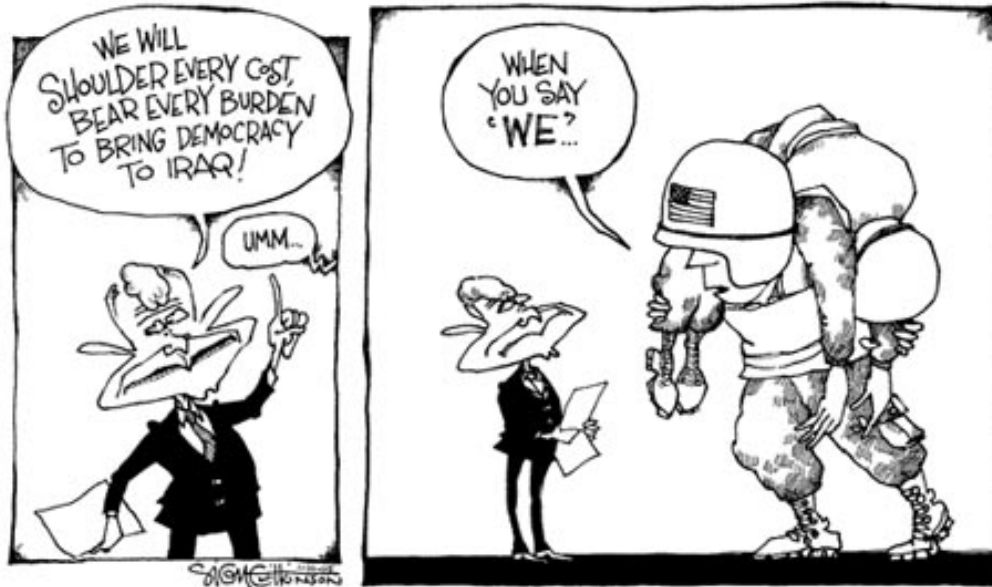


GI SPECIAL 3A23:



Come To Fayetteville March 19: The Troops At Ft. Bragg Need Your Help

March 19, 2005 marks the second anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq.

Perhaps no place in the United States has been affected to a greater degree by that war than Fayetteville, NC, the home of Ft. Bragg.

The US government continues to deploy soldiers stationed at nearby Ft. Bragg to fight and die in a country doesn't threaten our security and probably never did.

Many from the 82nd Airborne Division and the Army's Special Forces Command realize that those who really support them are their families and their community.

The appeal of the empty slogans and the yellow ribbon magnets of the right-wing pro-war zealots faded long ago. In 2005, Real Support for the Troops Means Bring Them Home Now!

On March 19, 2005, Fayetteville Peace With Justice, a small group of veterans, military spouses, community activists and even an occasional paratrooper in conjunction with Quaker House, the legendary home of GI organizing in the South invites all people of conscious to join with us in historic Rowan Street Park for a peace gathering like none you've ever seen.

Speakers from groups like Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, Veterans for Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War and many others promise to deliver a message from their experience that promises to resonate around the world.

We also need the support of our allies in communities of faith, trade unions, local peace groups and anyone else who realizes that The World Still Says No to War.

In this, the richest country in the world, soldiers return home from war to an uncertain economic future. Their teenage children see no way to enter college without also bartering their lives in military service for a small slice of the GI Bill. Americans applaud the \$335 million promised to tsunami victims, but the US spends that amount every three days in Iraq. We need Money for Jobs and Education, Not for wars and Occupations.

Come to Fayetteville this year.

Come and hear from parents whose children died in Iraq because this war continues.

Come and see children growing up while their fathers and mothers are trying to survive in a country where they are not wanted and where they do not want to be.

Your support can make a difference.

Your presence can save lives.

For more information, contact Lou Plummer, Fayetteville Peace With Justice (lou.plummer@mac.com, (910) 433-9053) or Chuck Fager, Quaker House (chuckfager@aol.com (910) 323-3912)

Peace,
Lou Plummer
Military Families Speak Out
Bring Them Home Now!
Fayetteville Peace With Justice

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Confirmed: Resistance Blew Up Ukrainian Troops

Jan. 21, 2005, AP

Ukraine's military experts have established that the blast was a deliberate act against coalition forces that can be considered a new insurgency tactic," Defense Ministry spokesman Andriy Lysenko said.

Eight Ukrainian troops and one Kazakh sapper were killed while unloading unexploded aviation bombs at an ammunition dump in southern Iraq. **Lysenko said that the investigators have established that the "center of the blast was under and between the bodies of two bombs" and that findings proved the ordnance was mined.**

"Pieces of a time fuse, wiring and batteries were discovered ... we don't know, however, who exactly planted it," he said. Shortly after the blast, Ukraine's outgoing President Leonid Kuchma ordered the Foreign Ministry and top military commanders to prepare the pullout of troops by mid-2005.

TROOP NEWS

**Rancor In The Ranks:
Military Personnel Critical Of The
War;
"Every Day I Get Calls From At
Least Two Soldiers Looking For A
Way Out."**

The Pentagon's civilian leadership has not been faced with so much criticism from within its own ranks since the Vietnam War. Retired general D. Barry McCaffrey is even concerned that "the army will lose its base in the next 24 months."

January 17, 2005 By GEORG MASCOLO and SIEGISMUND VON ILSEMANN, Der Spiegel

The war is over, at least as far as Darrell Anderson is concerned. Anderson, a 22-year-old GI from Lexington, Kentucky, deserted a week ago, heading across the US' loosely controlled border with Canada. When his fellow soldiers in the First US Tank Division, stationed in Hessen, Germany, ship out to Iraq for their second tour of duty, he'll be in Canada.

Anderson spent seven months in Iraq last year as a part of a unit assigned the dangerous mission of guarding police stations in Baghdad. He was wounded by grenade shrapnel during an insurgent attack, was awarded the Purple Heart and allowed to spend Christmas at home in the United States. But instead of returning to duty, Anderson fled to Toronto.

