

GI SPECIAL 3A31:

ELECTIONS A SUCCESS! U.S.A. WINS!!



Associated Press [Thanks to Des, Atlanta, for this one.]

Campaign workers pasting up posters in Saigon for the September 1967 election. As everyone knows, that wonderful election, limited to lists of candidates willing to have the freedom-loving U.S.A. occupy Vietnam, formed a government happy to have the freedom-loving U.S.A. occupy Vietnam.

Four months later came the Tet Offensive.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

British C-130 Down; At Least 10 Soldiers Dead;

“Hostile Action” Suspected

Reuters 31 January 2005 & 1.30.05 By Mariam Fam, The Associated Press & By CHRIS TOMLINSON, Associated Press Writer & BBC

A number of British military personnel died when an air force transport plane crashed northwest of Baghdad, Prime Minister Tony Blair has said.

There are no British troops usually based in Balad and the purpose of the flight was unclear.

The BBC's Clarence Mitchell said the weather in the region was fine and, given the good safety record of the plane, the "chances of it being hostile action against it are increasing".

At least 10 troops were killed, Britain's Press Association said. The Press Association quoted unidentified military sources saying the death toll was "around 10" and it was "highly unlikely" to be more than 15.

The British Defence Ministry, announcing the crash earlier in the day, said: "An RAF C-130 Hercules crashed at around 1725 local time (1425 GMT) on 30 January some 30km (19 miles) northwest of Baghdad."

Media reports said the aircraft was on its way to the city of Balad from Baghdad when it crashed.

The wreckage was strewn over a large area, officials said.

Balad houses one of the largest US airbases in Iraq and has two runways, according to Britain's Press Association newswire. Its 25-square-kilometre airfield is protected by a 20-kilometre security perimeter.

MARINE KILLED IN ANBAR

January 30, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-01-43C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- A Marine assigned to the 1 Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action on Jan. 30 at about 3:30 a.m. while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in the Al Anbar Province.

For Convoys, Streets Paved With Danger

(Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2005)

After two years of war and hundreds of U.S. deaths on Iraqi highways and streets caused by roadside bombs and suicide car bombings, the simple task of driving from point A to point B has become a forbidding challenge. Along the long desert stretches of Al Anbar province or the clogged streets of Ramadi, travel by convoy is a highly choreographed event conducted at high speed.

**EXCEPTIONALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



U.S. Army soldiers take cover after an insurgent sniper opened fire in Mosul Jan. 30, 2005. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

TROOP NEWS

Announcement:

CINDY SHEEHAN WILL BE ON LARRY KING LIVE MONDAY, JANUARY 31ST!

Cindy Sheehan is the mother of Army Specialist Casey A. Sheehan, May 29 1979-April 4 2004, killed in Iraq.

She is one of the founders of Gold Star Families for Peace. “Our group is open to any family member who has suffered the loss of a loved one in a war. Our goal is to assist those families in whatever way possible.”

For more information about GSFP visit the website at: www.gsfp.org

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.

Bush Regime Fucking Over Veterans, As Usual; Says Veterans' Benefits "Hurtful" to National Security

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, who sent this in.]

January 28, 2005 By Joel Wendland, Political Affairs

During a recent interview with the Wall Street Journal (1-25-05), Pentagon official David Chu, in a mockery of the contribution of veterans, defended a new round of cuts by ironically describing funding for programs like veterans' education and job training, health care, pensions, Veterans Administration (VA) housing and the like as "hurtful" to national security.

Despite Republican pretense that spending increases for the VA budget under the Bush administration have been large, new spending has neither matched inflation over the same period, nor does it keep pace with growing need.

The slow rate of VA spending growth enforced by Bush and the congressional Republicans over the last four years won't cover growing deferred benefits, such as education, housing, retirement, health care and so on, promised to current service members or that are supposed to be available for new enlistees.

Slow spending growth isn't even the biggest immediate problem for vets. In the last two years, Bush ordered the closing of several VA hospitals in different parts of the country, pushing waiting lists for medical services for veterans as high as six months for about 230,000 vets. These closings followed in the wake of the congressional Republican's concerted drive in 2003 to cut \$15 billion from VA spending over the next ten years.

A Center for American Progress analysis says, "President Bush's 2005 budget would increase prescription drug co-pays from \$7 to \$15 for many veterans. In 2002, the co-pay went from \$2 to \$7." This co-pay increase would have the biggest impact on "near-poor" veterans whose incomes are just high enough to require that they pay the new premium.

In fact the Republicans are so desperate to cut veterans' benefits they have started attacking fellow Republicans who want to preserve current benefit levels. The Wall Street Journal reports that "the House Republican leadership took the unusual step of stripping New Jersey Rep. Christopher Smith of his chairmanship of the Veterans

Affairs Committee" for pushing "so aggressively for veterans benefits that he at times threatened to oppose their spending plans - and President Bush's - unless more retiree benefits were included."

The Bush administration and Congressional Republicans lament the fact that increasing entitlements promised to veterans have forced them to limit the growth of spending for questionable missile systems and other weapons programs. **New funding for their illegal war on Iraq, they claim, is also in jeopardy as long as so much new military spending is set aside for veterans' programs.**

These "compassionate conservatives" want to force American taxpayers to choose between the GOP's vision of "national security" and taking care of the people who have provided that national security.

