

GI SPECIAL 3A30:



1.28.05 Sheek Abbas, Anti-Allawi-group

**“Back In The Mess”
“A Propaganda
Generator For The
Corporate Elite.”**

From: Soldier X

To: GI Special

Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2005 11:18 AM

Subject: Back In The Mess

I wasn't able to avoid the mess of the elections after all. In fact I will now be smack in the middle of it.

Since we will not have Iraqi laborers on camp during the elections, for their safety and ours, the battalion has found another job for me. I will be at ground zero over watching the polls in (XXXXX).

And what is best about this is I will be with cooks and mechanics that haven't stepped foot out side of camp since we got here a year ago.

All the combat sections will be patrolling the area while we sit in static positions. We are not allowing vehicles into the city for that entire day, however suicide bombers and other attacks are very probable.

We will go out a couple times in the next few days and then election day we will stay out there "Until Mission Complete". That means until every last ballot is brought to the main camp (xxxxxx). We might be out there for two days or more.

I better knock the dust off my body armor.

There was another accidental shooting with an NCO involved?

I better keep my head down and my superiors in my front! [Got that right. In Vietnam, there were occasions when anti-war troops were killed by "patriotic" NCOs, unless the soldiers could get to them first. Fragging went two ways.]

So Gonzo will be Attorney General of the US?

That sucks! If the CIA can use out of bounds interrogation techniques that limits other government agencies, what makes them any different from the Nazi SS? Can America just create an organization that is beyond the morals of human decency? "What do you mean they can't just exterminate Arabs? These guys are in the National Genocide Agency!"

It seems very likely the US will be at war with Iran by next year. I will have to run to Canada and hide to avoid the Inactive Reserve. I don't have a very good gut feeling about everything. I don't doubt the draft is around the corner in a few years also.

That is horrible that Americans are suffering from anxiety over the hype of artificial terrorism. It will get as bad as the red scare before long now.

The nation would be in a much better spot if the Government coup against Kennedy wasn't successful. **However, here we are in a propaganda generator for the corporate elite.**

America becomes more polarized because half of the people are scared shitless of change and the rest resent them for it.

We have to figure out a way to bring the people security and courage without making enemies of them. It is like taming a scared lion. Even Nixon said that the Government has become a wild animal and he can no longer control it. Even

though he is the main cause of a polarized America with the CIAs power shifting to the Military. And, what remains of the CIA becoming a puppet.

I guess "W" finished what he started?

I can go for some reality TV right now. I hate living in this 1984 fiction novel!

Soldier X

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.

**Wounded At W. Reed Forced To
Buy Meals, Uniforms;
"I Think It Sucks"
"You Know They Treat Us Like
Shit Up Here"
*Also Threatened With Punishment
If They Say Anything Critical Of
Bush Regime***

Soldiers in medical hold also complain they are still expected to line up for daily formations and buy new uniforms even as they struggle with debilitating physical and mental trauma from their service in Iraq. They say being charged for food while they're recovering is one more indignity.

Jan. 27, 2005 By Mark Benjamin. Mark Benjamin is a national correspondent for Salon based in Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON -- Most patients at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington have a lot on their minds: the war they just fought, the injuries they came home with, the future that lies ahead.

The last thing a wounded soldier needs to worry about is where the next meal is coming from. But for hundreds of Walter Reed patients, that's a real concern. Starting this month, the Army has started making some wounded soldiers pay for the food they eat at the hospital.

Paying out of pocket for hospital meals can impose a serious financial burden, costing hundreds of dollars every month. That can be a lot of money to a military family. But perhaps worse, the meal charge feels like an ungrateful slap in the face to some soldiers.

"I think it sucks," said a soldier from West Virginia who broke his neck in Iraq after falling off a roof. "I think that people should be able to eat. They get us over there, get us wounded and shot up and then tell us: Fend for yourself. You are all heroes, but here you go."

The meal charge policy "is an example of a much larger problem relating to the overall cost of the war. It is all an indication of extreme costs they are trying to make up on the backs of these men and women," said Steve Robinson, a retired Army Ranger and the executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center. "If the war is costing too much, the one place you don't skimp is on soldier and veteran programs. The administration has no problem deficit-spending on the needs of conducting war, and we see no reason not to apply the same methodology to veterans' benefits and soldier care."

A veterans' advocate who lost the use of his legs fighting in Vietnam said the meal charges constitute a personal affront to soldiers.

"I don't care what bureaucratic bullshit they come up with, this is an insult," said Bobby Muller, chairman of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and director of the foundation's Alliance for Security. "I cannot believe that people are being charged for their meals. This is a showstopper."

Although Walter Reed did not disclose the exact number of soldiers affected, the policy is most likely to affect at least the estimated 600 soldiers getting long-term outpatient care at the hospital in what the Army calls "medical hold."

Soldiers in medical hold are considered outpatients, but they usually live on hospital grounds -- some are put up in nearby hotels if housing on the grounds is full -- and have little choice but to buy food at the Walter Reed chow hall.

Even as outpatients, soldiers in medical hold often have serious injuries. Some have been blown up by roadside bombs or crumpled in Humvee wrecks. They have serious head wounds and amputations. Others are struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder after being flown out of Iraq with shellshock.

Some soldiers in medical hold are waiting to get processed out of the Army because their wounds are so serious that they will never return to duty. But processing at Walter Reed can take over a year, much to the frustration of the soldiers who would prefer to get outpatient treatment near their homes and families.

Soldiers in medical hold also complain they are still expected to line up for daily formations and buy new uniforms even as they struggle with debilitating physical and mental trauma from their service in Iraq. They say being charged for food while they're recovering is one more indignity.