Now he's a deserter and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. If apprehended, he faces several years in a US military prison. In justifying his desertion, Anderson says: "I can't go back to this war. I don't want to kill innocent people." He talks about the constant pressure soldiers face to make decisions in the daily grind of war. Once, when a car came too close to their Baghdad checkpoint, his commanding officer ordered him to shoot, even though Anderson could only make out a man and children in the vehicle. The soldier refused. "Next time you shoot," his commanding officer barked.

On another occasion, the safety on his automatic weapon was all that prevented Anderson from losing control. **"I was holding a heavily injured comrade in my arms, there was blood all over the place, and Iraqis were cheering all around us," he recalls. "I was so furious that all I wanted to do was kill someone, anyone."**

Anderson has now applied for political asylum in Canada. His attorney, Jeffrey House, was once one of the 50,000 draft dodgers who fled to Canada to avoid serving in the Vietnam War. Deserters who are now fleeing to Canada to avoid the Iraq war have reawakened memories of an exodus that took place more than thirty years ago. **House says: "Every day I get calls from at least two soldiers looking for a way out."**

Proposals being considered to improve the security situation in Iraq also show signs of desperation.

For the first time, regular soldiers are being offered training to fight insurgents. Until now, such special training was reserved for members of the elite forces and for marine infantry troops. **Part of the training includes a marines' training manual written in 1940. Some is helpful, but parts are completely antiquated. For instance, there is a section labeled "working with animals," (mules, mostly) and another on "mixed-race" companies. According to the manual, such companies are unusually "unmanageable due to a lack of strong character."**

Models that have long since been discarded as failures are hectically being revived. For example, US military advisors are to be embedded as supervisors and support personnel within units of the new Iraqi army, who have the dubious but well-deserved reputation of fleeing the minute they come under fire.

Precisely the same recipe was incapable of stopping the Vietnam debacle 40 years ago. Military officials are also talking about forming death squads, whose job would be to track down and eliminate the insurgents within the territory they control or to which they normally withdraw. This would include foreign territory beyond the borders of Iraq. **It's a strategy that was largely discredited during civil wars in Latin American in the 1970s.**

These experiences have led military personnel in particular to call for a rethinking of Washington's strategy.

The Pentagon's civilian leadership has not been faced with so much criticism from within its own ranks since the Vietnam War. Retired general D. Barry McCaffrey is even concerned that "the army will lose its base in the next 24 months."

Half Of IRR Call-Ups Seek Delays, Hundreds Are No-Shows

January 20, 2005 By Lisa Burgess, Stars and Stripes, European edition

ARLINGTON, Va. — **Half the Individual Ready Reserves members given orders by the Army to fight the war have asked for either a delay or an exemption to the order, and Army officials are approving the majority — 66 percent — of the requests.**

Hundreds of other IRR members, meanwhile, simply have failed to show up at deployment stations when ordered to do so.

And instead of declaring the scofflaws as “absent without leave,” or AWOL, the Army is choosing to give these people “the benefit of the doubt,” Lt. Col. Pamela Hart, an Army spokeswoman in the Pentagon, said in a Tuesday interview.

The combination of IRR deferments and no-shows is slowing the Army's effort to fill critical slots in deploying units.

“It would be fair to say there's a delay,” Hart said.

Knowing that not everyone called would make the cut, the same officials decided to send orders to 5,674 IRR members to report for training and deployment, a process that will extend through March 2005.

But attrition is turning out to be higher than Army officials had anticipated.

Of the 3,845 mobilization orders sent to IRR members as of Dec. 28, 1,919 people requested either a delay or an exemption from the deployment, Hart said.

An adjudication board at the Army's Human Resources Command in St. Louis has approved 1,258 of the requests, Hart said.

Only 85 requests have been disapproved, while 576 requests are pending a decision.

Meanwhile, another 452 IRR members who were supposed to report to their mobilization stations before Dec. 28 not only did not contact the board, they did not show up at all.

However, the Army "hasn't categorized anyone in AWOL status," Hart said, and is not moving to prosecute or punish any IRR member who did not report as ordered.

Asked why the Army officials appear to be treating the IRR so leniently, Hart replied, "This is a special group of people."

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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)

The Cowards In Command Who Slander The Dead

From: JFL

To: GI Special

Sent: Saturday, January 22, 2005 10:33 PM

Subject: I Am Not Going To Another War

"An NCO accidentally discharged a 50cal machine gun mounted on a tank while the kid was standing in front of it. The 50 cal round is about as fat as a salt shaker. It split the kid apart.

"The worst part is that they Army is lying to protect the NCO. They are saying that it was the dead kids fault so the man doesn't go to prison." [From GI Special 3A22, Letter From Soldier, Iraq.]

This story reminds me of the unbelievable crime the Navy brass committed when they labeled Clayton Hartwig a homosexual murderer after he died in the line of duty when antique munitions exploded killing him and 46 others in the gun turret of the USS Iowa.

They made sure they picked on someone who could not defend himself from their cowardly accusations.

It was at that point that I realized that the Navy is truly a despicable organization. I have no reason to believe that the Army or Air Force are any different.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Car Bomb Explosion In Hilla Wounds Nine Allawi Soldiers

22 January 2005 FOCUS News

Diwaniyah. **A car bomb blasted today at 3:50 pm Iraqi time near the main entrance to Charlie Camp of the Multinational Centre-South Division in the town of Hilla,** announced spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Domanski for FOCUS News Agency.

Nine soldiers from the Iraqi National Guard and one civilian were wounded. They were taken to the local hospital.

5 Collaborator Troops & Occupation Truck Driver Killed

23 January 2005 Aljazeera.Net

Four Iraqi soldiers and a truck driver have been killed in separate attacks.

Three Iraqi soldiers were killed and another wounded when unidentified attackers fired six mortar rounds at an Iraqi army post east of Dhuluiya.

Another soldier died when guerrillas ambushed an army patrol in al-Tharthar district, 9km west of Samarra, said Captain Saad Amjad.

