hospital, 8901 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda, MD, 20889.

Wagner said she hopes everyone continues prayer and support for both Jones and other troops.

"Pray for the troops, there's so many," Wagner said. "Lisa (Tate) said the stories just tear your heart apart."

She said everyone should "pray for peace" and "get this thing over and let God take over."

101st Soldiers Leaving For Operation Iraqi Fuckup

January 15, 2005 By AMY RITCHART, The Leaf-Chronicle

About 260 members of 2nd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment — an Apache attack helicopter battalion — will join about 50 2nd Battalion soldiers who have already left for Iraq, according to a statement released Friday by Fort Campbell Public Affairs Officer Cathy Gramling.

Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, were deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Apache helicopter pilots flew nearly 8,000 combat hours and were involved in the first "deep" 101st Airborne Division attack south of Karbala at the start of the war.

Marine V. Marine In Kentucky Highway Shootout

Jan. 12, 2005 By Peter Mathews, CENTRAL KENTUCKY BUREAU

A Marine engaged in his own private little war with two other Marines on Interstate 64 early yesterday, allegedly shooting an assault rifle at them in a high-speed case of road rage, authorities said.

Later in the day, authorities discovered the victim and his companion, both military police, were absent without leave from their base at Quantico, Va.

"A guy at the base said they've been gone for two weeks," Clark County Sheriff Ray Caudill said.

Abraham Cerpa, 20, his wife, Catherine, and her 5- and 6-year-old children were en route from Camp Lejeune, N.C., to Chicago when the trouble started.

Around the time they entered Kentucky from West Virginia, they met up with Wesley Wilkinson, 31, and Michael Young, 21. Young was driving Wilkinson's car.

After a traffic transgression of some sort -- Caudill didn't know what it was -- the occupants of the two cars drove side by side for 90 miles, exchanging insults and gestures at high speed.

Somewhere in eastern Clark County, Abraham Cerpa pulled out a MAC-90 assault rifle, Caudill said, and shot off three or four rounds, shattering a window of Wilkinson's car and flattening a tire.

One bullet fragment hit Wilkinson.

The two MPs called 911 from a Winchester service station. About 2:30 a.m., a sheriff's deputy stopped the Cerpas' car on I-64 in Scott County. Catherine Cerpa, clocked at about 100 mph, was charged with speeding, Caudill said.

Abraham Cerpa, who told police he works for the Judge Advocate General's office -- the military's justice system -- was charged with assault and wanton endangerment.

He said the assault rifle was his. Authorities were still verifying that yesterday evening.

After it was over, each of the men found out that his antagonist in the other car was a fellow Marine. It didn't appear to be welcome news, Caudill said.

Wilkinson was treated at Clark Regional Medical Center and released.

He and Young weren't charged. They told police, who did not yet know they were AWOL, that they were on their way from West Virginia to Indiana.

Military Firing Of Gay Linguists Blasted

Jan 13, By KIM CURTIS, Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO - The number of Arabic linguists discharged from the military for violating its "don't ask, don't tell" policy is higher than previously reported, according to records obtained by a research group.

The group contends the records show that the military - at a time when it and U.S. intelligence agencies don't have enough Arabic speakers - is putting its anti-gay stance ahead of national security.

Between 1998 and 2004, the military discharged 20 Arabic and six Farsi speakers, according to Department of Defense (news - web sites) data obtained by the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military under a Freedom of Information Act request.

Aaron Belkin, the center's director, said he wants the public to see the real costs of "don't ask, don't tell."

"We had a language problem after 9/11 and we still have a language problem," Belkin said Wednesday.

"The military is placing homophobia well ahead of national security," said Steve Ralls, spokesman for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a nonprofit group that advocates for the rights of gay military members.

"It's rather appalling that in the weeks leading up to 9/11 messages were coming in, waiting to be translated ... and at the same time they were firing people who could've done that job."

Experts have identified the shortage of Arabic linguists as contributing to the government's failure to thwart the Sept. 11 attacks. The independent Sept. 11 commission made similar conclusions.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**Offensive By Resistance
Cripples Energy Infrastructure;
Senior U.S. Official Says
Attacks "Intelligent" And
"Effective"**

Frustrated Iraqi and U.S. officials say insurgents in recent months have displayed an impressive capacity to cripple Iraq's most vital infrastructure.