While the Republicans would like to see tax dollars handed over to the big defense that fund their election campaigns contractors - their version of an "entitlement program" - they will also have to deal with the 28 million people who sacrificed their time and lives in the US military.

Republicans are blocking an effort to eliminate premium payments for some retirees who receive Medicare. **Also, the reliance on reservists in Bush's war on Iraq to participate in longer terms of active duty without adequate increases in pay is a de facto pay cut that affects thousands of service members who share equally the risks of military service.**

The Republicans' effort to cut veterans' benefits is just another sign of their callous attitude to the vast majority of people in this country. They feel that the very rich are entitled to hundreds of billions in tax cuts, but do not feel the least twinge of guilt in forcing veterans to forego the benefits and services promised in return for their sacrifices.

This week Bush announced his request to Congress for another \$80 billion, bringing the total spent on his war to \$280 billion.

Critics of the new spending request see it as more money being thrown at a criminal invasion of Iraq based on lies about WMD and terrorist ties that also is draining national resources from programs that help people for a military machine that kills and tortures.

Bush wants you to believe that the real threats to national security are retired veterans who need food, shelter, and medical care.

"I Don't Know Where These Troops Are Coming From."

January 27, 2005 Sidney Blumenthal, Salon.com

This week the Pentagon announced that the US force level in Iraq would remain unchanged through 2006.

"I don't know where these troops are coming from. It's mystifying," Rep. Ellen Tauscher, a ranking Democrat on the House armed services committee, told me.

"There's no policy to deal with the fact we have a military in extremis."

War Is Still Hitting Vermont The Hardest: Per Capita, Vt. Has Lost Most

[Thanks to Richard Perrin, who sent this in.]

January 29, 2005 By WILSON RING The Associated Press

MONTPELIER — One would think the numbers would start to even out — that, just by random chance, the number of Vermont service members dying in Iraq would slow, putting the state's burden in line with its tiny population.

But Vermont service members keep dying, keeping the state at the top of the per capita ranking of states that have lost sons and daughters to the Iraq war.

The latest Vermont death came Wednesday when Marine Sgt. Jesse Strong, 24, of Albany, died when his vehicle was ambushed near Haditha, a town northwest of Baghdad.

Vermont, one of the most rural states in the country, sends one of the highest proportions of its population to the military, said Vermont National Guard spokeswoman Lt. Veronica Saffo. **"There are fewer perceived possibilities as far as employment, the military is that much more appealing to people from small towns."**

The states with the smallest populations top the list of casualties when ranked per capita. After Vermont, whose population ranks 49th, comes North Dakota, ranked 48th; South Dakota, 46, and Wyoming.

In a quirk to the statistic, Alaska, whose population ranks 47th, has lost the fewest service members, one.

And within Vermont, the deaths are spread across the state in small towns from Albany near the Canadian border to Bennington on the Massachusetts border.

Only two of the deaths come from Chittenden County, home to about a quarter of the state's population.

"The rest were from mostly rural areas," said Clayton Clark, the state's veterans affairs coordinator. "If you look at the way our population is distributed, you would think there would be a couple more from Chittenden County.

"That's why the pain we feel for these losses is really poignant here, because when someone from a small town dies everyone knows that person, knows the family," Clark said. "The communities affected by this are very deeply affected."

In absolute numbers, California has lost the most service members, 160, but the state has the largest population in the country, giving it a per capita ranking of 31st. Texas, the second most populous state, has lost 126 service members, ranking it 17th.

In a map of the rankings, Vermont stands out among neighboring states that float through the middle of the rankings.

New York ranks 45th, New Hampshire 30th, Massachusetts 37th and Maine 12th.

Among the states with the fewest casualties, Alaska ranks 51st, Utah 50, Minnesota 49, Nevada 48 and Missouri 47.

ROLL CALL

Marine Killed In Crash Has Family In E. Meredith; "He Was Headed Home. He Didn't Make It."

01/29/05 By Amy L. Ashbridge, Staff Writer, The Daily Star, Oneonta, NY

One of the Marines killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq on Wednesday was originally from East Meredith.

"He was a kind son," Maciel's father, Fred Copenhaver, said Friday. "He'd basically do anything for anybody."

Copenhaver and Maciel's stepmother, Edna Copenhaver, live in East Meredith.

"He had to fly over to the elections," Copenhaver said. "He was going to be there for the elections."

Copenhaver, 49, said he talked to his son for the last time early Sunday morning when Maciel called. "He was happy," Copenhaver said. "He was telling me everything he was doing."

Copenhaver heard about his son's death Wednesday afternoon. The U.S. Marines Recruiting Office in Oneonta confirmed the death Thursday, said Katrina Matthews, Maciel's stepsister. "We knew, but we just wanted a final say," Matthews said.

The last time Maciel had been to the area was in June, Matthews said, before he went to Iraq. "That was the last time we had seen him," Matthews said Friday. "We're so glad he did (come to the area.)"

Maciel was supposed to return to the States after this month's elections in Iraq.

"He was headed home. He had plans," Copenhaver said. "He didn't make it."

Matthews, 31, said Maciel loved children, and her children loved him. "They just idolized him," Matthews said.