Police Lieutenant-Colonel Fares Mahdi said fighters using automatic weapons killed a truck driver in a Turkish convoy ferrying food to US troops near al-

Sharqat, some 330km north of capital Baghdad. The nationality of the driver was not immediately known.

Resistance Growing Larger, More Effective: "We Can Only Control The Ground We Stand On. We Leave, And It Falls Apart"

The insurgents "are getting smarter all the time. We've seen a lot of changes in their tactics that say, one, they're getting help from outside, and two, they're learning," said Sgt. 1st Class Glenn Aldrich, 35, of Houston, a 16-year Army veteran, after spending an hour recently greeting Iraqis on a foot patrol through a Baghdad neighborhood.

Jan. 21, 2005 By Tom Lasserter and Jonathan S. Landay, Knight Ridder Newspapers

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The United States is steadily losing ground to the Iraqi insurgency, according to every key military yardstick.

The analysis suggests that unless something dramatic changes the United States won't win the war. [Already lost. Game over.]

It's axiomatic among military thinkers that insurgencies are especially hard to defeat because the insurgents' goal isn't to win in a conventional sense but merely to survive until the will of the occupying power is sapped. **Recent polls already suggest an erosion of support among Americans for the war.**

The unfavorable trends of the war are clear:

- **U.S. military fatalities from hostile acts have risen from an average of about 17 per month just after President Bush declared an end to major combat operations on May 1, 2003, to an average of 71 per month.**
- **The average number of U.S. soldiers wounded by hostile acts per month has spiraled from 142 to 708 during the same period. Iraqi civilians have suffered even more deaths and injuries, although reliable statistics aren't available.**
- **Attacks on the U.S.-led coalition since November 2003, when statistics were first available, have risen from 735 a month to 2,400 in October.** Air Force Brig. Gen. Erv Lessel, the multinational forces' deputy operations director, told Knight Ridder on Friday that attacks were currently running at 75 a day, about 2,300 a month, well below a spike in November during the assault on Fallujah, but nearly as high as October's total.

-The average number of mass-casualty bombings has grown from zero in the first four months of the American occupation to an average of 13.3 per month.

- Electricity production has been below pre-war levels since October, largely because of sabotage by insurgents, with just 6.7 hours of power daily in Baghdad in early January, according to the State Department.

- Iraq is pumping about 500,000 barrels a day fewer than its pre-war peak of 2.5 million barrels per day as a result of attacks, according to the State Department.

"All the trend lines we can identify are all in the wrong direction," said Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, a Washington policy research organization. "We are not winning, and **the security trend lines could almost lead you to believe that we are losing.**" [Like the "almost" bit?]

Most worrisome, the insurgency is getting larger.

At the close of 2003, U.S. commanders put the number of insurgents at 5,000. Earlier this month, Gen. Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani, the director of the Iraqi intelligence service, said there are 200,000 insurgents, including at least 40,000 hard-core fighters. The rest, he said, are part-time fighters and supporters who provide food, shelter, funds and intelligence.

"Many Iraqis respect these gunmen because they are fighting the invaders," said Nabil Mohammed, a Baghdad University political science professor.

The insurgents "are getting smarter all the time. We've seen a lot of changes in their tactics that say, one, they're getting help from outside, and two, they're learning," said Sgt. 1st Class Glenn Aldrich, 35, of Houston, a 16-year Army veteran, after spending an hour recently greeting Iraqis on a foot patrol through a Baghdad neighborhood.

Insurgent attacks have shifted from small groups of men shooting at tanks with AK-47s to powerful car bombs and roadside explosives, and well-planned assaults, kidnappings and assassinations.

"The insurgency will grow larger," said Ghazi Bada al Faisal, an employee of the Iraqi Ministry of Industry and a Fallujah resident. "The child whose brother and father were killed in the fighting will now seek revenge."

"We can only control the ground we stand on. We leave, and it falls apart," said Jeffrey White, a former Defense Intelligence Agency analyst at the Washington Center for Near East Policy.

The Occupation And The Resistance Go Eyeball To Eyeball; Negroponte Meets With Al-Dhari

First of all, the people opposing elections are not just Sunni.

The opposition is national, not sectarian as others have described it.

More than 70 political parties and political groups from all ethnic and religious affiliations have withdrawn from the elections declaring their opposition. And the withdrawals are continuing. This is not to mention the many prominent political figures who have come out against the elections. The opposition to the elections, therefore, is not merely Sunni, it is a broad-based national phenomenon.

20 - 26 January 2005 AL-AHRAM (Cairo)

Harith Al-Dhari, head of the Muslim Scholars Association, spoke to Mohamed Al-Anwar in Baghdad about the US attempts to court Iraq's Sunnis.

Harith Al-Dhari comes across as a strong and imposing figure. Al-Dhari and his movement is one of the staunchest opponents of the fact that elections should be held while the country is labouring under the US-led occupation. The status of the Muslim Scholars Association rose to prominence in recent months when the movement championed a campaign to boycott the 30 January elections. Al-Ahram Weekly visited Al-Dhari at the association's headquarters in Um Al-Qura Mosque in western Baghdad.

There have been rumours that your recent meeting with the US ambassador to Iraq resulted in a secret agenda. Is this true? Who helped arrange this meeting and what was discussed and has another meeting been arranged?

Our meeting with members of the US diplomatic mission in Baghdad was the first such meeting to have taken place since the occupation.

They had asked for the meeting and it was arranged through the intermediacy of the French Embassy. We agreed to meet because our door is always open to all diplomatic agencies that want to hear what we have to say, just as we want to hear what they have to say.

The American delegation was headed by US Charge d'Affaires John Negroponte and consisted of several civil and military officials. Negroponte said that he had been instructed by his government to ask for this meeting.

He then addressed two issues: security and the elections.

On the first he said and I quote him "the Iraqi people have been deprived of security for 20 years and so they will remain until security is restored to the country. We believe that holding elections on time will help stabilise security and we hope that you participate in them because you are respected by your people and can influence others to take part in the elections as well."