Here's how the new rules drain hundreds of dollars a month from the pockets of soldiers: Enlisted soldiers get an extra \$267.18 every month in their paychecks for food. So before this month, all soldiers at Walter Reed got free food at the chow hall and extra cash. Soldiers say they received that extra food money while they were serving in Iraq, too, and they just let their families spend it on groceries.

Now, though, the outpatient soldiers forced to buy meals at Walter Reed say they could spend around \$15 a day if they eat three square meals at the dining hall -- about \$3 for breakfast and around \$6 each for lunch and dinner.

That adds up to \$450 a month, \$183 more than soldiers' food allowance from the military. (The situation is even worse for officers, who get only \$183.99 extra each month for a food allowance.) **The soldiers at Walter Reed point out that that they don't have the option of eating at home to save money because they are stuck at the hospital. Vandrey said spending \$6 for lunch and dinner sounds excessive. "I eat breakfast and lunch there every day and I never spend more than \$5 a meal," he said.**

Most soldiers in medical hold eat at Walter Reed every day, too. But for those well enough to leave the hospital grounds, a favorite spot -- and a rare treat -- is the local Red Lobster, particularly if the press is paying. At a recent meal there, three soldiers from Walter Reed told Salon the new meal charges were putting a serious strain on already tight pocketbooks. (All three ate hefty-size meals.) "I don't starve, [but] it might be beans and weenies or a cup of noodles," said the soldier from West Virginia who was treated for the broken neck; he can now walk, but does so with an awkward, bowlegged gait. "I'm not going to starve to death, but it is an issue that really sucks."

A soldier from Pennsylvania said, "They want to charge us for uniforms, for food, everything."

The soldiers interviewed for this story asked for anonymity because they feared getting into trouble with their chain of command for speaking out.

Many soldiers from Walter Reed attended the Heroes Red, White and Blue Inaugural Ball last week, attended by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and others. Soldiers told Salon they were lectured on the bus on the way to the ball that they would face consequences if any untoward comments about the military appeared in the press.

One soldier said he and others were told that they should not feel compelled to speak with reporters, but if they did, they would be in their commander's office in the morning if they said anything negative.

Beyond the creeping food bill, perhaps what's most bothersome to soldiers about the meal charge rule is the principle of the thing:

Paying for food at an Army hospital after fighting in a war doesn't seem right.

"You know they treat us like shit up here," said the soldier from Pennsylvania.

One officer from the Army Reserve who served in Iraq told Salon he was "highly disgusted" at being asked to pay for food after being stuck at Walter Reed.

"It affects me to a point, but it has a tremendous impact financially on the junior enlisted soldiers," he said. "After these kids get physically or mentally injured in combat, and then you expect them to take away from their personal finances to feed themselves? That is what disturbs me the most."

Comment:

[Hey, these are just employees, like at Wal-Mart, and why waste money on them when they're useless and fucked up? What do they think capitalism is about, anyway? Why should they expect to get treated any differently than fucked up auto workers or steel workers? They did their job, they were just hired hands for the Empire and for the people that own the government, and now they're useless for war, so they can pay their own way.

[Charging for meals? Uniforms? That's called "cost recovery" and "load shifting" in the corporate world, and that's what the armed forces do these days: serve the corporate world.

[Of course some cynics argue that the real enemy is in Washington DC, specifically the politicians who run the government for the same corporate interests, and that the Iraqi resistance fighters *and* the U.S. troops are *both* getting fucked over by the same disgusting murderous scum in human form, and that it will take a new American revolution to fix that once and for all.

["How extreme! Too soon to say that!! Wouldn't want people thinking we think that!!!"]

[That line of bullshit is nothing but cowardice in the face of the enemy.

[That's why most of the anti-war movement leadership is so lame, weak, pathetic, and pants-pissing scared to talk about more than the mush-mouthed shit they come out with. "Let's not talk about anything toooo radical, like how capitalism really works, and who runs the Empire, and how we can get rid of it, and God forbid we say the Iraqis have the right to defend themselves and fight Bush's invasion. Let's just keep on lying about reality. We could get frowned on for saying what we secretly think. Some asshole Democrat in Congress won't love us anymore! We won't have the really Important People, like 'left' writers and speechmakers, hanging out with us anymore!!"]

[These cowards care more about their precious reputations than they do about real living and dying troops. These half-stepping shits betray the troops, the wounded like these men and women at Walter Reed, or those stuck in Iraq, every time they inhale and exhale.

[While troops are killed and maimed in Iraq, they worry about looking "respectable."

[Well, there is nothing "respectable" about being dead or maimed for life in an Imperial war of conquest.

[Ignore the cowards. Fuck 'em. They mean nothing, contribute nothing, and only get in the way to slow things down. Think for yourself. Then organize to act with others who aren't kissing the ass of the powers that be. And if these "leaders," these apologists for the Empire, insist on getting in the way, push them out the door and down the stairs. They will never be missed. T]

Iraq Vet Says "Once You've Served Your Purpose You're No Longer Of Use To The U.S. Government."

January 27, 2005 BY CHERYL L. REED Staff Reporter, Chicago Sun Times

Soldiers recently returned from Iraq gave an unfiltered and unflattering assessment of the war's human toll as they detailed their war experiences to a crowd of Oakton Community College students and faculty Wednesday in Des Plaines.

The group showed a documentary in which former soldiers from Iraq -- many of them amputees -- were angry about how the government treated them once they returned, complaining they were met with a "nightmare of paperwork" to get medical and disability benefits.

"Once you've served your purpose," one young soldier told the camera, "you're no longer of use to the U.S. government."