"What they're doing is focusing efforts on intelligent attacks on infrastructure, especially oil and electricity," said a senior U.S. diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The number of attacks is down, but the effectiveness of the attacks is up significantly."

January 15, 2005 By Karl Vick, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD -- The armed men waited until at least 10 tanker trucks were in line outside the huge refinery in the Sunni Triangle city of Baiji, a major source of gasoline for Iraq. Then they made their move: Arriving in a blue Opel sedan, their faces obscured by checkered head scarves and wraparound sunglasses, the insurgents charged into the road and began moving from truck to truck.

The truckers were in no position to resist. One by one, witnesses say, they handed over the paperwork that permitted them to leave the tank farm with a load of gasoline. **When the gunmen had a fat sheaf of documents, they simply got back in their sedan and drove away, effectively shutting down one more strand of gasoline distribution in a country where energy has emerged as one of the war's most critical battlefields.**

"I have been waiting here a week," said Hussein Awad, who had driven from Baghdad to fill a truck for the 7th of April service station last week. His beard was several days along and his ankle-length robe was dirty from a week of constant wear. Back in the capital, the gas lines were running three miles long.

"Every day I come here to sit and wait, wishing that those armed men will not show up so I can fill my tanker and go back to Baghdad," Awad said. "But they are here every day."

Frustrated Iraqi and U.S. officials say insurgents in recent months have displayed an impressive capacity to cripple Iraq's most vital infrastructure.

"What they're doing is focusing efforts on intelligent attacks on infrastructure, especially oil and electricity," said a senior U.S. diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The number of attacks is down, but the effectiveness of the attacks is up significantly."

The consequences have been evident across Iraq.

The biggest hit was on the national treasury. Almost the entire federal budget is generated by exports of crude oil, and, according to the Brookings Institution in Washington, revenue from oil exports in November dropped by nearly \$700 million, almost 36 percent, from the previous month. The number of attacks on pipelines and other oil and gas infrastructure in November reached 30, almost tripling from October.

According to the State Department, exports rebounded slightly in December, but after attacks on pipelines in the northern and southern oil fields, early January

exports skidded below even the November level, to fewer than 1 million barrels a day -- less than half the current capacity.

To ordinary Iraqis, the attacks mean cascading hardships: Either they wait in day-long lines for heavily subsidized, 5 cents-a-gallon gasoline, or they pay black-market prices that run as high as several dollars.

Then the drivers probably return to dark homes. Power outages -- some leaving Baghdad without electricity for more than a day at a time -- accompany the fuel shortages, partly because generators in Iraq burn petroleum.

Insurgents have also attacked Iraq's power grid directly. A Jan. 7 strike on power lines between Baiji and Tikrit shut down the entire national system, according to an Electricity Ministry report.

A senior Iraqi official said the most effective attacks betrayed insider knowledge.

"When I see where some of these strikes go, it's obvious they knew exactly where to hit to have a maximum impact," the official said. But it remained unknown whether the technical knowledge came from current employees or officials of Saddam Hussein's deposed Baath Party government who could be working with insurgents. **[Try both.]**

Before the U.S. offensive on Fallujah in November, local insurgents vowed to shift their attacks to oil facilities.

"They say, 'You work for the Americans and Ayad Allawi, you don't work for the people's interest,' " Khalid Mohammed, 45, said from the cab of a state-owned tanker delivering gasoline to a service station on Baghdad's south side.

In urgent tones, the trucker listed the hazards facing fuel transporters in Iraq: Insurgents had blown up a car bomb inside another refinery in the Sunni Triangle a month earlier, he said. Armed men blocked a road to a loading station in Latifiyah, a town in the "triangle of death" south of Baghdad.

"Many trucks that belong to the government were stolen," Mohammed said. "We're getting more shortages every day of both trucks and fuel."

The Electricity Ministry reported four more power units shut down this week by fuel shortfalls, and outages increased again. **"For almost two years we have been reading about so many megawatts have been added and so much will be added by next summer and so on,"** said Hayder Abbas, a college professor who lives in west Baghdad. **"But in reality, the situation is exactly the opposite.**

"With every setback in the electric power network, we are told it is the gas, or the crude oil or sabotage. But the fact is, electric power supplies are regressing, and the average citizen asks: When will the situation be normal again like in neighboring countries? Is this impossible? Why don't they tell us that? Then at least we won't hope for anything better."