"He was a kind, caring, loving person," she said. "He was great."

Maciel was engaged to Jamie Hommel, who lives in Texas.

"She's not doing good at all," Copenhaver said. "She's taking it pretty hard."

Maciel and Hommel planned to wed once Maciel came back from Iraq, Copenhaver said. "He had plans to get married," Copenhaver said. "He had plans to go on his honeymoon."

Hommel had already started to plan the wedding, he said.

She had been shopping with her mother a few weeks ago.

"They went out and bought the wedding rings and the wedding dress," Copenhaver said.

Maciel graduated from Spring High School in Texas in 2003. He joined the Marines that September.

Matthews said the service and burial may be next Saturday, but a definite time and date haven't been set. The family needs to wait for Maciel's body to be flown back from Iraq, she said.

Maciel will be buried in Texas. His service will also be there. "His mom, Patsy, feels he would have wanted it that way," Matthews said.

Weymouth Marine Killed

January 30, 2005 The Associated Press

Marine Sgt. Andrew K. Farrar Jr., who re-enlisted after the 9-11 terrorist attacks, died Friday on his 31st birthday while on patrol in Iraq, his father said Sunday.

The Weymouth native, scheduled to return home to his wife and two young sons in three weeks, was electrocuted when he ran into a high-voltage wire on patrol in Anbar province.

ELECTION FARCE ROUNDUP:

No Election In Anbar; “A Hell That Bites The Americans”

FALLUJAH, Iraq, Jan. 29 (Xinhuanet) & AFP & 1.30.05 By Mariam Fam, The Associated Press & Aljazeera & (Xinhuanet) --

Polls were largely deserted all day in many cities of the Sunni Triangle north and west of the capital, particularly Fallujah, Ramadi and Baiji.

Polling stations in several towns in Iraq have not opened five hours after nationwide voting started on Sunday, the country's electoral commission said.

"In Latifiya, Mahmudiya and Yusufiya, polling stations have not yet opened their doors," commission spokesman Farid Ayar told reporters.

"The turnout was very low during the past few hours in Tikrit, Dujail, Balad and Tuz, much lower than expected," a source in the electoral body told Xinhua.

"In addition, no voters showed up in Baiji, Samarra and Dour," said the source, who declined to be identified.

The cities of Dujail and Balad have mixed population of Shiites and Sunnis, while Tuz has a mosaic of Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen.

Election organizers set up two polling centers on Saturday afternoon in Iraq's previously rebel-controlled Fallujah, but only found them bombed shortly after.

The two centers, in Fallujah's al-Risala and al-Shurta districts, were installed only hours before election day in an effort to showcase the idea that no place is absent from the elections.

The two are among the only four voting centers in Anbar province west of Baghdad.

A third is located in Anbar's capital city of Ramadi and is heavily guarded by US and Iraqi troops. The fourth one is said to be opened early Sunday in Fallujah, a virtual ghost town after US Marines and Iraqi forces stormed it last November.

In Tikrit, only seven people showed up in the first two hours of voting at a school in the city center. 75 percent of the voting stations have not been visited till now. Senior officials of Tikrit were the first to vote on Sunday, but followed by few people.

Unlike the south and the north of Iraq, there has been virtually no trace of elections in Anbar despite repeated calls for participation from the authorities.

"I do not even want to think of these elections because they only express the desire of the American administration. It will create an allegiant government which will in turn justify the criminal actions it had committed in Anbar," said Haj Mahmood Saloom.

"Come what may, I think the results of the elections are predetermined," said the 48-year-old citizen.

The situation in Ramadi, 110 km west of Baghdad, is equally harsh. Instead of campaign posters, on walls are leaflets that ask people to stay home especially at night to avoid violence.

"The evening will be turned into a hell that bites the Americans. The elections will be a disaster for the agents and collaborators with the occupation," reads a poster which carries the name of the Islamic Resistance Movement.

Samarra

Heavily fortified polling centres were deserted and streets empty as Iraqis in the Sunni Muslim city of Samarra stayed home on Sunday.

According to preliminary figures provided by a joint US and Iraqi taskforce that safeguarded the vote, fewer than 1400 people cast ballots in the city of 200,000.

The figure includes votes from soldiers and police, most of whom were recruited from the Shia south.

An AFP correspondent said there were no election staff at polling stations and police could not be seen on the streets of the city where US forces battled insurgents in October.

One Voter In Falluja

1.30.05 Aljazeera

In war-ravaged Falluja, nearly all residents stayed at home despite the presence of five polling stations. Only one man was reported to have voted.

Kelebdooni, Anti-Allawi group writes:

“That's turnout of 0.00033%.

“I think he had been on a desert island for the last two years and got back home only last night.

“What do you think? Any suggestions?”

CNN Caught Faking Happy Voter Shots

12:29:48 PM Interesting. I'm watching CNN International, and the shots of long lines and happy voters are almost all coming from Iraqi Kurdistan where the voters are motivated and the environment is (relatively) safe.

The rub is that CNNi is not identifying the images as coming from Kurdistan; the only way I knew it was from up north was the single shot of someone waving a Kurdish flag.