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

U.S. Embassy In Baghdad Hit By Rocket, Two Dead, 5 Wounded

Jan 29, 2005 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & By Matt Spetalnick & BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press Writer

A rocket hit a U.S. embassy compound in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone on Saturday, killing two Americans and wounding five, an embassy spokesman said.

The rocket struck shortly after dark, causing an explosion heard across Baghdad. Sirens sounded in the Green Zone shortly after the attack.

"It hit near the embassy building," spokesman Bob Callahan told Reuters, referring to Saddam Hussein's sprawling former Republican Palace where most U.S. officials work. "There are two dead and four who are wounded ... all Americans."

A civilian and a Navy sailor, both assigned to the embassy, were killed in the rocket attack, a military official said, also on condition of anonymity.

Of the four injured Americans, two were military, one was a civilian and the fourth was as yet undetermined, the military official said.

Insurgents carried out a rocket-propelled grenade attack on the fortified Baghdad Hotel. There was no word of casualties.

The U.S. military said insurgent attacks had more than tripled to 98 on Thursday from 29 last Saturday.

Bursts of heavy machine gun fire rattled through central districts at midday, and several heavy detonations shook the downtown area in the afternoon. American fighter jets roared through the skies in a show of force.

One Task Force Baghdad Soldier Killed By IED

29 January 2005 The Associated Press & CENTCOM

A soldier from Task Force Baghdad was killed by a roadside bomb about 3:45 p.m., Jan. 29 in a western district of the capital, the military said.

Bursts of heavy machine gun fire rattled through central districts at midday, and several heavy explosions shook the downtown area in the afternoon. American fighter jets roared through the skies in a show of force.

Two Killed In Helicopter Crash

01/29/05 MNF Release #050129a

Baghdad, Iraq -- **Two Task Force Baghdad Soldiers died when their helicopter went down in the southwestern portion of the Iraqi capital about 8 p.m. Jan. 28.**

Blinding Flash Of The Obvious: U.S. General Says He Can't Guarantee Voters Will Be Safe

(USA Today, January 26, 2005, Pg. 10)

The commander of U.S. forces in central and northern Iraq, Maj. Gen. John Batiste, said that he cannot guarantee the safety of Iraqis on election day, despite months of training Iraqi forces. He said he expects trouble particularly in Samarra and Beiji, where Iraqi security services are weakest. Nine attacks Tuesday on U.S. and Iraqi forces in Samarra were about double the usual number, he said.

Eight U.S. Generals Arrested By Soldiers South Of Mosul

January 29, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-01-111

U.S. Soldiers detained eight individuals suspected of anti-Iraqi activity while conducting a raid south of Mosul. Suspects are in custody with no troop injuries reported. [Yeah, it's early. Maybe January 29, 2006. Or July 29, 2005. Things do move faster these days.]

TROOP NEWS

Three Walter Reed Wounded Join In Anti-War Rally At Hospital

January 2005 Report By Doug Nelson, Veterans For Peace Newsletter

Chapter 16, District of Columbia:

Veterans For Peace at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Veterans Day 2004.

Thirty veterans, supporters and hospital patients showed up to greet commuters at 0700 with signs and banners, Mike Hoffman, IVAW co-founder, (www.ivaw.net) brought the colorful Iraq Veterans Against The War banner.

All who were interested were interviewed by an independent film maker.

Response was overwhelmingly positive, particularly from people in uniform.

One hospital worker told us he thought we had picked the wrong place for our message. We politely replied that we were speaking up for the soldiers, urging prompt and proper medical treatment and timely claims processing from the VA.

At 1100, all wishing to speak were provided an open mike. Mike Hoffman of IVAW gave a particularly stirring speech, as did VFP and Vietnam Veterans Against The War old hand Patrick McCann.

Patients are generally sequestered from anyone deemed controversial. Even Disabled American Veterans are not allowed on the wards.

However, three ambulatory patients joined our demonstration, including a lieutenant who has been charged with AWOL when he sought treatment for PTSD at a civilian hospital after being turned away by a military hospital.

Our chapters in the DC area have sent packages to soldiers, have provided calling cards, and extend the hand of friendship to all soldiers, regardless of their political position.

31 Fewer Good Men: Worn-Out Army Equipment: 1980s Helicopters, Tanks Still In Use In Iraq

(USA Today, January 26, 2005 & Ralph Peters, New York Post, January 27, 2005)

While past Pentagon requests for extra money have been used mostly for operational and personnel costs, the new appeal includes funds to refurbish or buy new equipment. Much of the current supply dates back to the 1980s.

The Pentagon has been forced to budget billions to pay not only for re-enlistment and recruitment bonuses, but also for spare parts for helicopters, tanks, armored vehicles and Humvees. **In some cases, Army divisions have been forced to completely**

overhaul equipment that was flown or driven five to 10 times farther than anticipated.

Our aging fleet of transport helicopters is a symptom of the neglect of practical military needs in favor of glamorous fighter aircraft and submarines of no real use.

Our troops risk all they have to keep us safe. And we send them to war in aircraft models that entered the force when LBJ was president. The Marines who went down in western Iraq deserved better.

While Troops Die Without Modern Equipment, GAO Report Points To Pentagon Waste

(Washington Post, January 26, 2005, 2004, Pg. 19)

The U.S. government's biggest department is also one of the most prone to waste, fraud and abuse, raising concerns about the effectiveness of many of its programs, according to a new report by the Government Accountability Office.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. 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)

Darien Soldier Nearly Died; Command Says He Has 10 Days To Get Over It

"I know I shouldn't, but I was kind of hoping he got hurt bad enough to come home," he said.