We explained that the US forces' violence and tyranny against the Iraqi people and their destruction of our cities from Najaf to Falluja, were responsible for this dire situation. In addition, the Iraqis do not feel that these elections will lead to the fulfilment of their main demand, which is the end of the US occupation.

They simply do not see a light at the end of the dark tunnel. Although I have not been appointed spokesman for the Iraqis who refuse to participate in the elections I do know their demands, feelings and aspirations.

Therefore, if the Americans want to bring an end to the problems and reach stability, they should commit themselves to a declared schedule for withdrawing their troops from Iraq.

Did you ask Negroponte for the release of the detainees from your organisation? What reasons did you give for boycotting the elections?

We told him that the killing and destruction have continued uninterruptedly from the time US forces entered the country until the present. More than 100,000 Iraqis have been killed and more than half a million Iraqi men and women are in prison.

There are more than 120 imams and preachers from the association who were either killed or imprisoned.

Then came the phase of the total or the near total destruction of the cities of Najaf and Falluja.

How can people be expected to have elections under such circumstances?

The major demand for which Iraqis have undergone such suffering (the end of the occupation) will not be obtained through the elections. The Iraqi people do not expect these elections to produce anything but a government that will always do America's bidding, and all indications are that the forthcoming government under US occupation will be weak and rubberstamp every American wish."

Some people criticise your position on the elections. What would make you change your mind about the boycott?

Our position on this matter is not new.

We have made it clear since the creation of the Interim Governing Council that we are a religious jurisprudential organisation, not a political party or association. **We have no interest in being, nor do we seek to become, a party in a political grouping until after our country attains independence, for us to do so would confer legitimacy on**

that grouping, regardless of its beliefs, and consequently contribute to prolonging the occupation.

However, we do have supporters and many share our conviction in the need to boycott the elections. However, if the US declared its commitment to a timeframe for leaving Iraq we could appeal to those people to take part in the elections. We would not issue a religious ruling to that effect; we would simply urge them to take part and leave the decision up to them.

What do you have to say to those who charge that you are actively inciting Arab Sunnis to boycott the elections and thereby depriving them of the opportunity to shape their future in the new Iraq?

There are certain facts everyone should be aware of.

First of all, the people opposing elections are not just Sunni.

The opposition is national, not sectarian as others have described it.

More than 70 political parties and political groups from all ethnic and religious affiliations have withdrawn from the elections declaring their opposition. And the withdrawals are continuing. This is not to mention the many prominent political figures who have come out against the elections. The opposition to the elections, therefore, is not merely Sunni, it is a broad-based national phenomenon.

Secondly, the permanent constitution will be created on the basis of the law for the administration of the state which was mainly drafted by Paul Bremer, the former US civil ruler in Iraq, and ratified by the now-dissolved Interim Governing Council. We do not expect the constitution to depart from that law.

But even if it is worse, history informs us that countries liberated from occupation work to eradicate all traces of the occupation. This includes the constitutions and laws that have been imposed by force.

Are you coordinating with Shia parties? What are your comments on the fact that there is an Islamic party on the electoral lists and well-known Sunni figures with connections to Sunni parties taking part in the elections?

The Shias, like the Sunnis, are not unified in their position on the elections.

The Shia have many parties and authorities.

There is the supreme Shia authority as represented by Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani who has his followers and who wants to participate in the elections.

However there are other well-known Shia authorities in Najaf and Karbala, such as Sheikh Ahmed Al-Baghdadi and Sheikh Mahmoud Al-Hasni. These, as well as the Shia tribes in the south will not take part in the elections.

The same applies to many secular parties, not to mention the Sadr and Jawad Al-Khalisi movement. As I said, the opposition to the elections is a national, not a denominational or sectarian, movement.

As for the Iraqi Islamic Party, it has asked for the elections to be postponed and when this demand was turned down it withdrew. I am 100 per cent sure that it will not participate. If, on the other hand, the elections are postponed it may change its mind again. As for the other Sunni figures, they are only token names.

Do you feel that your life is in danger? Have you received death threats?

Yes. Also, the threats have come from several different sources and some of these had an official stamp and were delivered to me directly. Four months ago I received a letter from the occupation forces via the CIA. Other threats from other parties have been relayed to me through other various agencies.

Do you think that one of those agencies is the one that assassinated your brother, Sheikh Damer, and his son?

It is difficult to say.

What do you want Egypt and other Arab countries to do now?

All we expect from Egypt and other Arab countries is to understand the situation as it stands in Iraq and not to intervene in matters that are not in the interests of Iraq and the Iraqi people.

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.

Silly Bush “Civil War” Propaganda Nailed One More Time

January 22, 2005 Gareth Porter , Antiwar.com

As the U.S. occupation of Iraq heads toward its third year, there is a remarkable absence of debate over withdrawal, despite the evidence that a clear majority of the American people want out. Many conservatives are uneasy about the occupation, but they are unwilling to challenge the administration publicly. **Most liberals in politics and the media appear to believe that invading Iraq was a major blunder but withdrawal anytime in the foreseeable future would lead to civil war and chaos.**

In Iraq the strong anti-sectarian standpoint of both Sunni and Shia leaders has been a powerful brake on any such tendency.

The leading organization of Sunni clerics, the Association of Muslim Scholars, with oversight over several thousand mosques across the country, has supported the resistance to the occupation, but has also strongly condemned foreign terrorists for trying to foment war between Sunnis and Shi'ites. And Shi'ites have identified their enemy as the foreign Wahhabis, not Sunnis in general

At the funeral procession following the mosque bombing in Baghdad, thousands of Shi'ite mourners did not call for vengeance against the Sunni. Instead they chanted slogans accusing the United States of being complicit in the bombing.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Sound Familiar?