January 30, 2005 Christopher

8:39:11 AM (All times local Baghdad time): Explosions in the Green Zone, probably mortars. Police report a car bomb in west Baghdad, with some casualties.

9:34:37 AM So far, not as much violence as everybody feared. The question is why?

Is the insurgency taking a pass on this one? (It's possible. Our sources in the insurgency say the election will make no difference to them, so why expend a lot of energy?)

Is the insurgency much weaker than previously thought?

Or is the level of security sufficient to keep it in check? If that's the case, then that is discouraging, too, because the measures that have kept today safe (so far) are truly draconian. No driving, dusk to dawn curfews, states of emergency. If that's what it takes to provide security in Iraq, why erase one police state only to replace it with another?

11:32:34 AM Four suicide bombings, all in west Baghdad. Seven dead and several wounded. We can't get to them because the bridges are blocked off and west Baghdad is on the other side of the Tigris River.

12:22:58 PM Sixth suicide bomb kills six people at a polling center in Baghdad. Unsure on where it is. Some of our other staff are out on the streets right now, and I'll be heading out again when they get back. (We only have so much security.)

12:29:48 PM Interesting. I'm watching CNN International, and the shots of long lines and happy voters are almost all coming from Iraqi Kurdistan where the voters are motivated and the environment is (relatively) safe.

The rub is that CNNi is not identifying the images as coming from Kurdistan; the only way I knew it was from up north was the single shot of someone waving a Kurdish flag.

But if you don't know what the flag looks like (red, white and green bars with a yellow starburst in the center), as I suspect most Americans don't, you wouldn't know the context of these images. Shi'ites are also coming out in droves in the south. But Sunnis are staying home. **I will be surprised if the Sunni vote hits double digits at this point.**

1:15:38 PM Nine suicide bombs in Baghdad alone, with at least 20 dead. **A bomb went off near the home of the Justice Minister. There are a number of outgoing mortars from my neighborhood in the last 10 minutes.**

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)

Occupation Caught Importing 60 Million Ballots--- But Only 15 Million Voters

January 30, 2005 Sheek Abbas, Anti-Allawi group

Jan. 29, 2005 By Robin Wright, The Washington Post Company

*In the run-up to Iraq's elections, the State Department's spokesman this week ticked off the final markers of progress: 130 planeloads of voting materials had landed in Iraq, including 90,000 ballot boxes **and 60 million ballots** — In a last-minute American role, officials said, the U.S. military will assist today in distributing the equipment to polling stations.*

There are about 25 million Iraqis, and about 15 million of them are eligible to vote (many are indeed boycotting it).

What will they be doing with the extra 45 million ballots?

U.S. Stooges Caught Faking Voter Turnout Numbers; Forced To Admit 72% Claim “A Guess”

30 January Aljazeera & BBC & By Kelebdooni, Anti-Allawi group

Confusion surrounds turnout statistics in Iraq's election, with the country's election commission backtracking on a statement that 72% had voted and top politicians insisting the turnout was high.

Iraq's electoral commission held a news conference 90 minutes before polls closed to say turnout was estimated at 72%, with 90% or more in some Shia areas.

But electoral official Adil al-Lami did not say how these figures had been reached.

The commission said its initial tally had been little more than a guess based on local estimates.

Comment by Kelebdooni:

It [the 72% number] was given by the same electoral "official" who announced within the first hour that all polling stations were open for normal sordid business. Hours later, we learned from other "officials" that some polling stations were never even opened because the staff failed to show up!

Turnout in Ramadi and Salahuddin provinces was almost nil, because hardly any stations opened. In Samarra, only 2 stations opened at noon, with no turnout.

Nowhere to vote in the "triangle of death" area south of Baghdad, because no one dared mention a polling station.

Turnout in Mosul, Baquba, and Basra was very light. Turnout was negligible in most areas of Baghdad itself. Those were the accounts of Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, and ANB field reporters from the areas mentioned, which account for more than half of the Iraqi population!

It must have been countered by a turnout of 272% in Erbil!

So why bother to count anyway?

Big Joke



[Thanks to D in Atlanta, who sent this in.]

1.28.05 BBC

Mahmoud al-Rassam, 25, student:

"I will not take part of these elections. How can we have elections when the occupation forces have their boots over our necks? What kind of election will it be when most Iraqis are not participating? This is just an American plot to hand the government to their agents and say this is your government.

"Iraq will be like Iran and civil war will take place. These elections are a big joke, I feel ashamed of all those Iraqis deceived by the American propaganda."

While CNN Fakes The Election Stage Show, The War Goes On

30 January 2005 By Robert Fisk, The Independent on Sunday U.K.

The media boys and girls will be expected to play along with this. "Transition of power," says the hourly logo on CNN's live coverage of the election, though the poll is for a parliament to write a constitution and the men who will form a majority within it will have no power.

They have no control over their oil, no authority over the streets of Baghdad, let alone the rest of the country, no workable army or loyal police force. Their only power is that of the American military and its 150,000 soldiers whom we could see at the main Baghdad intersections yesterday.

The big television networks have been given a list of five polling stations where they will be "allowed" to film. Close inspection of the list shows that four of the five are in Shia Muslim areas - where the polling will probably be high - and one in an upmarket Sunni area where it will be moderate.