January 29, 2005 By Donna Lenz Wright/Special to The Gazette

DARIEN-For families with loved ones serving in Iraq, a middle-of-the-night phone call brings nothing but dread.

When Theresa Brickner of Darien answered her phone late one night last week, she learned her son, Specialist Jordan West, was critically injured when a roadside bomb exploded next to the vehicle he was riding on.

West, 19, took shrapnel to the face and neck in the attack, according to his mother. He was in stable but guarded condition Thursday.

"He's OK, but it was horrible," said Brickner.

West was in critical condition for 36 hours before Brickner was notified, she said.

"I can't tell you what it's like to have a first sergeant on the phone in the middle of the night saying we'd be flying to Germany 'if he pulls through,'" she said. "That call was devastating. I feel for those families who have lost theirs. It's just devastating."

The attack on West's unit took place Jan. 23 near Mosul, Iraq. Brickner said her son was out on patrol when an improvised explosive device, or roadside bomb, blew up next to his Humvee.

Because the bombs used by insurgents are made of unknown and varied materials, West's wounds are being left open to ward off infection.

"This is the third time he was blown up in his Hummer," said West's grandfather, Fred Wright, of Darien. "The first time he wasn't hurt. The second time his buddy, who was sitting right next to him, was killed. Now this time he really got hurt."

It is Brickner's understanding that West will be given 10 days to recuperate in the medical unit near Mosul, where he is being cared for. Eventually he'll be back on patrol.

Brickner couldn't help but be thankful that her son won't be patrolling during the Iraqi elections. **However, West's grandfather couldn't help but wish that his injuries were slightly worse-for very different reasons.**

"I know I shouldn't, but I was kind of hoping he got hurt bad enough to come home," he said. "But he's trained and wants to get back out there," said Brickner.

As for what might happen tomorrow, Brickner can't go there. But for today, she can't praise the community of Darien enough for its support during this past week's nightmare.

"I don't wish this on anybody. It's just horrible," she said. "But it's part of the military and part of war. You just have to support them and their families because that's all you can do." **[Wrong. You can get together with others and do some fighting of your own**

to stop this pointless, no-mission exercise in Imperial greed. The life you save might be your sons. Would that be so bad?]

ROLL CALL

Slaughter Of Louisiana National Guard Goes On: Three More Dead Friday; 2% Have 22% Of This Months' KIA

January 29, 2005 By Martha Carr and Dan Shea, Staff writers, The Times-Picayune

Three Louisiana National Guardsmen were killed Friday by a roadside bomb in western Baghdad, bringing to 13 the number of Louisiana citizen soldiers killed in just two months, according to two state officials.

The three men were combat engineers with the 1088th Engineering Battalion headquartered in New Roads, part of the 3,000-man 256th Brigade Combat Team deployed to Baghdad in early November.

But the father of 25-year-old Staff Sgt. Jonathan Ray Reed of Krotz Springs said his son was one of the three who died in the blast.

"I'm still in shock," Webster Reed told the Associated Press on Friday. "We lost a good man today among a bunch of other good men, I'm sure."

Jonathan Reed left behind a wife and infant son. Webster Reed said he learned of his son's death when a sergeant and chaplain showed up Friday afternoon to notify the family.

While the Louisiana National Guard represents only 2 percent of U.S. troops in Iraq, it has suffered 11 of 49, or 22 percent, of the combat casualties this month. In comparison, the 6,000-member regular Army unit to which the Louisiana Guard is attached has lost only one soldier during the same period.

No other state has lost more guardsmen in combat than Louisiana since the beginning of the war.

Local Soldier Wounded;

"I Hate The Idea Of War. There's Different Ways We Could Do This."

January 28, 2005 Michele McClintick, WorldNow and WIVB

For the Schaus family of Hamburg, it started with a phone call. Their 23 year old son Ben and his Army unit came under attack in Mosul.

Ben's father Jim Schaus said, "The battalion commander called to tell us he was in the hospital with a concussion, he hurt his back from the force of the IED."

Luckily, he was all right and is recovering in a field hospital. He was able to call his family back home a few hours later.

The Schaus family always watches the coverage of Iraq, never thinking that they'd see their son Ben in the midst of all the fighting. But there he was, laying there while his fellow soldiers helped him to safety. His humvee riddled with bullets was shown on TV.

Ben's mother Cindy Schaus said, "The reporter kept saying this guy was lucky he was hit and was with shock and treated."

Now the Schaus family is counting their blessings.

"Cause it could have been a lot worse."

Heidi Schaus said, "I hate the idea of war. There's different ways we could do this."

But his sister Heidi is relieved that her big brother is okay.

It's the second tour for the Army sergeant. He was in Baghdad for over a year, before just returning again, with a broken ankle.

"They said you're going, but not out in the field. Now look, a week after, he's out in the field."

St. Paul Soldier Mike Carlson Killed; He Was Cretin-Derham Athlete

January 29, 2005 Joy Powell and Terry Collins, Star Tribune

Army Sgt. Mike Carlson, a two-sport star at Cretin-Derham Hall High School in St. Paul, died in Iraq this week, becoming the 15th Minnesotan to die since the war began.

He "was a real nice kid. He's somebody whose life didn't deserve to end like this," said Mike Scanlan, a head football coach at Cretin-Derham.



Carlson, who would have turned 23 on Valentine's Day, had been in Iraq for almost a year and had been due to return to his unit's home base in Germany next week, KSTP-TV reported.

His older brother, Dan Carlson, told the station that their parents were away on a cruise when a military representative showed up at their home with the news Thursday, and that they were on their way home Friday night.