"This so-called ill treatment and torture in detention centers, stories of which were spread everywhere among the people, and later by the prisoners who were freed ... were not, as some assumed, inflicted methodically, but were excesses committed by individual prison guards, their deputies, and men who laid violent hands on the detainees." Rudolf Hoess, the SS commandant at Auschwitz

The Spectacle: No One Wants To Talk To Cindy Sheehan On Inauguration Day (Or Any Other)

My comment that war-supporting John Kerry can go straight to hell with this administration hits two nerves, and a grumble harmonizes with the wild shrieks of approval, the former coming from David Cobb and his entourage of feint-hearted Greens. The "go to hell, John" crowd is far and away the majority, and the best sign I see all day is there: "I voted for Kerry, and now I'm carrying this fucking sign."

By Stan Goff, Master Sergeant, U.S. army, Special Forces (Retired) January 22 / 24, 2005, CounterPunch. [For more, see Bring Them Home Now: <http://www.bringthemhomenow.com/>]

Back in Raleigh now, and I can't shake the feeling that I've spent the last two days in a dream.

Arrive in DC on the morning of the 19th, and we are hit with horizontal snow and a Siberian wind chill, worse because we are standing in LBJ park taking cover on the leeward sides of the big oaks while our Gold Star families talk to the press.

Military Families Speak Out has gathered ten family members - widows, sisters, dads, aunts, grandmothers of those killed in Iraq.

One was killed a year later when he pulled his own trigger at the end of a post-traumatic spiral. His sister said he couldn't quit talking about a fellow troop who slit the throat of an Iraqi girl. Cindy Sheehan, whose son was killed in an ambush last April, seems positively normal until she is asked to relive the moment she first saw the military sedan in front of her house with the three men in uniform. Then her breath is taken away again by that moment of terrible recognition, and she sobs.

Across the foot bridge is the North parking lot of the Pentagon. The Gold Star families have written the Secretary of Defense time and again requesting a meeting. They want to ask him to explain why their loved ones had to die. No reply, of course.

So today they - with a few others of us who still have living family members in the service - will walk across that foot bridge and keep going toward Rumsfeld's office until we are stopped.

We are halfway across the bridge before we can see through the driving snow that there is a phalanx of black clad, armed and body-armored police waiting for us, the blue lights whipping around on top of their cruisers. Someone has monitored our emails. When the treacherous dads and grandmothers approach and attempt to negotiate entry, the burly African American police spokesperson seems embarrassed and discomfited by the little drama.

He's been sent out here to the far reaches of a giant, empty parking lot in a snow storm to handle a situation that is pregnant with "political sensitivity," and he's been given not an ounce of useful guidance. At one point, he apologetically dissembles, saying that they didn't even know we were coming. Our delegation can't suppress a little sardonic laughter over that one.

The bereaved finally leave a stack of 8 x 10 color photos of the dead boys - taken while they were alive, posed in uniform - and ask the cop to try and ensure the delivery of the snow-wet portraits to the Office of the Secretary of Defense of the United States of America.

Later, at St. Aloysius Church, as we shake the snow off our outer garments and the blood rushes back into our frozen peripheries and we settle into chairs with hot coffee, a kind of sleepy thaw-torpor comes over us.

The next day - inauguration day - I give a brief speech at Malcolm X Park.

My comment that war-supporting John Kerry can go straight to hell with this administration hits two nerves, and a grumble harmonizes with the wild shrieks of

approval, the former coming from David Cobb and his entourage of feint-hearted Greens. The "go to hell, John" crowd is far and away the majority, and the best sign I see all day is there: "I voted for Kerry, and now I'm carrying this fucking sign."

The DC Anti-War Network (DAWN), who organized the rally, is almost three thousand strong when they march away. At the end of the march they carry dozens of flag-draped coffins.

I begin working my way back to a checkpoint at D Street and 7th, where I will try to join the "Turn Your Back on Bush" contingent of military families and vets who have staked out a position along the parade route near Mellon Memorial Fountain.

On the way, I drop into Harry's Hotel to grab coffee and a sandwich at the bar. The place is infested with expensively clad white people, and brown people are waiting on them. Today is a good day for both. The white people have their leader to celebrate, and the brown people are making out on tips. On the television above the bar, though, CNN plays. CNN was almost in the direct employ of Donald Rumsfeld in the past, and is trying today to pretend that this inauguration is some momentous event.

Still they still get a report from Christiana Amanpour in Iraq, in which the British-Iranian airline heiress and CNN war-zone correspondent uses two D-words to describe the situation there - disaster and debacle.

The crowd in the restaurant-bar become momentarily still. It's like someone farted. When the smiling reporters reappear on the big screen to cover the coronation again, everyone relaxes, and they go back to their five-dollar bottles of exotic beer and their coffee and their Pinot Noir.

I leave having caught bits and pieces from the TV of the whole weird spectacle. Encrypted in the speeches is a state of general war on all who fail to obey. Caligula.

There is to be an Uncle Tom Gala featuring Armstrong Williams, where the Party of White Supremacy can take a moment to fawn over beaming black reactionaries and trump the brain-dead "cherish diversity" liberals of "the opposition." "Massa loves my ass" confronts the cherish-diversity liberals with a stark fact of history; the planter aristocracy cherished the fuck out of diversity. It was the plantation demographic.

In the street, a smug triumphalism emanates from the wind-bitten Anglo-Saxon cheeks of Republican patriarchs in their thousand dollar coats. Clutching their arms to balance on spiked heels are their chinchilla and mink clad mates - the Prozac and anticipation of the days events have given them a slightly crazed and euphoric look.

I remember that look from my youth when my siblings and I would hide in the woods to watch Pentecostal tent revivals. But the country women at the tent revivals had no minks, and they couldn't match the hair products that are in evidence here today. I'm thinking that the hair of Republican women could stop a nine-millimeter round. Maybe it's an additional security measure.

There is a cordon around the parade route to keep back any threats to the spectacle. There is a personal cordon around each of the intoxicated participants; little force fields

that filter their backgrounds. They can hear the marching bands and the tittering of their fellow white nationalists, but they can't seem to hear that incessant backdrop of helicopters and sirens that - for me, at least - gives the whole scene an air of apocalyptic science fiction. They see the capital dome in the distance, but they don't see the freezing beggars they bypass or the sleeping homeless bodies buried under mounds of cast-off clothing in the alcoves.

