

GI SPECIAL 3A32:

ENOUGH. COME ON HOME NOW



The Cold Numbers: Who Voted And Who Didn't: Reality Trumps Iraq Occupation Propaganda

January 31, 2005 By Frontlines staff, with material from agencies

The real numbers of this election are difficult to obtain as international monitors were not allowed to observe the proceedings for "security reasons." **Even if we use the highly unreliable figures distributed by the Iraqi government and sources close to the US embassy in Baghdad, the results seemed to indicate a mixed bag, no matter what the different parties are trying to spin:**

Eligible voters: 20-Million

Registered voters: 14 million or 70% of those eligible

Total voters on 1/30/05: Approximately 7 Millions or 50% of those registered or 35% of all eligible voters.

[Do the math. 35% of eligible voters vote = 65% of eligible voters do not vote. Not like the big success reported in the next election story!]

Déjà Vu All Over Again

U.S. Encouraged By Vote: Officials Cite 83% Turnout Despite Vietcong Terror

[Thanks to Phil G. who sent this in.]

September 4, 1967, By Peter Grose, New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3-- United States officials were surprised and heartened today at the size of turnout in South Vietnam's presidential election despite a Vietcong terrorist campaign to disrupt the voting.

According to reports from Saigon, 83 per cent of the 5.85 million registered voters cast their ballots yesterday. Many of them risked reprisals threatened by the Vietcong.

The size of the popular vote and the inability of the Vietcong to destroy the election machinery were the two salient facts in a preliminary assessment of the nation election based on the incomplete returns reaching here.

Pending more detailed reports, neither the State Department nor the White House would comment on the balloting or the victory of the military candidates, Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, who was running for president, and Premier Nguyen Cao Ky, the candidate for vice president.

A successful election has long been seen as the keystone in President Johnson's policy of encouraging the growth of constitutional processes in South Vietnam.

The purpose of the voting was to give legitimacy to the Saigon Government, which has been founded only on coups and power plays since November, 1963, when President Ngo Dinh Diem was overthrown by a military junta.

Few members of that junta are still around, most having been ousted or exiled in subsequent shifts of power.

The fact that the backing of the electorate has gone to the generals who have been ruling South Vietnam for the last two years does not, in the Administration's view, diminish the significance of the constitutional step that has been taken.

The hope here is that the new government will be able to maneuver with a confidence and legitimacy long lacking in South Vietnamese politics. **That hope could have been dashed either by a small turnout, indicating widespread scorn or a lack of interest in constitutional development, or by the Vietcong's disruption of the balloting.**

American officials had hoped for an 80 per cent turnout. That was the figure in the election in September for the Constituent Assembly. Seventy-eight per cent of the registered voters went to the polls in elections for local officials last spring.

Before the results of the presidential election started to come in, the American officials warned that the turnout might be less than 80 per cent because the polling place would be open for two or three hours less than in the election a year ago.

The turnout of 83 per cent was a welcome surprise.

The turnout in the 1964 United States Presidential election was 62 per cent.

Captured documents and interrogations indicated in the last week a serious concern among Vietcong leaders that a major effort would be required to render the election meaningless. This effort has not succeeded, judging from the reports from Saigon.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

**U.S. Iraq Command Having
“Contacts” With Resistance
Military Leadership:
A Christmas Truce And Another
Truce For Election Day**

Washington, DC, Jan. 29 (UPI)

U.S. military officers are in contact with certain Iraqi insurgent groups, but not talking to them, according to a knowledgeable diplomatic source in Washington. The purpose is to try to reduce the violence during the election weekend.

The apparent contradiction of being in contact but not talking is explained as a diplomatic formula in which each side expresses its intentions without actually engaging in dialogue. That way either side can plausibly deny that any negotiations are taking place.

The source said contact was established about two weeks ago between U.S. officers and former members of Saddam Hussein's army linked to the insurgency.

"It took place in the area of operations, and it's military to military," was how the source put it.

The insurgents told their U.S. military contacts that they planned to reduce their armed attempts to undermine the election weekend, the source said.

The Americans in turn requested that the insurgents declare this intention publicly. The insurgents have refused to comply, but have reiterated that violence will be reduced.