Carlson was a defensive lineman on Cretin's 1999 state champion football team and was an all-conference wrestler. He graduated in 2000.

His football and wrestling teammate Ricky Schreier said he looked up to Carlson as a role model.

"He talked about joining the service ever since I'd known him," Schreier said Friday night. "He wanted to do that most, and when he finally had the opportunity, he followed through."

Schreier said Carlson, who was two years older, watched out for him at football and wrestling practice, and even in the school halls. "When I was a freshman, I only weighed a hundred pounds," Schreier recalled. "People would throw me into the lockers, joking around, and he would always tell them to stop."

Local Soldier Injured

1/28/2005 WGRZ-TV

Jason Strand has been in Iraq for almost one year. On Sunday he was wounded during a mortar attack in Samara. His sister Amy said "he did get hurt, it was a severe injury and they're still monitoring it and he'll be in the hospital for awhile, we're grateful he's alive."

Strand attended Lancaster High School before moving to Cheektowaga where he graduated from Maryvale High School in 2001.

After graduation he joined the military. He was sworn in by his older brother, Ron Blatchford, a Buffalo police officer, who recently returned home from Iraq.

As of late Friday, the family said Strand had developed an infection in his leg. However, they say his spirits are good.

The family is hoping to get more information from the Army. So far, all of their information has come from Strand who has been heavily medicated.

Even A Hero's Life Can Be Wasted, Just As A Moron Can Be Made King

To: GI Special

Sent: January 29, 2005

Subject: Re: AP story

By JG & DG

We here in Benicia, CA have just suffered the loss of one of our own [in Iraq]: Dustin Shumney.

We found out about it while standing at our weekly peace vigil in the park across from the Veterans' Hall. A TV van pulled up and shot a teaser with a reporter announcing the story in front of the hall. They had no interest in us.

I just got home and clicked your link. Grim lips and no satisfaction here.

As we all saw, the newsman had set up his camera and live-feed boom for the six O'clock news even before most of us arrived for the weekly Vigil.

Apparently, ABC-7 reporter Wayne Freedman didn't think twelve people gathered across the street for several hours in protest to this very same war was worth making any kind of connection.

It was more important to frame the vacant Vets Hall for his parting shot while ignoring the overwhelming honks of support and peace symbols waved at us this evening. BTW - This Week of Our Lord Number 98 saw a notable increase in restless natives and we all commented on the strong affirmations.

I thought it interesting we never saw cameraman point at us for the background loops most news crews routinely suck up like the mad video vacuums they are.

So, when he was done and walked over to chat I expected him to, well, be a reporter. You know, ask a few questions, compare and contrast, ask softball questions, but he was more interested in some sort of emotional confessional catharsis - I didn't catch it all. The last thing of his short utterance was how moved he was by the death, or event, or some such... and he walked back across the street.

That's it?!?

I grew amazed he was leaving just like that. What myopia! Such arrogance!

OK. Maybe he was at some emotional peak-experience, but he's hardly on the front lines and this isn't the Green Zone so a modicum of journalistic professionalism is due the public.

Get a grip and keep it together man!

When he hopped into his gleaming gold pod-car I just had to call out before his door closed how emotional to multiply that by 100,000+ Iraqi dead. ABC's "talent" sped away.

This is more sad detail to the giant destructive wave our country is determined stare at transfixed instead of moving to higher {dare we say moral?} ground. **The people are speaking, but those who speak to us - for those in power - do not want to hear.**

Because this administration has let it be known the messenger of ill-tidings – always - finds hemlock in their professional latte.

Cowards selling us out cheap. Loss everywhere is the order of the day.

Onward...

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraqis' Agree: End The Occupation

(Christian Science Monitor, January 28, 2005, Pg. 1)

The presence of U.S. troops is vital to security in Iraq and Sunday's elections could not be held without them. **But the one thing every Iraqi agrees upon is that the American occupation should end soon. [Not quite "every." The traitors who help the occupation don't want to run for the border just yet.]**

53% Of Iraqis Approve Armed Resistance;

Which Candidate Has *That* Platform?

28 January 2005 Zogby International | Press Release

More than half, 53% in this survey, believe that ongoing attacks in Iraq are a legitimate form of resistance.

Senior Shi'ite Cleric Calls On People To Take Up Arms: Says Elections So Much Occupation Bullshit

Jan 29, 2005 Reuters

NAJAF, Iraq (Reuters) - A senior Shi'ite cleric urged Iraqis on Saturday to boycott Sunday's landmark elections and take up arms to expel U.S. forces from the country.

"The current elections are a conspiracy to divide and destroy Iraq," Ayatollah Ahmed al-Hassani al-Baghdadi told Reuters on the eve of Iraq's first multi-party poll in 50 years.

Baghdadi said a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and scrapping the interim constitution that embraces federalism should precede a poll.

"I believe these elections will fail as most Iraqis will boycott because of the lack of security and calls for federalism ... I call on my people to boycott the elections," he said in an interview at his home in Najaf.

While he has far less influence than Sistani, who is deeply revered among Shi'ites, Baghdadi's rejection of elections reflects the simmering resentment of some Shi'ites for U.S. forces in the country, which face an insurgency led by Sunni militants and Saddam Hussein loyalists.

Baghdadi condemned elections under the gaze of U.S. tanks as a mockery, slammed the cleric-politicians who are running for office and urged Iraqis to unite to expel American forces.

"Resistance will continue even if both Sunnis and Shi'ites go to the polls," he said. "These elections will fail. Elections with lax security, under the interim constitution, have no legitimacy."