There is no way I'm getting through the checkpoint. There are thousands waiting at the little bottleneck, many with inauguration tickets that won't magic-carpet them through the team of over-worked cops who are checking every jacket, every bag, every pair of shoes. This has forced the exultant Republicans to mingle with legions of protesters. Outside the cordon, the numbers of protesters almost match that of the Buffoon-worshippers.

Ever so often, something about being logjammed together with the protesters inexplicably penetrates and disrupts the happy-happy force-field, and one of them will snap.

Then their eyes flash with the strange breathless rage that only an assault on illusion engenders. A blue-haired matron seems suddenly overcome with it when she marches straight up to a 30-ish woman standing in an unobstructed and unobstructing spot with a sign that says, "Bush Lied." The old woman's eyes are alight with frustration (and fear!) when she scolds the younger woman for "violating my right to see my president."

The younger woman says she isn't stopping anyone from doing anything - that the police are - but the invisible armor comes back up and the blue-hair suddenly can't hear anything but marching bands again as she stalks away. Perhaps she had eaten earlier at Harry's and is still seething about Amanpour's less than glowing description of her Idiot Prince's liberty-bearing crusade in Mesopotamia.

I've seen enough. I have another speech to give to a collection of lefties tonight, where I will ask them to come to Fayetteville on the 19th of March. But I've hit the wall in some sense, watching that unstable little old woman and these insufferably ignorant and arrogant white men in their thousand dollar coats, and the dead chinchilla parade, and the whole spectacle that now unaccountably calls up the image in my head of fat growing around someone's heart.

Everyone hates a party-pooper.

No one wants to talk to Cindy Sheehan. No one wants to see her weep. No one wants to smell the bodies under the rubble in Fallujah. No one wants to know about the furious masses around the world that will make a mockery of this whole futile exhibition.

That's our job now, I'm thinking. To make them see what they don't want to see.

MORE:

Families Of Servicemembers Killed In Iraq Turned Away At Pentagon



Cindy Sheehan clutches a photo of her son, Casey, at Wednesday's protest. Casey died during an April mission in Sadr City, Iraq. (Leo Shane III / S&S)

January 21, 2005 By Leo Shane III, Stars And Stripes

WASHINGTON - Pentagon police on Wednesday turned away family members of troops killed in Iraq who wanted to confront Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on the reasons for the war in Iraq.

The group of about 20 was stopped before entering Pentagon property by about a dozen officers, who told the protesters they did not have the proper permission to enter the building.

Organizers said they have been petitioning for the meeting for weeks, but department officials are ignoring their requests.

"The man who was too busy to personally sign the Killed in Action letters these families received is apparently too busy to acknowledge the request of the Gold Star families for this meeting," Nancy Lessin, co-founder of Military Families Speak Out, told reporters gathered for Wednesday's protest.

Five Gold Star families - ones who have lost a son or daughter to fighting in Iraq - brought pictures and letters to the event to present to the secretary, and asked police to pass the items along to illustrate their loss and grief.

Cindy Sheehan, a California resident whose son Casey was killed during a mission in Sadr City last April, sheltered a photo of her son from the snow with her arms as the group tried to convince police to let them by.

"I wanted them to see my son," she said, weeping. "I wanted them to see the consequences of his actions. ... I have the feeling they feel he was a dispensable asset to them."

Sheehan flew to Washington on Wednesday and planned to take part in the group's inauguration protests on Thursday.

Families said they also wanted Rumsfeld to explain why troops in many cases weren't properly trained or equipped for the fighting, and when the other troops will be brought home.

"We're here to try and bring the truth to the Pentagon," said Celeste Zappala, a Philadelphia resident whose son Sherwood was killed in Baghdad last April.



Nancy Lessin, center, co-founder of Military Families Speak Out, lists her complaints against Secretary Rumsfeld as Sue Niederer, left, and Bill Mitchell display photos of their sons, who were killed while serving in Iraq. (Leo Shane III / S&S)

OCCUPATION REPORT

**U.S. Soldiers Dying So Thieves
Can Fill Their Bank Accounts;
Allawi & Scum Take \$300 Million;
*"This Is What Governments Do
When They Are Coming To An
End."***

"I am sorry to say that the corruption here is worse now than in the Saddam Hussein era," said Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the Iraqi national security adviser, who said he had not been informed of the details of the flight or the arms deal.

January 22, 2005 By DEXTER FILKINS, New York Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Jan. 21 - Earlier this month, according to Iraqi officials, \$300 million in American bills was taken out of Iraq's Central Bank, put into boxes and quietly put on a charter jet bound for Lebanon.

The money was to be used to buy tanks and other weapons from international arms dealers, the officials say, as part of an accelerated effort to assemble an armored division for the fledgling Iraqi Army. **But exactly where the money went, and to whom, and for precisely what, remains a mystery, at least to Iraqis who say they have been trying to find out.**

The \$300 million deal appears to have been arranged outside the American-designed financial controls intended to help Iraq - which defaulted on its external debt in the 1990's - legally import goods. **By most accounts here, there was no public bidding for the arms contracts, nor was the deal approved by the entire 33-member Iraqi cabinet.**

On Friday, the mysterious flight became an issue in this country's American-backed election campaign, when Defense Minister Hazim al-Shalaan, faced with corruption allegations, threatened to arrest a political rival.

In an interview on Al Jazeera television, Mr. Shalaan said he would order the arrest of Ahmed Chalabi, one of the country's most prominent politicians, who has publicly accused Mr. Shalaan of sending the cash out of the country. Mr. Shalaan said he would extradite Mr. Chalabi to face corruption charges of his own.

Mr. Chalabi first made the allegation against Mr. Shalaan last week, on another Arabic-language television network. He said there was no legitimate reason why the Iraqi government should have used cash to pay for goods from abroad. He implied that at least some of the money was being used for other things.

"Why was \$300 million in cash put on an airplane?" Mr. Chalabi asked in an interview this week. "Where did the money go? What was it used for? Who was it given to? We don't know."