Every working-class Sunni polling station will be out of bounds to the press. I wonder if the television lads will tell us that today when they show voters "flocking" to the polls.

In the Karada district, we found three truckloads of youths yesterday, all brandishing Iraqi flags, all - like the unemployed who have been sticking posters to Baghdad's walls - paid by the government to "advertise" the election. And there was a cameraman from Iraqi state television, which is controlled by Iyad Allawi's "interim" government.

The "real" story is outside Baghdad, in the tens of thousands of square miles outside the government's control and outside the sight of independent journalists, especially in the four Sunni Muslim provinces which are the heart of Iraq's insurrection.

Right up to election hour, US jets were continuing to bomb "terrorist targets", the latest in the city of Ramadi - which, though Messrs Bush and Blair do not say so - is now in the hands of the insurgents as surely as Fallujah was before the Americans destroyed it.

Every month since Mr Allawi, the former CIA agent, was appointed premier by the US government, American air strikes on Iraq have been increasing exponentially.

There are no "embedded" reporters on the giant American air base at Qatar or aboard the US carriers in the Gulf from which these ever-increasing and ever more lethal sorties are being flown. They go unrecorded, unreported, part of the "fantasy" war which is all too real to the victims but hidden from us journalists as we cower in Baghdad.

The reality is that much of Iraq has become a free-fire zone - for reference, see under "Vietnam" - and the Americans are conducting this secret war as efficiently and as ruthlessly as they conducted their earlier bombing campaign against Iraq between 1991 and 2003, an air raid a day, or two raids, or three. Then they were attacking Saddam's "military targets" in Iraq.

Now they are attacking "foreign terrorist targets" or "anti-Iraqi forces". I especially like this one since the foreigners involved in this violence happen in reality to be Americans who are mostly attacking Iraqis.

Yes, I know how it's all going to be played out. Iraqis bravely vote despite the bloodcurdling threats of the enemies of democracy.

At last, the American and British policies have reached fruition - a real and functioning democracy will be in place so we can leave soon.

Or next year.

Or in a decade or so.

Merely to hold these elections - an act of folly in the eyes of so many Iraqis - will be a "success".

Allawi & Iraq “President” Vote In Green Zone Safety

1.30.05 Aljazeera & Matt Spetalnick, Reuters

Casting his vote in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi urged his countrymen to defy the guerrillas and go to the polls.

Iraq's interim President Ghazi al-Yawir became the first Iraqi official to vote.

Al-Yawir, draped in white and yellow robes, dropped his vote into a clear plastic ballot box at 7:05am (0405 GMT).

"Thank God, Thank God. Blessed are the Iraqi elections," he said. "We greet all Iraqi people and urge them not to give up their rights, to vote for Iraq, elect Iraq and not to give up on Iraq." Al-Yawir voted inside Baghdad's sealed off Green Zone.

[Comment 1.30.05 from Samia Jamal, Anti-Allawi Group:

[Al-Yawir voted inside Baghdad's sealed off Green Zone.

[Can I vote there too?

[Then again, the American embassy was bombed there only yesterday!

[Thank God. Thank God. He made it.

Fighting In England At Iraq Election Voting Center

30 January BBC

Oldham manager Brian Talbot has been hurt after being caught up in a clash outside a polling station set up in Manchester for the Iraq election.

The fighting had broken out between voters and about 200 Arab Iraqis protesting against the election.

Talbot was driving to Boundary Park for Sunday's FA Cup tie against Bolton when he became embroiled in a skirmish between rival groups of Iraqis.

He was attacked after accidentally hitting an Iraqi with his car.

Stooge And A Dictator



[Thanks to D in Atlanta, who sent this in.]

1.28.05 BBC

Omar Nai'em, 43, electrician:

"All these banners and posters are a big lie. Those people running for elections are agents of the foreigners - the Iranians, Americans and the Israelis. It is not the intimidation that is preventing the people from voting. It's the lies.

"They claimed that Saddam was a dictator, but what is Allawi now? He is the same - an American stooge and a dictator."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Attacks

30 January Aljazeera & AFP & 1.30.05 By Mariam Fam, The Associated Press & BBC & Reuters & (KUNA)

Deadly mortar volleys hit Baghdad's Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City and struck voters at several sites in Balad, and Kirkuk in the north and Mahawil south of the capital. Across the country, at least 35 people and nine suicide bombers were killed.

Baghdad

At least eight bombs exploded outside Baghdad polling stations, killing at least 28 people. Seven of the bombers walked up to the voting stations on foot and one used a car bomb.

Sporadic explosions and machine gun fire were heard across the centre of the capital in the early morning.

The blasts came from different districts in the centre of the capital and police said an explosion had jolted the Mansur district, an upper class area of western Baghdad.

Iraqi police said the Mansur attack was a car bomb at a makeshift polling station in the Zahra school. Sources said six people were killed, including an Iraqi security member. Thirteen others were injured.

Another car bomb exploded outside the justice minister's house; one security guard was killed and four others injured.

A bomber blew himself up at a polling station in western Baghdad, killing himself, three policemen and a civilian, officials said. The bomber who wore an explosive belt around his waist tried to enter the polling center but policemen forced him to be searched. **He blew himself up killing three policemen and two army personnel.** Four people were wounded, two of them army personnel and the other two were civilians.