"I am a son of Iraq and I call on all Christians and Muslims to expel the Americans from Iraq," he added.

Resistance Active In Two-Thirds Of Iraq And Intensifying, Latest Surveys Show

(New York Times, January 27, 2005) More than two-thirds of all Iraqis live in districts that have experienced insurgent attacks in the past month, according to an analysis of new intelligence data.

General Says Insurgency Forces Will Keep Growing Until U.S. Out

(USA Today, January 27, 2005, Pg. 8)

The top U.S. general in Iraq Army Gen. George Casey said as long as many Iraqis view the Americans as an occupation force, it will help feed the insurgency.

Senior Officer Says Resistance Rules Baghdad

1.27.05 AP

One senior American military officer acknowledged at a briefing last month that nowhere in the area assigned to his troops could be considered safe. Starkly put, the capital is not under control, either by the Iraqi interim government or the American military. [Guess who that leaves in control.]

MORE:

“No-Go” Zone Now Inside Baghdad

January 28, 2005 By Jonathan Steele, Guardian Newspapers

We may be witnessing the Vietnamisation of the war, as the guerrilla insurgency puts down roots in more and more cities to the north and west of Baghdad and starts to take the fight to districts of Baghdad.

Haifa Street, close to the capital's very heart, is already becoming a no-go area.

In the future more areas of the city may see roving guerrilla checkpoints. If the US follows the brutal tactics it adopted against Falluja and inflicts them on other population centres, the insurgency will spread even faster.

Five Collaborators Killed In Ramadi

29 January 2005 The Associated Press

In the insurgent bastion of Ramadi, five Iraqis with hands tied behind their backs were found slain Saturday on a city street. One of the bodies was decapitated. Militants accused them of working for the Americans.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

Assorted Resistance Attacks

29 January 2005 The Associated Press & Reuters & By Matt Spetalnick,

An attack occurred in Khanaqin, 70 miles northeast of Baghdad on the Iranian border. Police Col. Mohammed al-Khanaqini said the attacker was wearing an explosives belt and detonated himself outside a police station between a U.S. base and a courthouse killing three Iraqi soldiers. An official of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said nine people were wounded in the attack.

Eight mortar shells landed at an Iraqi National Guard barracks in the central town of Swayrah, killing one Iraqi soldier and wounding another, the Polish military said.

South of Baghdad, rebels opened fire on U.S. Marines and Iraqi forces as they placed concrete blast barriers around polling stations south of the capital Saturday.

In Khaldiyah, about 50 miles northwest of Baghdad, insurgents burst into a school used as an Iraqi National Guard base, asked the few members there to leave and then destroyed it with explosives, residents said. No one was reported hurt.

Attacks on polling stations were reported in at least eight cities from Dohuk in the far north to Basra in the south.

In the north, four schools serving as voting centers in Baiji, 145 kilometers (90 miles) south of Mosul, also were hit with explosives late Friday, slightly damaging them, according to city police.

A rocket attack on an Iraqi army base in the town of Duluiya killed three soldiers.

Insurgents blew up an explosives-laden donkey cart outside a polling station, killing a guard, in the town of Sharqat, south of Mosul, witnesses said. Mortar rounds hit a voting centre in the refinery town of Baiji, wounding four guards.

Three Iraqi contractors abducted a week ago were found shot dead in the town of Balad. Insurgents brand all Iraqis working with U.S. forces as collaborators and have killed hundreds.

In Kirkuk's predominantly Arab southern district, two polling centers were targeted with a rocket-propelled grenade and the other with fire from automatic rifles, police Brig. Gen. Sarhad Qader said.

Early Saturday, a polling center was attacked with mortar rounds in the predominantly Sunni Arab town of Hawija, 45 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of Kirkuk wounding on Iraqi National Guard, Maj. Gen. Abdul-Rahman Youssef said.

In the town of Bajwan, 25 kilometers (15 miles) west of Kirkuk a polling station was attacked with mortars causing material damage, said Maj. Gen. Torhan Abdul-Rahman Youssef.

In the northern Kurdish city of Dohuk, one of Iraq's safest, three mortar rounds were used as a bomb late Friday wounding four civilians, a police official said. The rounds targeted an election center in the central Norouz neighborhood, said Lt. Serwan Dofky.

OOOPS

29 January 2005 The Associated Press

In Basra, hundreds of Iraqi police uniforms have gone missing in Iraq's second largest city and may be in the hands of insurgents to help them slip through checkpoints, according to a report by the British media pool.

Four police vehicles were stolen by insurgents from a prison at Umm Qasr south of Basra, British authorities said, raising fears the cars could be used in suicide attacks.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Great Iraq Election Fraud:

By Yamin Zakaria, London, UK

[These are excerpts from a longer article. A web site reference will be posted when available.]

Due to an extremely low turn out it is possible that the election will fail so badly that it may even be dismissed by the occupying powers. Consequently, the status quo will not be altered and the Iraqi resistance will continue to fight the occupiers until Iraq is liberated.

The US track record when it comes to genuine free and fair elections in the Islamic world is zero!

On the contrary the US has an excellent track record for propping up countless dictators, including Saddam Hussein. In the early 1990s when the Algerian elections were about to deliver the reins of power to FIS (Islamic Salvation Front), the Western World (including the US) agreed to a military coup in order to abort the elections.

Likewise, when the Islamic party in Turkey won the election the subsequent intervention by the Turkish military did not lead to any threats nor did it jeopardize Turkey's bid in seeking entry into the European Union!

If the US is really interested in bringing democracy through free elections why doesn't she start with her client states like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Kuwait etc? It certainly would not require a full scale war and invasion since the US has a cordial relationship with them!