Allawi TV Call-In Show Cancelled; Resistance Knocks Out Phone System

Jan 14, 2005 Khaled Yacoub Oweis, Reuters

Price spikes have turned onions into a luxury. There is barely any electricity, and **the Iraqi telephone networks are so bad that a call-in show with the prime minister had to be canceled.**

"There we were, happy to have Iyad Allawi on air after months of working on an interview," Radio Dijla chief executive Ahmad al-Rikaby told Reuters.

"We called it off because both landlines and cell-phones simply did not work."

Hopes have been dashed that the Iraqna cell-phone system, a subsidiary of Egypt's Orascom that is responsible for the cellphone network in Baghdad and central Iraq, could compensate for a landline network yet to recover from the 2003 bombardment.

Iraqi telecom officials say the company is finding it difficult to keep the cell-phone network running in Iraq's hostile security environment. [Translation: the resistance rules, took out the phones, and there's nothing we can do about it.]

Disenchantment has turned into outright hostility.

"We hear nothing except complaints and curses."

Fallujans Unconquered: Resistance Rules The Night; Refugees Won't Live Under "The Tent of Occupation"

"Fallujah people suffered under Saddam and they liberated their own city. They did not do so to live under occupation."

"Then America came here after 9 April, 2003, with all its power and soldiers, so proud of getting rid of Saddam Hussein. *But now the morale of these soldiers is rotting each day. They have psychological problems. My advice to them is to leave.* "

Fighting continues each night in Fallujah. As the sheikh puts it, not without some humour: "The Americans move in the streets during the day from 6am to 6pm but they do not move when the muqawama (resistance) imposes its own curfew on them between 6pm and 6am."



Banner: "We Won't Live Under The Occupier's Lances."

People of Falluja demonstrating in nearby Saqlawiya town, 01/12/2005

January 14, 2005 By ROBERT FISK, The Independent

Baghdad.

They live beneath old fly-blown tents in the car-park of the Mustafa mosque and their canvas-roofed kitchen stands next to a pool of raw sewage, but the refugees from Fallujah will not return home.

First, because many have no homes to go to; second, because they are - with the encouragement of local clerics - listing a series of demands that include the withdrawal of all American soldiers from the city, the maintenance of security by Fallujans themselves, massive compensation payments and the return of money and valuables which those who have just visited Fallujah say were stolen by American troops.

And they are very definitely not going to vote in the 30 January elections. Squatting on the floor of his concrete-walled office in his black robes to eat a lunch of chicken and rice, Sheikh Hussein - he pleads with me not to print his family name - insists that his people are not against elections.

"We are not rejecting this election for the sake of it," he says. "We are rejecting it because it is the 'tent' of the occupation. It is the vehicle for the Americans to ensure that [interim President Iyad] Allawi gets back in. And we are still under occupation."

A bearded and bespectacled academic is sitting beside the sheikh, Dr Abdul-Kader of the department of Islamic Science at Baghdad University, who gravely reminds me of

the civilian dead of Fallujah. "There were hundreds," he says. "We found bodies in homes and graves in the gardens of homes."

Sheikh Hussein says "The Americans started off by killing native Americans and still they kill people they look down on." Everyone in the room, including a student of computer sciences from Fallujah who has so far listened in total silence, vigorously nod their heads.

"One day," the sheikh continues, "I was stopped and taken to an American base and questioned by the CIA, and they said, 'You are a religious man and we want advice'. I said, 'What I want to tell you is not to enter the cities because the people are waiting for a chance to attack you. They will make you suffer in different ways. Pull out your troops to the deserts, far away from the gunfire of the resistance, though that stretches a long way'. **But they were very, very stupid. They didn't take the chance to go out. They stayed to force us to have elections so they could get out and leave their agents in power. I say this; the American troops will retreat suddenly, or they will find themselves prisoners inside the trap of Iraq.**

"You know, you Westerners laugh at us Easterners, especially when we say, 'If Allah wills'. But the Prophet - peace be upon him - once said that the Iraqis would be scourged, that they would not receive a single dirham or a grain of rice in the hand, and this happened in the economic embargo of the 1990s.

"Then America came here after 9 April, 2003, with all its power and soldiers, so proud of getting rid of Saddam Hussein. But now the morale of these soldiers is rotting each day. They have psychological problems. My advice to them is to leave. They have a choice to make: they must leave or they will be forced out."