The \$300 million flight has been the talk of Iraq's political class, and fueled the impression among many Iraqis and Western officials that the interim Iraqi government, set up after the American occupation formally ended in June, is awash in corruption.

It is not clear whether the money came from Iraqi or American sources, or both.

"I am sorry to say that the corruption here is worse now than in the Saddam Hussein era," said Mowaffak al-Rubaie, the Iraqi national security adviser, who said he had not been informed of the details of the flight or the arms deal.

That charge is echoed outside of Iraq as well. Isam al-Khafaji, the director of the New York-based Iraq Revenue Watch, said corruption had become an "open secret" within the Iraqi government.

"There is no legal system to bring charges against anyone not following the rules and not abiding by the law, especially if you're a powerful politician," Mr. Khafaji said. "That's the tragedy of Iraq: Everyone runs their business like a private fiefdom." [Stop whining. That's capitalism, how it's supposed to be, the American way, and who do you think set up your fake "government?"

Reached by telephone in Lebanon, the aide, Mishal Sarraf, said the arms deal had been approved by four senior members of the Iraqi government, including Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and Mr. Shalaan. He said it had been carried out quickly because of the urgency of the guerrilla war. **He said he had not realized that the deal had been done in cash. [And the dog ate my homework.]**

Mr. Sarraf refused to say who received the money, saying it was too dangerous. [For Mr. Saffar that is.]

In threatening to arrest Mr. Chalabi, Mr. Shalaan appears to be trying to change the subject to Mr. Chalabi's own legal problems. In Jordan, Mr. Chalabi faces charges that he embezzled millions of dollars from the Petra Bank, which collapsed in the 1990's.

Dr. Allawi's office did respond to repeated requests for an interview.

According to a senior Iraqi financial official with knowledge of the deal, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject, the \$300 million was then transferred to the Warqa Bank, a private Iraqi financial institution with a capitalization of about \$7 million. That bank, the Iraqi official said, does not have the ability to transfer money electronically to another account in another country. An equivalent amount of cash was then taken from the vault of the Central Bank of Iraq, taken to the airport, loaded on an airplane and sent to Lebanon.

"The government here knows it is coming to an end," the official said. "This is what governments do when they are coming to an end."

"The Iraqi Government Exists Only On Television"

January 21, 2005 Robin Cook, Guardian/UK

Since George Bush was reelected over 200 more US soldiers have been killed in Iraq.

Each new day brings another 70 attacks on the occupation forces as the territory dominated by the insurgents expands and the area which the occupiers can safely patrol shrinks.

This week a senior Kurdish leader, although a supporter of the occupation, admitted that for a lot of its citizens, "the Iraqi government exists only on television".

"Notes Of A Former Peacekeeper"



US soldiers attempt to extract information from Iraqis, during a raid in the Sunni Triangle, by making them do push-ups. Afterwards the men were arrested, handcuffed and loaded into armored personnel carriers, but then released several miles down the road. January 15, 2004. photo by Johan Rydeng Spanner; All Rights Reserved

January 20, 2005

(The photograph above was shot by my friend Johan Spanner, a really talented Danish photographer who I think is covering the inauguration in DC today. I met Johan in Jordan in April 2003, shortly after he was released from jail in Iraq. Johan, along with three other journalists, had been jailed by the Hussein government for traveling to Iraq on the wrong visa (a tourist visa, and not the incredibly difficult to obtain journalist visa). They were held, among other places, at Abu Ghraib prison.

(Johan has been back to Iraq since then, and will head back to Baghdad to cover the election. The photograph here comes from an online exhibition of his work, part of a monthly series put on by the folks at PixelPress, and it's well worth checking out. I've excerpted a selection from his artist's statement below, which hints at the unique

perspective he brings to covering war. In it, he discusses the Iraqis you see doing push-ups above, exercise Johan says wasn't voluntary.)

Before becoming a photographer I served in the Danish Army as a peacekeeper in Croatia and Bosnia in the mid-1990s. It was a very different conflict from Iraq--there were actual front lines, violence was only occasionally directed against the peacekeepers, and we were clearly instructed to act as guests in the region, rather than as an occupying force. Now, while I don't see the Balkan missions as a complete success, I consider them a lot more successful than Iraq, which seems to spin ever more out of control.

During the few days I was embedded with an infantry company in the Sunni Triangle during January, 2004, the American soldiers routinely violated the Geneva Conventions. I witnessed them raid a hospital with the intention of taking anybody with a gunshot wound back to the base for interrogation; I was told (but not shown) that a prisoner at the Forward Operating Base who had been shot in the abdomen would receive no medical attention unless he decided to speak.

I also witnessed the implementation of a policy called "Leave No Refuge," aimed at destroying the houses of suspected highway hijackers. In the process of finding those houses, the soldiers raided literally every house in the village. They forced villagers to do push-ups, just for the fun of it or to extract information. I saw them kick in villagers' doors and offer their kids teddy bears confiscated in earlier raids as compensation.

<p>At times it was truly absurd, as when they used 8 TOW missiles (at an estimated \$20,000 each) as well as hundreds of rounds of other ammunition, to destroy the empty houses of two of the suspected hijackers.</p>
--

Baghdad Water Supply Cut Off

21 January 2005 Reuters

Just when the people of Baghdad thought things couldn't get much worse, they did.

For the past five days, most of the city — particularly the western districts — has been without water.

"This is everyone's biggest problem," said Alaadin Saad, 32, a father of two who lives in the southwest district of Saidaia.

"We haven't had water for nearly a week. We used up all our reserves and now I haven't had a shower for three days."

There has been no explanation for the crisis, which has provoked such anger and frustration that one Iraqi called a news agency demanding that something be done.

Insurgents are suspected of attacking a water mains outside the city several days ago, cutting off supplies.

“Nothing works — there’s no power, no water, no fuel, no phone service. It’s a disaster,” said Namidh, a security guard who said his family had been without water for a week.