Capitalist nations are driven by material interests and it is a sheer myth that they are driven by principles, such as democracy, freedom and liberty.

Rather, these principles are used as a fig leaf to cover their lust for the material resources of other countries. Therefore, only the naive and the treacherous would advocate that the capitalist US has invaded Iraq for altruistic reasons. Those who are naïve and treacherous have expressed gratitude towards the US, as if the Americans have incurred a huge expense and loss of lives only for the Iraqis to hold free elections; - the US is definitely not a charitable institution!

The Pentagon has already announced that it will keep 120,000 troops for the next two years, hence Iraq will certainly not be independent and free regardless of the elections.

How can the US be so confident that the elected Iraqi government would agree to the continuation of the US occupation, given that the recent polls showed over 90% of Iraqis viewing the US with contempt?

The answer is the US intends to engineer the elections.

A 'free and fair' election would most likely result in producing an anti-US regime thereby the US would risk being: getting kicked out humiliated, loosing its plan for the long-term domination of Arab oil and not fully recuperating at the very least the cost of this war.

The US perhaps would only resort to such 'free and fair' elections as part of its exit strategy. Therefore, the purpose of this flawed election is to try and give legitimacy to a puppet regime.

Everyone is predicting a Shi'ite dominated parliament with some Kurds and no Arab Sunnis (NB. The majority of Kurds are also Sunni).

The Arab Sunnis abstaining will feel betrayed and reluctant to accept the election result.

Sistani ordered his followers by issuing a *fatwa* not to resist the invasion. Despite the toppling of the Ba'athist regime followed by Moqtada as-Sadr's uprising and the desecration of Shi'ite shrines Sistani still remained silent. The Grand Ayatollahs silence over the Abu-Ghraib horrors and Fallujah massacre will forever remain within the psyche of the Arab/Islamic masses.

Which Way Out?

(Los Angeles Times, January 27, 2005)

American citizens, who are paying the bill for Iraq and watching their neighbors or loved ones die in combat, deserve more than comforting platitudes from the president.

They deserve to know how long it is expected to take to train Iraqi soldiers, police and other security forces. Can 50,000 of the 150,000 U.S. troops now in Iraq come home when 20,000 Iraqi soldiers and 100,000 police are trained? What will it take to bring the next 50,000 Americans home?

Sound Familiar?

[Thanks to Lou P. who sent this in.]

"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." -Rudolf Hoess, SS Commandant at Auschwitz, Executed 1946

OCCUPATION REPORT

He Heard His Masters' Voice: Silly Fake Iraqi "President" Suddenly Changes His "Mind"

29 January 2005 Aljazeera

Iraq's interim president has reversed earlier comments and now says that he expects two thirds of Iraqis to vote in Sunday's election.

"I expect a majority, up to two-thirds of eligible Iraqis to vote," President Ghazi al-Yawar said on Saturday.

But his comments came only hours after he said violence would deter the majority of Iraqis from voting.

"What we hope is that most Iraqis will take part in the election, but we know that the majority will not because of the security situation," Yawar said earlier.

"The majority will decide not to take part, not because they are boycotting the election, but because of the security situation," he added

His latest comments, however, are more in line with those of Iraqi interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. [He did not respond to reporters' questions about his sudden loss of the thumbs on both hands or what appeared to be rope burns around his neck.]

Stupid Story Of The Week: U.S. Troops' Role In Iraqi Elections Criticized; U.N. Official Assails Distribution Of Material

(Washington Post, January 27, 2005, 2004, Pg. 14)

The United Nations' top elections official, Carina Perelli, sharply criticized U.S. military forces in Iraq for distributing material urging Iraqis to vote in the country's elections Sunday.

Perelli and other U.N. officials are concerned that such U.S. military involvement is compromising efforts to convince the Iraqi public that Iraqis are directing the elections. [Perelli really has to have an IQ of 3 if she thinks any power on earth can convince Iraqis that the U.S. Empire isn't running the whole bullshit show, or that whoever the Empire allows to win doesn't love having their country occupied by Bush & Co.]



“Who's promoting these elections?” 1.28.05 Sheek Abbas, Anti-allawi-group

Puppet Government Report Finds Occupation Kills More Iraqi Civilians Than Resistance: Stupid Terrorist Negroponte Caught Lying About It

29 January 2005 BBC

Coalition and Iraqi troops are responsible for killing 60% more non-combatants in Iraq than the insurgents, the BBC has learned.

The civilian death toll for the last six months is contained in confidential records obtained by Panorama.

More than 2,000 civilians were killed by the authorities, while insurgent attacks accounted for 1,200 deaths.

The Iraqi Ministry of Health figures are usually available only to members of Iraq's cabinet.

The data covers the period 1 July 2004 to 1 January 2005, and relates to all conflict-related civilian deaths and injuries recorded by Iraqi public hospitals.

The figures exclude, where known, the deaths of insurgents.

The figures reveal that 3,274 Iraqi civilians were killed and 12,657 wounded in conflict-related violence during the period.

Of those deaths, 60% - 2,041 civilians - were killed by the coalition and Iraqi security forces. A further 8,542 were wounded by them.

Insurgent attacks claimed 1,233 lives, and wounded 4,115 people, during the same period.

Panorama interviewed US Ambassador John Negroponte shortly before it obtained the figures. He told reporter John Simpson:

"My impression is that the largest amount of civilian casualties definitely is a result of these indiscriminate car bombings.

"You yourself are aware of those as they occur in the Baghdad area and more frequently than not the largest number of victims of these acts of terror are innocent civilian bystanders".

The coalition has yet to respond to the figures.