But the source stressed that the contacts have not included all extremist groups, and certainly not the al-Qaida terrorist organization led by the Jordanian Abu Musab Zarqawi.

The Iraqis involved in the contacts had been instrumental in the recent arrest of Zarqawi's alleged aide Sami Mohammed Said al-Jaf, also known as Abu Omar al-Kurdi, in an apparent attempt to prove their distance from the terrorist leader, the source said.

Earlier this month there were reports that insurgents had, through U.N. officials in Baghdad, offered a two-day unilateral cease-fire against U.S. troops on Dec 24-25. Whether by coincidence or design, no U.S. troops were reported killed during that period.

The worst case scenario for Washington is an election was held and nobody came — in other words, a very low turnout across the board, despite the intense security effort. Hence, the source said, the somewhat risky move of contacts with the insurgents. Military sources in Washington had no comment.

Attack On Embassy Killed High Ranking Officer

January 31, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 104-05

Lt. Cmdr Keith E. Taylor, 47, of Irvine, Calif., died Jan. 29, in a rocket attack on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Taylor was assigned to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command, Iraq Detachment.

Cincinnati Soldier Killed

January 31, 2005 ChannelCincinnati.com

A soldier from Anderson Township was killed in an explosion at an Iraqi polling place Sunday, his father said.

Jim Miller, Jr., 22, was helping to guard a voting station in Ramadi against an insurgent attack during Sunday's historic, nationwide elections.

Miller graduated from Anderson High School in 2001 and went to Xavier University for about a year and a half.

Miller played football in high school and liked to play the guitar and drums. "He was really into music," his father said. "That was his love."

Sgt. Killed In Armor Wreck

January 31, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 105-05

Sgt. 1st Class Mickey E. Zaun, 27, of Brooklyn Park, Minn., died Jan. 28 in Mosul, Iraq, from injuries sustained in a collision between two armored vehicles. Zaun was assigned to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, N.C.

THREE MARINES KILLED, TWO WOUNDED IN ACTION SOUTH OF BAGHDAD

January 31, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-01-45C

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq -- Three U.S. Marines were killed in action and two others wounded on Jan. 31.

MARINE KILLED IN AL ANBAR

January 31, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-01-44C

CAMP FALLUJAH -- A Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action yesterday.

One U.S. Soldier Killed, Two Wounded In Ramadi: “I’ll Never Forget This Day”



U.S. and Iraqi troops look for targets after a roadside bomb destroyed a U.S. Humvee patrolling a few hundred meters from a polling station in Ramadi, Iraq. Joseph Giordono / S&S

January 31, 2005 By Joseph Giordono, Stars And Stripes

RAMADI, Iraq One U.S. soldier was killed and at least two others injured by a roadside bomb around 3 a.m. Sunday, according to military officials. In another attack at noon, a Humvee patrolling less than 200 meters from a polling station was hit by another bomb, sending a huge plume of smoke into the sky.

The Humvee crew all escaped with minor wounds, but the explosion touched off long bursts of machine-gun fire from Iraqi and American troops manning security positions at the nearby polling site, a large grammar school compound.

According to soldiers who were observing from a nearby rooftop position, the second roadside bomb was planted by a teenage boy who ran into the street and dropped a large plastic bag just moments before a U.S. patrol drove through.

For long minutes after the explosion, ammunition from the Humvee continued to cook off and fire into the air.

“I’ll never forget this day,” said Pfc. Branden Bell, a 19-year-old infantryman from Napa, Calif., who had been manning the polling entrance closest to the second Humvee explosion.

Bell and another soldier with Company C, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment felt small pieces of shrapnel land on their position after the explosion.

Mosul Base Under Heavy Attack

31 January 2005 Aljazeera

A US military base in the former presidential complex in Mosul has come under heavy mortar attack, Aljazeera reported.

Columns of smoke were seen rising over the base.

Marine Copter Down: No Sandstorm, No Bad Weather; Just More Lying Bullshit From Command:



January 30, 2005 WhatReallyHappened.com

Today a C-130 Hercules crashed in Iraq. According to witnesses, the wreckage was spread out over a wide area. Anyone familiar with aircraft accidents will confirm that this indicates that the aircraft came apart high in the air, not on impact with the ground.