Meanwhile, mortar shells struck a polling station in Sadr City killing four voters and wounding seven others. Other mortar shells fell in Al-Saadoun square and Al-Thawra area in Sadr City in the Iraqi capital wounding at least two people, according to police sources.

At a polling center in a western part of Baghdad, one policemen and the bomber died, police said.

In Baghdad's mainly Sunni Arab area of Azamiyah, the neighborhood's four polling centers did not open at all, residents said.

Rafi al-Bayati, an independent Iraqi journalist in Baghdad, said about 20 explosions were heard throughout the city early on Sunday.

He said rockets appeared to have been launched from the al-Ghazaliya district west of Baghdad directly hitting polling centres.

Al-Bayati also learned from local police sources that about 20 police vehicles and ambulances had been stolen in the past few days and believed to be rigged with explosives.

Ziyad al-Samarrai, an Iraqi journalist, added that voters had not yet approached polling centres in al-Yarmuk, al-Bayya, al-Shaab, al-Huriya districts and al-Rabia street.

Also in Baghdad, US forces opened fire on Iraqi security officers belonging to the interim interior ministry. Two were severely injured and taken to a nearby hospital, al-Bayati said.

Balad

A mortar attack on a polling station killed one woman, and wounded another and her child.

Basra

A mortar shell landed near a polling station in al-Dhubbat neighbourhood, killing and injuring some people.

Baquba

A US military base north of Baquba city came under Katyusha rocket attack. Fighting is reported to have broken out in the south of the city

Hilla

A mortar attack killed one person.

Kirkuk

Three mortars were fired into the main airport, which is now a US army base. There were no reported casualties. A few mortars exploded near the US military base in the northern city of Kirkuk shortly before the voting centres opened.

Latifiya

Mortars struck two voting stations. US troops killed one attacker and arrested 15 others.

Mosul

Six explosions, but no reported casualties. In western parts of Mosul, clashes erupted between guerrillas and Iraqi soldiers. **One polling station visited by the media was empty. Streets were deserted. Early signs showed a poor turnout of voters in Mosul. US soldiers were seen driving around city blocks asking why residents were not voting.**

Tal Afar, west of Mosul

One man was wounded in fighting between Iraqis and US forces.

Al-Duluiya, 70km north of Baghdad

Attacks were reported from voting stations in the city, no reported casualties.

Al-Mahawil, 80km south of Baghdad

Five people killed and 14 wounded when a bomb tore through a bus carrying voters to a polling station.

One Iraqi civilian killed and three policemen injured in mortar attack.

Al-Muqtadiya, 100km north of Baghdad

Two attackers blew themselves up in front of voter stations

Mortar rounds also rained down on other cities, including Hilla, where one person was killed.

Behind The Rising Tide Of Resistance In Iraq

January 28, 2005 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker. Excerpts from http://www.socialistworker.org/2005-1/528/528_06_Ramadani.shtml

SAMI RAMADANI lived in exile from his native Iraq for many years as a political refugee from Saddam Hussein's regime. But he stood strongly with the international antiwar movement in opposing the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. He is a columnist for Britain's Guardian newspaper and a senior lecturer in sociology at the London Metropolitan University.

Ramadani was interviewed by ERIC RUDER about what's at stake in the Iraqi elections-and what the future holds for Iraq's resistance to U.S. occupation.

ER: THE U.S. government dismisses the Iraqi resistance to occupation as a hodgepodge of "terrorists" or remnants of the old regime. Can you talk about the character of the resistance?

It has come as a surprise to me that some left and liberal commentators have been very quick to accuse the Iraqi resistance of "hedonism" and "targeting" civilians. Not only have they done this without producing concrete evidence, but they also have tended to accuse the resistance in general.

My own assessment is that their time would be much more fruitfully spent digging into Negroponte's record of coordinating the activities of terror organizations that targeted trade unionists and others in Central America in the 1980s.

I think that these commentators are causing enormous damage to the right of the Iraqi people to resist the occupation. I am not pretending that Iraqi resistance elements are some kind of special angels, but they are not peculiar monsters, either.

Nor are they the first resistance movement that targeted collaborators and persons working with occupation forces. We only have to look at the record of the resistance forces in France and elsewhere in Europe in the fight against Nazi occupation forces to see how bitter and bloody these conflicts can become.

To those who say that the U.S.-led forces should not be compared to the Nazi forces in Europe, I say this might be strictly true, but try telling it to the people of the neighborhoods of Falluja, Najaf and Sadr City--at the receiving end of bombardment by the most lethal death-and-destruction machine in human history. Try telling it to the relatives, loved ones and dearest friends of the over 100,000 Iraqis killed by the occupation forces.

Those who only see the Iraqi resistance through the prism of the spectacular terrorist operations are perhaps not aware that of the average of 3,000 military operations per month against the occupation forces, the terrorist operations that target civilians and grab the daily headlines are not much more than 30 per month.

THE MEDIA in the U.S. are especially focused currently on the split between Shia and Sunni Muslims in Iraq. How has this division affected the resistance?

I THINK that this split is highly exaggerated and is often based on lack of knowledge and understanding of Iraqi society and history. There are Shia living throughout Iraq, including Kurdistan, and similarly, there are Sunnis and Christians who have peacefully coexisted for many centuries.