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

Shit-Brained Killer Negroponte Learns Nothing, Forgets Nothing; Wanted To Stay In Vietnam Too

January 29, 2005 By TODD S. PURDUM, New York Times

In 1973, John D. Negroponte, now Mr. Bush's ambassador to Baghdad, was Henry A. Kissinger's special assistant on Vietnam.

Mr. Negroponte protested that the peace agreement that allowed North Vietnamese forces to remain in the South after the American withdrawal would leave the situation "basically unresolved," Mr. Karnow recounts in his book. But

Mr. Kissinger was unmoved, asking: "What do you want us to do? Stay there forever?"

"Idiots Guide To Being A Good Vichy Government"?

January 27, 2005 Baghdad Burning, Girl Blog from Iraq

Unfortunately, the electricity situation has deteriorated. We're getting about four hours for every twenty hours in our area- I'm not quite sure what's going on in the other areas. It feels like we're almost cut off from each other.

Ghazi Al Yawir, our alleged current president, was giving an interview on LBC yesterday. Apparently, he and Allawi aren't on the same election list anymore because they had a falling out as to who should head the list. Ghazi proposed the president should be the head of the list and Allawi claimed somebody Shia (Allawi himself) should head the list. Now, Allawi's group is 285 on the election ballot and Yawir's group is 288, I think.

My favorite question during the interview was when the reporter asked him what he thought of Chalabi possibly being arrested. Ghazi looked flustered and a little bit unsure (apparently he hasn't been watching CNN while abroad). **He actually told her that the person who claimed Chalabi was wanted was probably speaking his own "personal" opinion and that it wasn't representative of the 'government'**- never mind the person in question was the Minister of Defense.

To be perfectly fair, he didn't mention which government he was referring to- I couldn't tell if he was talking about the US, the UK or the current group of Puppets. He claimed that for Chalabi to be arrested there needed to be 'proof' he had actually done something wrong... the Interpol wanting him really wasn't enough.

It's a bit discouraging to watch the current government so uncoordinated. It's like they don't even communicate with each other. It's also somewhat disturbing to know that they can't seem to decide who is a criminal and who isn't. Isn't there some "idiots guide to being a good Vichy government"?

Collaborator Leaders Abandon Talk Of Ending Occupation; Allawi and Sistani Now Love Bush Regime

Jan. 25, 2005 By Hannah Allam, Knight Ridder Newspapers

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Politicians from the two leading tickets in Sunday's Iraqi elections backed away Tuesday from earlier campaign promises to set a deadline for the withdrawal of American forces.

Both interim Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, who heads a secular slate, and his chief rival, the Shiite Muslim-based United Iraqi Alliance, are calling for a gradual transfer of responsibilities from U.S. troops to Iraqis. The switch coincides with a U.S. military report that some 120,000 American troops would remain in Iraq through 2006.

The change is especially significant for the United Iraqi Alliance, favored by many to dominate the balloting. Until this week, its campaign materials listed its No. 2 promise as "setting a timetable for the withdrawal of multinational forces from Iraq."

But the alliance rewrote its campaign materials this week, revising its platform. The second item now reads: "The Iraq we want is capable of protecting its borders and security without depending on foreign forces."

The alliance, led by a prominent Shiite cleric and tacitly endorsed by the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's highest-ranking cleric, is expected to garner millions of votes.

Iraqi transitional laws [written by the occupation dictatorship of course] authorize U.S. forces to remain in Iraq until full democratic elections at the end of this year.

Sheik Homam Hamoodi of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Iran-backed driving force of the United Iraqi Alliance, said **the change came with the realization that Iraqi troops weren't ready to take charge - and probably wouldn't be for years to come.**

Amer Hassan Fayadh, a political science professor at Baghdad University, said, "Whenever the security situation gets worse, the issue of troops departing becomes less of a priority in their platforms."

"The promise of putting U.S. troops on a timetable is not out of sincerity, it's only for campaigning. These major lists know their existence is linked to the presence of the troops," Fayadh said.

Surreal Election: The Marching Orders Are Coming From Washington.

January 28, 2005 Editorial: Capital Times, Madison, Wisc.

The residents of occupied Iraq are supposed to go through the charade of voting on Sunday.

But even the top contenders for positions in the soon-to-be-organized National Assembly appear to be having their doubts about whether it makes sense to go forward with an election when most voters do not know who the candidates are or what they stand for.

Early this week, six of the most prominent Iraqi candidates squared off in the first-ever televised national debate.

On the surface, the debate seemed similar to the sort of political discourse that might be seen in any number of Western democracies. There was a frank exchange of ideas, even if the discussion seemed a tad stilted.

But there was one fundamental difference between the Iraqi debate and a political face-off in the United States, Britain or any of a number of other countries: This was not a multi-issue debate. Only one issue was discussed: whether the elections should be held.

Give the Iraqis credit. They are exploring the one real political question facing their country at this point. While the Bush administration refuses to recognize the absurdity of going ahead with an election in which Ambassador John Negroponte, the top U.S. official in Baghdad, says that neither U.S. nor Iraqi forces can guarantee voter safety, the Iraqis are confronting the reality of their circumstance.

Despite the fact that many Iraqis recognize the problem with holding national elections Sunday, the Bush administration is hellbent on going ahead, and will do so.

It raises the question: Who is in charge?

The answer, unfortunately, is all too obvious.

No one in Baghdad is calling the shots in Iraq's surreal experiment with electoral politics.

The marching orders are coming from Washington.

And after all the tragedies that Iraq has so far experienced, this continued direction from a distance promises even more tragedy and farce in the days to come.

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