A week ago, a helicopter crashed in Iraq, killing 31 people. Officially blamed on the weather, reports from the crash site indicate the wreckage covered 2 square kilometers. Again, this strongly suggests that the helicopter came apart high in

the air. *The Baghdad meteorological office confirms that the weather was clear with only moderate winds and no sandstorms at the time of the crash.*

The bad news is that the Iraqi people have gained the ability to shoot down our aircraft.

The US, having lost control of the use of the roads in Iraq, resorted (as they did in Vietnam) to trying to run the war from the air. The folly of that approach was demonstrated in Afghanistan when the Mujahideen learned how to kill the helicopters the Russians relied on. And now it is happening again.

The people the US invaded are getting better at killing our kids, who were sent off to invade Iraq for, well, we don't really know, do we?

They are angry, and rightly so. The people of Iraq know they did not do any of the things Bush claimed they did to justify the war.

Our troops know it too.

Our kids KNOW they are the villains, and they have to fight that awareness while they fight the Iraqi people, the climate, and the lack of supplies.

That's the bad news.

Kinda sucks, doesn't it?

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)

TROOP NEWS

(What's The Bad News?)
**TOP GENERAL SAYS NO
GUARANTEE OCCUPATION LOCALS**

WILL EVER DEFEAT THE RESISTANCE

26 January 2005 The Associated Press

BAGHDAD - The top American commander in Iraq on Wednesday said U.S.-trained Iraqi security forces were still not ready to take over the counterinsurgency and there was no guarantee they will ever be able to defeat it on their own.

U.S. trainers have modified eight-week programs to focus on fighting an insurgency that Casey says has gotten more organized in recent months.

Iraqi forces still lack the ability to develop an intelligence network, draw up combat plans and support them logistically and even to defend the institution of the army itself, the general said.

Brothers In Arms



Douglas Herman/Digitalmedia.com

By Douglas Herman, www.strike-the-root.com. USAF veteran Douglas Herman [<mailto:douglasherman7@yahoo.com>](mailto:douglasherman7@yahoo.com) served in the Vietnam era and now lives in Florida and Kodiak Alaska and is a regular contributor to Strike The Root

"There should be a law . . . If you support a war, if you think it's worth the price, that's fine, but you have to put your own precious fluids on the line. You have to head for the front and hook up with an infantry unit and help spill the blood."

When a soldier sees too much with his own eyes--too many fallen comrades and too many dead civilians--he's no good for war any more; he finally begins to question the false rationale. He begins to question the media slogans and military propaganda. He begins to believe his own eyes instead, his own conscience, his own heart.

You've heard the saying: Cowards die a thousand times but heroes die but once.

This is false. Heroes die every day but pick themselves up again and again to resist.

Whether as a common soldier pressed into a war he cannot understand, or those of us back home shining the light on the cowards who sent the soldiers there, the front lines shift but the enemy remains the same.

Let Commanders Beware These Few Words -- That's How It Starts

"I've been over here long enough to understand the people some," said Spc. Joel Endres, 25, of Madison, Wis., who said he believes security fears will keep most Iraqis away.

"Disappointing is one way to look at it," he said, "because you can ask, '**Why should we be helping them so much if they're not going to help themselves?**' " January 27, 2005 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times staff writer

Jacksonville Sailor Killed

1.31.05 By First Coast News Staff

JACKSONVILLE, FL -- First Coast News has confirmed with family members that a Jacksonville sailor has died in Iraq.

According to the family, Keith Taylor, a member of the U.S. Navy and a graduate of Sandalwood high school, was killed at the U.S. Embassy Compound in Baghdad in a mortar attack Saturday.

His brother-in-law told First Coast News Taylor joined the Navy right out of high school. He then took time off to go to college and get a degree. Afterward, Taylor rejoined the Naval Reserves.

We are told Keith Taylor was scheduled to leave Iraq in five weeks. He was on a 6-month deployment.

Taylor's parents and sister live in Jacksonville, and his brother lives in St. Augustine.