Fighting continues each night in Fallujah despite American claims of victory and to be "breaking the back" of the insurgency. As the sheikh puts it, not without some humour: "The Americans move in the streets during the day from 6am to 6pm but they do not move when the muqawama (resistance) imposes its own curfew on them between 6pm and 6am."

A great-grandfather in the camp says he cannot go back to his city while the Americans are there. And when I ask him if he will vote, he laughs at me. "The Americans must leave Fallujah unconditionally," the sheikh says. "They have done too much harm there to be accepted."

I suggest that Fallujah's troubles started the day the 82nd Airborne killed 18 protesters outside a local school just after the fall of Baghdad in 2003. Dr Abdul-Kader admonishes me.

"It started even before that," he says. "Fallujah people suffered under Saddam and they liberated their own city. They did not do so to live under occupation."

MORE:

Falluja: The Strategic Disaster

14.01.2005 By: Michael Schwartz, IraqWar.mirrorworld.ru

The underlying reality [in Falluja] was a classic, low-level urban guerrilla war in the rubble, with the guerrillas standing and fighting only when they thought they could inflict modest damage, and the U.S. responding with overwhelming force — tanks, artillery, and bombing runs — against any building from which they received fire.

Whether these encounters were occasional or frequent, whether the Americans or the insurgents regularly prevailed, the result was certainly an ongoing struggle. **A January UN dispatch reported that only nine of 27 neighborhoods were safe enough for medical teams to enter; and that reporters were not being permitted in the city "for their own safety."**

In Ramadi, 40 year old Abdulla Rahnan concluded, "The Americans want every city in Iraq to be like Fallujah. They want to kill us all — they are freeing us of our lives!"

His friend contributed his own grim observation: "Everyone here hates them because they are making mass graves faster than even Saddam!"

And while the Americans were tied down in Falluja, the guerrillas mounted a huge offensive throughout the Sunni areas of Iraq.

They reversed American offensives in Tal Afar and Samarra; seized the initiative in Mosul and Tikrit (previously showcases for the occupation authorities); challenged American control in many neighborhoods of Baghdad; regularly shelled the American headquarters in the capital's "Green Zone;" and escalated their attacks against American bases.

In November, one in four American supply convoys was ambushed, forcing the military to turn increasingly to airlifts to transport supplies.

In the meantime, with so many front-line troops fighting in, or occupying Falluja, the American military has only been able to mount half-hearted responses to insurgent efforts elsewhere, while remaining vulnerable to IEDs planted along convoy and patrol routes, to the mortaring of bases and of the Green Zone, and to suicide attacks like the one at the army mess hall of in Mosul.

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

**Sadr Movement Takes To The
Streets;**

Demands Solution To Iraq Fuel Crisis

January 15, 2005 KUT, Iraq (AFP) & By ERIK ECKHOLM, New York Times

Thousands of Moqtada Sadr supporters across Iraq protested against petrol and electricity shortages, as the radical Shiite leader's movement started to flex its political muscle ahead of key elections.

In the central city of Kut, around 1,000 Sadr loyalists took to the streets and protested in front of the local government building to complain about the lack of improvement in their daily lives since the March 2003 US-led invasion.

"Where are human rights?", "Where is the oil and gas?", "Where are the health services and electricity?" shouted the protestors, some of whom came symbolically equipped with candles and lanterns.

Amid tight security, the protestors marched to the government building in Kut, waving posters of the young Shiite cleric and shouting their slogans.

Another demonstration was held in the southeastern city of Amara, where some 2,000 people urged the Iraqi authorities to find a solution to the fuel issue.

"For the sake of Iraq's poor, we need electricity," implored Sheikh Minshed al-Azrafi, a local Sadr aide. "Where are all the things we were promised?"

A similar protest was staged in the central holy Shiite city of Karbala by around a thousand Sadr loyalists.

"We demand that the government and all oil officials work towards solving the energy crisis in the country," said Said Ali al-Musawi, the local representative of Sadr's movement.

A Sadr representative in Baghdad, Saad al-Kabi, said protests were planned in front of the oil ministry on Sunday, although he denied any knowledge of the wave of protests around the Shiite heartland.

Iraq's power supply is at its lowest since the 2003 invasion while queues at petrol stations have kept growing.