There is no history of communal strife or civil war in Iraq, and the degree of socio-economic integration and unity of purpose among the Iraqi people is often underestimated. There is also a powerful secular tradition in Iraq that transcends all religions and sects.

U.S. and British mainstream commentators were confidently predicting that large-scale attacks by Shia against Sunnis would be unavoidable after the downfall of Saddam's regime. To their embarrassment and dismay, millions of Iraqis--of all sects and none--marched in the streets, denouncing the occupation and chanting "La Shia, La Sunna, hatha al-balad menbi'a" ("No Shia or Sunni, this country we shall not sell").

It was also noticeable that people from most parts of Iraq were collecting aid for the peoples of Najaf, Falluja and Sadr City while the U.S. and British media were busy peddling sectarian myths.

On the historical tribal roots, it has also to be stressed that nearly all Iraqi tribes have Sunni and Shia "branches" within them. These traditional tribal links, though much weaker now than tens of decades ago, have also militated against any sectarian conflicts.

While recognizing that if something didn't happen in the past doesn't mean it will not happen in the future, it is important to also recognize that sectarian centrifugal forces--whether in the socio-economic or ideological fields--are particularly weak within Iraq.

One of the main reasons for this is that "Iraqi" identity has deep roots that go much further back than the foundation of the modern Iraqi state. In modern Iraq, working-class struggles and national anti-colonial and anti-imperialist uprisings have often engulfed the whole of Iraq, cementing this identity.

SOME VOICES in the antiwar movement propose that we withhold support for the resistance in Iraq because we disagree with their politics. What do you think?

THERE HAS always been disagreement with the programs, politics and tactics of resistance movements. This was true of Albania, France, Algeria, Kenya, Cyprus, Vietnam and many others. This is also true of Palestine and Iraq today.

My view is that one has to start from the principled position of opposing occupation and conquest, whether of the colonial or imperialist variety--and of supporting the struggle of the peoples for liberation. As a socialist, I would naturally be delighted if these struggles are led by socialist movements. But that is for the people in struggle to decide.

Nor should the absence of such strong socialist movements be used as an argument to absolve socialists of their internationalist duty and fundamental task of backing the struggle against imperialist policies of hegemony and wars of aggression.

Criticism of and dialogue with all movements in struggle is obviously essential. But to withhold support from the people's resistance to occupation because one disagrees with some of its sections or even of its leadership would seriously damage the worldwide struggle against imperialist domination.

Also, one has to be also vigilant and take a dose of anti-imperialist immunity, because the mainstream media's constant attempts to portray the resistance movements as a bunch of murderers is bound to affect us.

This is particularly so if we do not have easy access to alternative sources of news and analysis. I find my knowledge of other countries seriously colored by the mainstream media until I have access to those country's authentic voices. Even on Iraq, with a fast-developing situation, I find that even a few day's detachment from sources emanating from Iraq colors my view of the situation if I only have access to the mainstream media.

The repetition of mantras and the drip-drip effect of intensive and prolonged media coverage can have serious influence on our view of the world. The Sunni-Shia "conflict" is one such manta that has become so dominant that it has crept into antiwar and socialist analyses of Iraq.

The class basis of some of these issues is completely ignored, with no understanding that the top merchants of Najaf and Karbala and Baghdad take a very different view of the conflict in Iraq than the workers, students and unemployed of those cities--regardless of their sect. There is, for example, a failure to see the class distinction between those supporting the Shia cleric Moktada al-Sadr and those backing other Shia clerics. As the conflict escalates, this distinction will prove very important and undermine any notion of a deep Sunni-Shia divide.

A false and damaging distinction is sometimes made between "purely" working-class activity--trade unions, for example--in an occupied country like Iraq and the general struggle to end imperialist occupation and domination.

The struggle of the peoples against occupation and for liberation is part and parcel of the struggle of the working people in Iraq, the U.S., Europe and the whole world for a better future--a future in which wars of aggression, exploitation of human labor for the benefit of the few and the destruction of the earth's environment are eliminated.

Without active international solidarity, particularly of the American people, the Iraqi and other peoples will not be able to achieve liberation from occupation and war. Nor will that brighter future be possible.

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.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Doom Comes Calling For George

Sun Tzu wrote that "when you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped.

"Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardor damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity.

"Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue."

Xerox War

From: Richard M. Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: January 27, 2005
Subject: Xerox War

Is there anything big going on in March, with the second anniversary of "Operation Iraqi Freedom?" [See you at Ft. Bragg.]

God, that is an absurd thing to write. "Operation Iraqi Freedom," that's like asking Charles Manson to do a house call.

I saw a great bumper sticker the other day. It simply said, "What is our oil doing under their sand?" What a great one liner.

I am including a piece I wrote tonight.

War spelled backwards is Raw!

Xerox War

The real smoking gun in Iraq is the deployment
revolver filled with American soldiers.
Wasted, wasted, wasted...
The shell casings hitting the ground,
Casket, casket, casket...
Taps, taps, taps...
When it comes to war,
business has no conscience.
Lies, lies, lies...
I am a Vietnam Veteran,
who refuses to die.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Jan. 26, 2005

Same Old Same Old

Uncle Sam got himself in a big ol jam,
Way down yonder in Viet-nam.
Throw down your books and pick up a gun.
Were gonna have a whole lotta fun!