He and his wife have three children, all girls, ages 13, 10, and 18 months.

Ordered To Attend Inauguration, N. Y. Soldier Has To Pay His Own Way! “People Need To Know How Some Heroes Are Being Treated By Their Own Government.”

Jan. 31, 2005 MSNBC, Citizen Journalists on the Iraqi elections

My son is an army reservist and he returned from Iraq last March.

He was ordered to attend one of the inauguration parties.

I am prior service myself, so I felt very proud that he was chosen from all the people in his group. This particular gathering was to honor many of the soldiers and their families who have been to Iraq.

A group of five drove down from Long Island to Washington last Monday morning, and they were to return Tuesday evening.

Around midnight on Tuesday, my son returned home, looking tired from the drive. The next morning, he told me he didn't have a good time because they basically stood around and watched the president say a few words.

He said there was no food provided for them, so they ate after the event at some fast-food restaurant. They spend all this money for this celebration and can't feed my son? He stayed at a local military base with the rest of the group, but they made him pay for the room.

Apparently, there was a mix-up, or they were short a room.

I don't care what the problem was, he was told to go, this was not an option, orders were cut for this excursion!

I am disgusted and horrified that he had to even show his wallet for this event.

In addition to serving as a medic in the 310 MP Battalion, my son is a full-time student and works part-time to fill in the gaps the military doesn't. He takes his responsibility as a soldier very seriously.

I am angered at the way he has been treated.

People need to know how some heroes are being treated by their own government.

Rebecca Lawson, West Babylon, N.Y.

Military Mom Condemns War: “I Simply Cannot See How Proud Americans Could Wish This On Our Young.”

Jan. 31, 2005 MSNBC, Citizen Journalists on the Iraqi elections

We have two deployed in Iraq, served extended tours, and both are under orders to re-deploy to Iraq for 2nd tour as well as being under Stop Loss orders now.

Interesting how when it is their time to decide whether to re-enlist they get Stop Loss, isn't it?

I want my two home, and while I'm proud of them as young men and as soldiers, I'm not for a second proud that our country is in Iraq.

So after almost 3 years Iraq will have elections, and will the war then end...not hardly.

I do not believe my two, who have served honorably, will live out their lives proud of their actions in Iraq, rather will live with the conflict and turmoil in their souls that war brings to any warrior.

I simply cannot see how proud Americans could wish this on our young.

—Lietta Yuger, Bay Center, WA

A Little Discipline Problem In The 1-7

January 31, 2005 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times staff writer

BAGHDAD — The notes have started popping up on Camp Falcon's barracks bulletin boards: packing lists, meeting notices, timelines. Start your paperwork now.

In the midst of one of the busiest periods since they arrived in Iraq 11 months ago, the soldiers of 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry, are seeing signs that home may finally be just over the horizon. With their one-year tour here reaching an end, they are coming home — but not before a two-week election period that promises to test them as much as anything they've faced in their time here.

“We don't want **our** soldiers getting complacent,” said Lt. Col. William Salter, 1-7's commander. “The planning that's going on for redeployment is secondary to the mission we're conducting now, and **our** soldiers have been very good at recognizing that.”

Commanders and soldiers admit that's not an easy task. **It's human nature for soldiers who have spent nearly a year in a dangerous combat environment to think of home. [And also think very hard about not getting killed in a dirty war of conquest and occupation. Safety first. Time for search and evade?]**

“I'm sure everybody would like to be home. I know I would,” said Pfc. Marcus Harris, 21, of Seattle, a cavalry scout. “But we've got stuff to do, and we're not going to leave until it's done.”

Still, NCOs haven't been shy in recent days about handing out reminders — in the form of push-ups and leg lifts — that discipline hasn't lost its importance.