A spokesman for the public works ministry had no explanation for the crisis and referred callers to the mayor’s office.

The crisis has left many families unable to cook, wash or bathe and also caused illness, some say.

A police source said around 300 people were taken to hospital in west Baghdad this week with stomach problems or similar ailments and complaining of having been “poisoned”.

In some areas there is absolutely no water, in others, a trickle for a few hours a day. The shortages have become the main talking point in a city of around five million people already beset by difficulties.

MORE:

Bleak Eid...

January 22, 2005 Baghdad Burning, Girl Blog from Iraq

It's the third day of Eid. Eid is the Islamic holiday and usually it's a time for families to get together, eat, drink and celebrate. Not this Eid. This Eid is unbearable. We managed a feeble gathering on the first day and no one was in a celebratory mood. There have been several explosions- some far and some near but even those aren't as worrisome as the tension that seems to be growing on a daily basis.

There hasn't been a drop of water in the faucets for six days. Six days.

Even at the beginning of the occupation, when the water would disappear in the summer, there was always a trickle that would come from one of the pipes in the garden. Now, even that is gone. We've been purchasing bottles of water (the price has gone up) to use for cooking and drinking. Forget about cleaning.

It's really frustrating because everyone cleans house during Eid. It's like a part of the tradition. The days leading up to Eid are a frenzy of mops, brooms, dusting rags and disinfectant. The cleaning makes one feel like there's room for a fresh start. It's almost as if the house and its inhabitants are being reborn. Not this year. We're managing just enough water to rinse dishes with. To bathe, we have to try to make-do with a few liters of water heated in pots on kerosene heaters.

Water is like peace- you never really know just how valuable it is until someone takes it away. It's maddening to walk up to the sink, turn one of the faucets and hear the

pipes groan with nothing. The toilets don't function... the dishes sit piled up until two of us can manage to do them- one scrubbing and rinsing and the other pouring the water.



Iraqis rally outside the Oil Ministry in Baghdad Jan. 17, 2005. Hundreds of followers of radical Shiite Muslim cleric Muqtada al-Sadr participate in a three-day sit-in in front of the Oil Ministry in Baghdad to protest gasoline shortages that have caused hours-long waits at gas stations. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim, File)

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

Happy Wolfowitz Announces More Iraqis Killed Than U.S. Troops!!

January 22, 2005 Gordon Prather, AntiWar.com

Well, on the eve of Bush's second inaugural, we finally got some good news about Operation Iraqi Freedom, already the worst foreign policy disaster – and potentially the worst military disaster – in America's history.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said he was encouraged because "since June 1, there have been more Iraqi police and military killed in action than Americans."

The Election Farce Rolls On: “An Attempt To Fool The World.”

January 22, 2005 By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

In Iraq, where 14 million people are eligible to vote, the elections next week may have only one outsider from the hastily organized International Mission for Iraqi Elections to evaluate the balloting. If reluctant governments change their minds at the last minute about letting their officials go to Iraq, a handful of others may show up. But, even then, none is likely to tour polling stations or to be publicly identified, mission and U.S. officials said.

"Any attempt to present the elections as valid is an attempt to fool the world," **Giulietto Chiesa, an Italian member of the European Parliament, told reporters after the EU decision not to send representatives to Iraq.**

In the absence of outside observers, election experts are concerned that voter turnout may be used as a barometer of the elections' credibility.

"I hope we don't resort to saying that in the U.S. we only get 15 percent in local elections, 35 percent in gubernatorial elections and 55 percent in presidential elections, and therefore even a low vote is credible," Frederick D. Barton, a monitor or election trainer in Haiti, Poland and Ethiopia in the 1990s and now co-director of the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. said.

"This is not an honest standard in a country that finally gets a chance to vote on its future."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush Getting Messages From Aliens

"We have a calling from beyond the stars." (GW Bush, inauguration speech, January 20 2005.)

Facing Arrest, Rumsfeld Runs Away

21 January 2005 dpa

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld cancelled a planned visit to Germany after a US human rights organisation asked German authorities to prosecute him for war crimes, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa) has learned.

Rumsfeld has informed the German government via the US embassy that he will not take part in the Munich Security Conference in February, conference head Horst Teltschik told dpa on Thursday.

The New York-based Centre for Constitutional Rights filed a complaint in December with the Federal German Prosecutor's Office against Rumsfeld accusing him of war crimes and torture in connection with detainee abuses at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison.

Rumsfeld made it known immediately after the complaint was filed that he would not attend the Munich conference unless Germany quashed the legal action.



Received:

CELEBRATE! With Annie And The Vets

From: Diane Rejman
Sent: January 20, 2005 6:47 PM
Subject: CELEBRATE with Annie and the Vets - 2nd printing of CD!

Some good news!

Annie and the Vets has gone into the second printing of its CD.

"Touch A Name On the Wall" was released on July 13, 2004. 1,200 copies were made. Already - only six months later - a 2nd thousand had to be printed!

This CD is already being listened to in at least 9 countries and 18 states. We've been on two public access tv programs, including a film of Jim Hightower speaking in Palo Alto. This has been shown a half dozen or more times on local tv. In March, we'll be filming our own half-hour program. And we're discussing a 2nd CD (by popular request!).

If you haven't heard them yet, go to: www.cdbaby.com/cd/annieandthevets

To celebrate this milestone - the CD has been added to the \$5 area of CD Baby. In this area, if you purchase at least 3 CDs from CD Baby, you get them for \$5 each. This would give you the opportunity to add Annie and the Vets to your collection and check out other independent artists. There are many other political/folk groups listed on this site. Along with music from all genres.

Thanks to all of our fans! We're extremely happy that so many people are enjoying our music.

Annie and the Vets consists of members of Veterans for Peace. Music is a powerful way of spreading the message of peace, no war. All proceeds from the sale of the CD are going to Veterans for Peace.

Singing peace,
Diane Rejman, George Johnson, Phil Pflager, Anne Pflager

www.ambergrass.com - for photos, more info, and Bay area appearance schedule.

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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