By invoking the dire economic situation and singling out the ever-worsening fuel shortages, **Sadr's movement is tapping into an issue that strikes a chord with most of the population, especially with his power base among the poorer strata of the majority Shiite community.**

Sadr is not running in the January 30 general elections which the Shiites are expected to dominate. However, some key members of his entourage have thrown their weight behind front-runner Abdel Aziz Hakim's Unified Iraqi Alliance.

Although Sadr stopped short of throwing his hat in the political ring after his decision to end his uprising, he still represents a major force and ranks as one of the most popular figures in the country.

On Friday, clerics representing Sadr delivered sermons urging their followers to make their voice heard and demand that their basic needs be met.

A big question in Basra, as in other Shiite centers, is the strength and intentions of Moktada al-Sadr.

The militia is lying low for now, and, while some sympathizers are on party slates, the Sadr organization is officially staying aloof from the elections. But among the white-turbaned clerics in the Sadr office in Basra, a populist mix of anti-Iranian and anti-establishment feelings is palpable.

"The other Shiite parties are taking positions that are good for their own interests but not for the people," said Sheik Assad al-Basri, chief of the office. "Their actual popularity with the people is almost zero."

"Some of the leaders of the other parties don't even read Arabic," he said, a not-so-subtle swipe at those who matured in exile. "These people spent a lot of time in Iran and it raises suspicions."

**We Were Never A Threat To
America...
Congratulations Bush - We Are A
Threat Now.**

**WANTED FOR FELONY MURDER:
THE TERRORIST-IN-CHIEF
Darth Vader**



(AFP/Brendan Smialowski)

January 15, 2005 **By: Riverbend In Baghdad**

This was an interesting piece of news a couple of days ago:

The United States has ended its physical search for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq, which was cited by the first administration of President George W Bush as the main reason for invading the country, the White House has said.

Over here, it's not really "news" in the sense that it's not new. We've been expecting a statement like this for the last two years.

A question poses it self at this point- why don't they let the scientists go if the weapons don't exist? Why do they have Iraqi scientists like Huda Ammash, Rihab Taha and Amir Al Saadi still in prison? Perhaps they are waiting for those scientists to conveniently die in prison? That way- they won't be able to talk about the various torture techniques and interrogation tactics...

I hope Americans feel good about taking their war on terror to foreign soil.

For bringing the terrorists to Iraq- Chalabi, Allawi, Zarqawi, the Hakeems... How is our current situation going to secure America? How is a complete generation that is growing up in fear and chaos going to view Americans ten years from now? Does anyone ask that?

After September 11, because of what a few fanatics did, Americans decided to become infected with a collective case of xenophobia... Yet after all Iraqis have been through under the occupation, we're expected to be tolerant and grateful. Why? Because we get more wheat in our diets?

Terror isn't just worrying about a plane hitting a skyscraper... terrorism is being caught in traffic and hearing the crack of an AK- 47 a few meters away because the National Guard want to let an American humvee or Iraqi official through.

Terror is watching your house being raided and knowing that the silliest thing might get you dragged away to Abu Ghraib where soldiers can torture, beat and

kill. Terror is that first moment after a series of machine-gun shots, when you lift your head frantically to make sure your loved ones are still in one piece.

Terror is trying to pick the shards of glass resulting from a nearby explosion out of the living-room couch and trying not to imagine what would have happened if a person had been sitting there.

The weapons never existed.

It's like having a loved one sentenced to death for a crime they didn't commit- having your country burned and bombed beyond recognition, almost. Then, after two years of grieving for the lost people, and mourning the lost sovereignty, we're told we were innocent of harboring those weapons.

We were never a threat to America...

Congratulations Bush - we are a threat now.

Cadet At School...





Next Summer's Resistance

(14 January, 2005; sheek abbas, anti-allawi-group@yahoo.com)

Kut: Occupation “Businessman” Killed

January 15, 2005 –AFP

The bullet-riddled corpses of four Iraqis working with a foreign company were discovered near Kut south of Baghdad, drawing attention once again to the high level of power exercised by rebels across central Iraq.

The dead were identified as an Iraqi businessman and three of his workers who had been threatened for working with a foreign company, police said.

The bodies were dumped near the town of Al-Suweira where insurgents have set up checkpoints and carried out attacks, about 60 kilometres south of Baghdad, in a region with a mix of Shiites and Sunni Arabs.