And its 1, 2, 3 what are we fightin for?
Don't ask me
I don't give a damn!
My next stop is Viet-nam."

Fool Us Just How Many Times Exactly?

January 30, 2005 By Kelebdooni, Anti-Allawi group

If it's a matter of numbers, then the Shia have always been a majority in any body in Iraq by sheer proportions.

This does not coincide with where power lies and how.

The Shia will of course be a majority in any case in the new assembly, but what proportion of them will be "Shia" in the factional sense?

Let me remind everyone that Allawi is a Shia.

So was the leader of the parliament during the Saddam regime, and the majority of the members too. So was the well known minister of information during the war, and a number of other ministers.

Fool us just how many times exactly?

The Real Test Of Opposition To The War

Jan 29/30, 2005 By RON JACOBS, Excerpt from
<http://www.counterpunch.org/jacobs01292005.html>

Until Washington has the control it wants over Iraq, its troops will remain.

This is what pundits and politicians mean when they talk about finishing the job George Bush and his cabal began.

Various statements by members of his second-term cabinet confirm this. Sure, Colin Powell said the troops could begin coming home by the end of 2005. Instead, it's Mr. Powell who is going home.

As for the Congress, that other branch of government, they just seem to cough up the cash whenever Mr. Bush asks for it.

The biggest challenge the administration might get is the occasional congressperson asking for some kind of accounting for the billions being spent on this war and the other one in Afghanistan (and who knows where else). It's not as if these legislators really want to know who is getting the money and how it's being spent. It's just that some of their constituents have asked them to find out.

So, the congressmen and women ask without really wanting an answer.

Nor do they want an end to the war. If they did, all they would have to do is stop funding the endeavor. Instead, they only ask that the war billions actually go to the military and not to the war industry.

Who do they think the war is for, anyhow?

The people who live in those countries where US troops operate? The troops?

Such false naiveté only goes so far. In the end, it doesn't matter how much bluster these men and women bring against the Condoleezza Rice's of the United States when the real test of their opposition to Bush's policies is in whether or not they vote to fund them.

I have yet to see a serious campaign against any of the foreign or domestic policies put forth by the current administration. **I don't expect one, either, unless enough of the people in this country make them answer to them.**

Two Ways Of Looking At It

"The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possessions of modern peoples is their national debt . . . The state-creditors actually give nothing away, for the sum lent is transformed into public bonds, easily negotiable, which go on functioning in their hands just as so much hard cash would." (Marx, *Capital*)

"Finance capital has created the epoch of monopolies, and monopolies introduce everywhere monopolist principles: the utilization of 'connections' for profitable transactions takes the place of competition on the open market. **The most usual thing is to stipulate that part of the loan that is granted shall be spent on purchases in the creditor country, particularly on orders for war materials, or for ships, etc.** In the course of the last two decades (1890-1910), France has very often resorted to this method." (Lenin, *Imperialism*)

OCCUPATION REPORT

232 Civilian Occupation Workers Killed, So Far

30 January 2005 Aljazeera

At least 232 civilians have been killed while working on U.S.-funded contracts in Iraq and the death toll is rising rapidly, according to a U.S. government audit.

Not all U.S. employers would have filed DBA claims for workers killed in Iraq and the death toll from civilians killed is likely to be higher than 232, said one U.S. official.

Attacks on U.S.-funded work sites, convoys and employees averaged about 22 a week until Jan. 3, the report said.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Piss On What The Troops Need: Bush Spending \$6 Billion On His Presidential Helicopters

[Thanks to Mark S for sending this in. He writes: Keep your commentaries going, I agree with you about 98%.]

Jan 28 WASHINGTON (AFP)

The US Navy awarded Lockheed Martin a 1.7 billion dollar contract to build the next fleet of Marine One helicopters, picking its European designed helicopter for the signature dark green-and-white ride of US presidents.

The contract would ultimately be worth 6.1 billion dollars for the 23 helicopters that the government wants to acquire for the presidential fleet, Navy officials said.

I Just Can't Wait For The Next One?

January 28, 2005 by Bernard Chazelle, CommonDreams.org

Condoleezza Rice: "I do agree that the tsunami was a wonderful opportunity to show not just the US government, but the heart of the American people, and I think it has paid great dividends for us." And I just can't wait for the next one, our top diplomat might have added.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Mentally Retarded Palestinian Executed By Zionist Terrorists

GAZA CITY, Palestine, January 27, 2005 (IPC + WAFA)

Medical sources in Gaza Strip declared today that a mentally-retarded civilian died today of wounds he sustained when Israeli occupation forces shot him.

Doctors at Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza said that Abdul Moti Thaker, 30, a mentally-retarded civilian, died today of wounds he sustained near Al Shohada junction, south of Gaza City, **when Israeli forces opened fire at him and prevented ambulances from evacuating him till he was pronounced dead later. [The Nazi's usually put the retarded in camps before killing them. This way saves time and money.]**

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

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/qi-special/> ; www.qifightback.org ;

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

www.williambowles.info/qispecial

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for purely educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. Go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml> for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.