That's not to say a loss of focus has become a problem. It's “more a concern right now than an actual fact,” said 1st Sgt. Rodney Wilmore of 1-7's Blackhawk Troop. **[Happy face, happy talk, let's NOT says there's a little problem with discipline.]**

“Our soldiers understand that just because the deployment is nearing an end, that doesn't mean the mission isn't as important.” **[In your dreams. They're not your fucking soldiers, and they understand very well that there is no “mission,” besides doing Bush's Imperial dirty work. And they won't forget it, either. That lesson has been learned once and for all.]**

Watch Out For The Weasel Words

(European Stars and Stripes, January 25, 2005) To keep troops from spending what the Army found was an average of \$300 per year on their own equipment, the service is now issuing troops everything from improved helmets to seasonal boots. The Army plans to issue the gear to every soldier headed to Afghanistan, **and to as many troops as possible serving in Iraq. [Bush just placed a billion dollar order for new**

Presidential helicopters. So what isn't "possible" here? Why not? Fuck Bush and his helicopters. Let the asshole walk or crawl.]

Insurgent Ambush In South Baghdad Claims 25-Year-Old's Life



Courtesy Photo

1.31.05 By GILBERTO SALINAS, The Brownsville Herald

Joseph E. Rodriguez was counting the days before he would be back home with his family ready to start his second career.

His plan was to attend warrant officer school and train to be a pilot.

And he was only six weeks away from his dream.

Rodriguez, 25, of the U.S. Army 1st Cavalry, 8th Engineer Battalion, was killed Friday in south Baghdad after insurgents ambushed his convoy. Joseph Rodriguez is survived by his wife, Leslie, 27; his 2-year-old son, Ethen Michael, from Killeen; his father; and his mother, Gloria Nava of Las Cruces, N.M.

Although Rodriguez lived most of his childhood with his mother in New Mexico, he attended Sharp Elementary School for a year while living with his father in Brownsville. Rodriguez also spent time with his father in Brownsville during time off from school, his father said.

He died after a piece of shrapnel struck him in the back of his neck when his Humvee came under attack. He was the convoy's squad leader.

Member Of 39th Killed

January 31, 2005 Little Rock (AP)

A soldier from Oklahoma serving with the 39th Infantry Brigade was killed by a sniper in central Baghdad.

Specialist Lyle Rymer of Roland, Oklahoma, was killed Friday while guarding an area where engineers set up barricades. The 24-year-old Rymer was helping with preparations for Iraqi elections.

Rymer is survived by his wife, LaTisha; a four-year-old son, Shawn; and an infant daughter, Jasmine. He will be buried in Fort Smith National Cemetery.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Key Article: Making Sense Of The Election

Still, why the apparent difference geographically? I suggest we can explain these phenomena by political rather than religious influences. I think it is a gross error to portray Iraqi politics as being influenced primarily by religious or sectarian factors, but rather the other way round. Politics is using "religious forces" as convenient instruments under the present circumstances.

To get back to our point, the resistance is strongest in Baghdad and the more-developed central areas of Iraq, and other major urban centers like Basra and Amara in the south and Duhok in the Kurdish north. It is weakest still in rural areas...

January 31, 2005 Kelebdooni Anti-Allawi group

I think the apparent Shia-Sunni difference in voting trend is being misrepresented. Both the mainstream media along with the occupations' divisive plans and the so-called not-so-well-informed progressives unfortunately, will continue to misrepresent it in those terms. We need to be aware of playing into "their" hands.

It is easier and more natural to interpret voting trends in geographical and political rather than sectarian terms. I need to explain this by examples.

Turnout was extremely low in central areas altogether plus Basra marginally. It is easy to think of the almost total boycott of Ramadi & Sallahuddin provinces in Sunni terms alone, but this would be inaccurate.

Towns like Balad and Dijail (Shia) were not any different in total boycott from neighboring Samarra and Al-Dur (Sunni). There are towns that are predominantly Shia within the so-called Sunni triangle that behaved just like their Sunni neighbors.

Mosul and Kirkuk behaved similarly within their mostly Arab and Turkomen areas. Baquba is almost 50-50 with Kurdish minority. Again, Buhriz town (Shia) behaved like neighboring Baquba city itself (Sunni).

Baghdad has a small overall majority of Shia actually. Most areas are well integrated with a majority of this or that, apart from Sadr city that is clearly Shia. There were very slight differences in behavior in almost all areas. Moving furthest south to Basra (50-50), we observe similarity but to a lesser degree.