Sharqat Election Building Blown Up

January 15, 2005 By NED PARKER, Agence France-Presse

Insurgents set off a bomb in a voting centre in Sharqat, a town with a strong rebel presence north of Baghdad, causing widespread damage, police said. No one was in the centre at the time of the blast.

Sharqat, 300 kilometres north of Baghdad in Salahuddin province, is located in the Sunni Muslim heartland,

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Assholes In Command; It Never Changes

Jan 14, 2005 Michael Gaddy, Axis of Logic. **Michael Gaddy [mgnc46@yahoo.com]**, an Army veteran of Vietnam, Grenada, and Beirut, lives in the Four Corners area of the American Southwest.

Our enemy is much more cognizant of our history than are our leaders.

A young intelligence officer, now home from Iraq, told me that when he brought up the similarities of what was happening with the insurgency in Iraq, and what had happened in Vietnam during the war, he was ridiculed by his commander for bringing up "ancient" history, and told, "shut up, Lieutenant."

When this same intelligence officer questioned some of the tactics being used, such as firing into buildings to see if anyone would return the fire, and the likelihood that would create more insurgents, he was accused of "going native."

Such is the mentality of those who follow the gospel according to saints, Rummy, Cheney and Bush.

In late January of 2005, as in late January of 1968, we have the bastard child called illegitimate war, sired by lies and delivered from the womb of the mother called the omnipotent State, with identical dynamics: a psychopathic administration and war department, a military led by political whores who would not give credence to any intelligence that contradicts the psychobabble of that administration, a growing resistance that has been terribly underestimated, and a nation whose majority is asleep at the wheel.

God save our fine soldiers, at least those who have seen this war for what it is.

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 inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

OCCUPATION REPORT

The Great 2005 Election Farce Rolls On; Iraqis Get To Vote On Secret Candidates With Secret Platforms!

January 14, 2005 Richard Beeston, Times Online & By: Michael Schwartz,
IraqWar.mirrorworld.ru & January 13, 2005 Dan Murphy, Staff writer of The Christian
Science Monitor

Some of the tactics being used to protect candidates and voters will make the Iraqi
elections a unique event. All candidates for the national assembly appear on one of the
111 party lists registered with the electoral commission.

**In many cases the names of those who wish to stand for public office are not
actually available and will only be shown on request inside the polling station on
election day.**

**Leaders of the United Iraqi Alliance, the superlist of Shiite political groups that is
expected to take the most seats in the new parliament, say they probably won't
announce their full slate of candidates until after the election. Party platforms
also seem to be kept secret.**

Many other party lists are following suit.

Riverbend, the pseudonymous young Sunni woman whose website has become
required reading for those concerned with Iraq, expressed this sentiment elegantly at the
beginning of January: **"Sunni Arabs are going to boycott elections. It's not about
religion or fatwas or any of that so much as the principle of holding elections
while you are under occupation."**

"People don't really sense that this is the first stepping stone to democracy, as western
media is implying.

**"Many people sense that this is just the final act of a really bad play. It's the tying
of the ribbon on the 'democracy parcel' we've been handed. It's being stuck with
an occupation government that has been labeled 'legitimate' through elections."**

Baghdad: The Occupation Lives In Fear: But Even Kurds Slam Occupations' "Civil War" Crap

Colin Powell is warning of "civil war" in Iraq. Why do we Westerners keep threatening civil war in a country whose society is tribal rather than sectarian?

Of all papers, it is the Kurdish Al Takhri, loyal to Mustafa Barzani, which asks the same question. "There has never been a civil war in Iraq," the editorial thunders. And it is right.

12 January 2005 By Robert Fisk, The Independent U.K.

Journalism yields a world of clichés but here, for once, the first cliché that comes to mind is true. Baghdad is a city of fear. Fearful Iraqis, fearful militiamen, fearful American soldiers, fearful journalists.

At the al-Hurriya intersection yesterday morning, four truckloads of Iraqi national guardsmen - the future saviours of Iraq, according to George Bush - are passing my car. Their rifles are porcupine quills, pointing at every motorist, every Iraqi on the pavement, the Iraqi army pointing their weapons at their own people.

And they are all wearing masks - black hoods or ski-masks or keffiyahs that leave only slits for frightened eyes.

Just before it collapsed finally into the hands of the insurgents last summer, I saw exactly the same scene in the streets of Mahmoudiya, south of Baghdad. Now I am watching them in the capital.

At Kamal Jumblatt Square beside the Tigris, two American Humvees approach the roundabout. Their machine-gunners are shouting at drivers to keep away from them. A big sign in Arabic on the rear of each vehicle says: "Forbidden. Do not overtake this convoy. Stay 50 metres away from it."

The drivers behind obey; they know the meaning of the "deadly force" which the Americans have written on to their checkpoint signs. But the two Humvees drive into a massive traffic jam, the gunners now screaming at us to move back.

When a taxi which does not notice the U.S. troops blocks their path, the American in the lead vehicle hurls a plastic bottle full of water on to its roof and the driver mounts the grass traffic circle. A truck receives the same treatment from the lead Humvee. "Go back," shouts the rear gunner, staring at us through shades. We try desperately to turn into the jam.

Here were the terrified "liberators" of Baghdad throwing bottles of water at the Iraqis who are supposed to enjoy an American-imposed democracy on 30 January.

The rear Humvee has "Specialist Carrol" written on the windscreen. Specialist Carrol, I am sure, regards every damn one of us as a potential suicide bomber - and I can't blame him. One such bomber had just driven up to the police station in Tikrit, north of Baghdad, and destroyed himself and the lives of at least six policemen.

Round the corner, I discover the reason for the jam: Iraqi cops are fighting off hundreds of motorists desperate for petrol, the drivers refusing to queue any longer for the one thing which Iraq possesses in Croesus-like amounts - petrol.

I drop by the Ramaya restaurant for lunch. Closed. They are building a 20-floor security wall around the premises.

So I drive to the Rif for a pizza, occasionally tinkling the restaurant's piano while I watch the entrance for people I don't want to see. The waiters are nervous. They are happy to bring my pizza in 10 minutes. There is no one else in the restaurant, you see, and they watch the road outside like friendly rabbits. They are waiting for The Car.

I drive back through the al-Hurriya intersection beside the "Green Zone" and suddenly there is a big black 4x4, filled with ski-masked gunmen. "Get back!" they scream at every motorist as they try to cut across the median. I roll the window down. The rear door of the 4x4 whacks open. A ski-masked Westerner - blond hair, blue eyes - is pointing a Kalashnikov at my car. "Get back!" he shrieks in ghastly Arabic.

Then he clears the median, followed by three armoured pick-ups, windows blacked, tires skidding on the road surface, carrying the sacred Westerners inside to the dubious safety of the "Green Zone", the hermetically-sealed compound from which Iraq is supposedly governed.

I glance at the Iraqi press.

Colin Powell is warning of "civil war" in Iraq. Why do we Westerners keep threatening civil war in a country whose society is tribal rather than sectarian?

Of all papers, it is the Kurdish Al Takhri, loyal to Mustafa Barzani, which asks the same question. "There has never been a civil war in Iraq," the editorial thunders. And it is right.

CLASS WAR NEWS

RED FLAGS ON THE NEVSKY PROSPEKT



Passengers in a bus watch demonstrators walking along The Nevsky in St. Petersburg, Russia's second largest city, in protest against a recently passed law that strips them of benefits on Jan. 15, 2005. **The substitution of years-old benefits, such as free rides in public transport and free or subsidized medicines, for cash payments for retirees, disabled, war veterans and other broad categories of the population has triggered massive protests after the law came to force on Jan. 1. The rally in Putin's home city appeared to be the largest protest so far, and some of its participants called on the president to step down.** (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)

Received:

Flag Idiocy

From: Bill Everdell, USMCR, Brooklyn
To: Veterans For Peace
Sent: January 15, 2005 5:14 PM
Subject: Re: [VetPax] Flag Bill Flutters Schools' Finances

On Jan 14, 2005, at 1:23 AM, George S. Weber quoted:

In Hillsborough County alone, it could cost tens of thousands of dollars to comply with the Carey Baker Freedom Flag Act, which took effect this month. The law requires a U.S. flag in every public classroom in the state, including those for kindergarten through grade 12, community colleges and universities.

I'm a schoolteacher. If I were in Florida I'd resist---by buying copies of the Constitution for each class member and pointing out that the Constitution says nothing about a flag.

Bill Everdell, USMCR, Brooklyn

Web Copies

For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/>

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> ; www.gifightback.org ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>,

www.williambowles.info/gispecial

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