Consider that those areas contain about 60% of the population. With very little math, it can be seen that it must also include within it a large proportion of Shia and Kurds, as the Arab Sunnis cannot be more than 30% of the population by the most optimistic estimates.

Take Baghdad. Break the population (approx) down into 50% Shia, 40% Sunni, 10% Kurds & others. Did you get a turnout of 60%? Reliable accounts from the media and personal sources suggest 20% for Baghdad at most. What can we conclude from this?

Still, why the apparent difference geographically? I suggest we can explain these phenomena by political rather than religious influences. I think it is a gross error to portray Iraqi politics as being influenced primarily by religious or sectarian factors, but rather the other way round. Politics is using "religious forces" as convenient instruments under the present circumstances.

The occupation acted to dismantle all forms of political structure deliberately to install its own alternatives. It continues to thwart voices of civil groups (unions, professionals, academics) apart from those pre-prepared collaborator expatriates who came in on the US tanks. After banning the Baath party, they refused room to other expatriate parties that opposed the invasion, as well as some indigenous national-platform movements formed after the invasion.

The occupation is promoting the idea that Iraq is a collection of sects and ethnic groups, and denies a national unifying theme to further its aims of control.

Alternative religious and tribal structures, which are of secondary importance usually in a well-developed third-world country, thus emerged to the foreground of political life.

Old and newly formed religious structures (e.g. the association of Muslim scholars) are being used as alternative political arms by the various dissident elements, rather than for their inherently religious character.

To get back to our point, the resistance is strongest in Baghdad and the more-developed central areas of Iraq, and other major urban centers like Basra and Amara in the south and Duhok in the Kurdish north.

It is weakest still in rural areas of the south and Kurdish north (mainly rural), where other forces are at work more prominently, where archaic feudal, tribal and reactionary religious forces are being bolstered incessantly.

Counter influences in the south include the strong sectarian influence of the Sistani school, which although is anti-occupation; it nevertheless gives higher priority to sectarian rather than national interests.

There is also the influence of SCIRI and Dawa parties that are closely linked to Iran and using Sistani's influence for their objectives. The Kurdish north has been under the influence of the two reactionary feudal parties since 1991, which has been time enough thanks to US backing for practically total separation of the region from the rest of Iraq.

It is naturally a complex scene, as any country would be under such circumstances.

You cannot begin to understand it by reading the western media, even most of the anti-war advocates that are still influenced by the strong prevailing current of unavoidable oversimplification and deliberate misrepresentation.

Prisoner Uprising At Camp Bucca: 4 Dead

January 31, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-01-120

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- A riot at the Camp Bucca Theater Internment Facility shortly after noon, Jan.31, left four detainees dead and six injured.

The violence erupted after a routine search for contraband in one of the camp's 10 compounds. The facility's commander immediately deployed all available guards to the camp in an attempt to control the situation.

The riot quickly spread to three additional compounds, with detainees throwing rocks and fashioning weapons from materials inside their living areas. The four compounds involved in the riot house more than 2,900 of Camp Bucca's 5,300 detainees.

Guards attempted to calm the increasingly volatile situation using verbal warnings and, when that failed, by use of non-lethal force. After about 45 minutes of escalating danger, lethal force was used to quell the violence. **The situation quickly began to subside after the use of lethal force.**

“The US Is Behaving As If Every Sunni Is A Terrorist”

“We Will All Join The Resistance”

January 26, 2005 Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, The Guardian

For centuries they have comprised the ruling class, but since the fall of Saddam everything has changed for Iraq's Sunni Arabs. This weekend's elections are likely only to reinforce their disaffection, reports Ghaith Abdul-Ahad.

In Iraq - as is the case in most of the Muslim world - the Sunnis were always the natural-born leaders of the community. In Iraq's case this meant that they tended to look with a mixture of anxiety and scorn at the poor Shia in the south and the Kurds in the north; these fears and prejudices were exploited by those who came to control Iraq, from the Ottomans to Saddam via the British.

During four long centuries of Ottoman rule, the Sunni Arabs were automatically chosen to fill positions in the army and state. The British used the officers and statesmen already trained by the Ottomans to build the new country they named Iraq - especially when the Shia rebelled against them.

When the Americans toppled Saddam and disbanded the army and the reviled security services, which just happened to be the two largest employers of the Sunni community, they found themselves not only without leadership but disenfranchised and with a legitimate sense of persecution.

And their worst nightmare, the revenge of the Shia and Kurds, seemed ever closer as the state ministries were purged of Ba'athists, a policy perceived by many in the community as anti-Sunni. **"(The Americans) made every single mistake they could have thought of to alienate the Sunnis," said Janabi. "The US is behaving as if every Sunni is a terrorist."**

"When the Americans first came, all the tribal leaders wanted to jump on board the wagon - they all wanted money and contracts and jobs for their kids. It was us, the mujahideen who fired the first bullets," said a young Sunni cleric in Falluja, resting a Kalashnikov on his lap a few hours before the American attack on November.

To get a picture of how their politics have turned to violence, you must visit the neighbourhoods around Baghdad, such as the one in which five men, all in their early 30s, sit around in their safe house, weapons laid against the walls.

These are the insurgents that Americans call terrorists; their neighbours and families call them resistance; and they call themselves mujahideen, or holy warriors. They are Sunni Arabs. Two of them were working in Saddam's security service and the rest are normal people.

They say they are fighting the Americans because they are occupiers. They hate the Shia because they are backed by Iran, and they are killing the police because they are collaborators and because they are all Shia.

"Our main aim is to drive the Americans out and then everything will go back to normal, as it was before," said one of the men.

According to Janabi and other officials who have met with insurgents in an attempt to involve them in a political solution, more than 80% of the insurgency is based on the fear and sense of repression that the Sunni community is facing. It now manifests itself in a nationalist resistance movement that hasn't yet developed a political programme.

Having a tribal name that associated you with a Sunni-dominated area or tribe was for centuries a guarantee of access to the government and a good job, but these same names now land you in American custody if you happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

A widespread loathing of the Americans combined with a fear of Shia revenge is likely to lead to a very low turnout among Sunnis this weekend. For most, a Shia government is inevitable - and so, in turn, is the likelihood of further disturbance.

A senior moderate Sunni official who is running in next week's elections was asked what would happen if the Shia won a landslide victory. He replied: "We will all join the armed resistance."

Silence In Ramadi

31 January 2005 By Tony Perry The Los Angeles Times, RAMADI, Iraq

Most voters stayed at home despite U.S. promises to protect those who showed up to cast ballots.

By agreement with the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, the Marines did not enter the school polling place because they didn't want to give credibility to Sunni clerics' claim that the election was merely a way to ensure that the government would be run by "American puppets." So strict was the arms-length protocol that Marines who set up the cardboard voting booths Saturday were careful not to touch the boxes of ballots.

Still, Marine snipers were on rooftops. Concertina wire blocked off street access to the site to thwart car bombs. Squads of Marines waited in homes near the school, ready to respond to any attacks.

By midday it was apparent that the Sunni population was staying away from the polls.

Two female U.S. soldiers, assigned to search female voters, were told to return to the nearby house where they had been billeted. Bepo, a German shepherd dog trained to sniff explosives, had no one to sniff.

Children who had filled the nearby streets were largely absent, kept indoors by their parents. The only sound was the buzz of a U.S. unmanned surveillance plane looking for insurgents.

"For people who say they want their country back, they sure aren't taking the initiative," said Cpl. Francisco Ortega, 21, of Hanford, Calif. **[Wrong. Refusing to submit to Bush's election farce is taking the initiative, in a big way. Think it over.]**

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

In Mosul Elections, Football Wins

MOSUL, January 30 (IslamOnline.net)

Amid boycott calls from leading Sunni powers and scenes of deserted bullet-scarred polling stations, the majority of the city's population did not demonstrate any enthusiasm for the vote, the first in a half-century.

But many youths in this predominately Sunni city were busy kicking or carrying a ball for a fervent soccer match.

As soon as the dawn-to-dusk curfew imposed by Iraqi and US authorities ended at 6:00 a.m., football-frenzied youths fanned out across the city kicking off their matches in full passion and energy. Baghdad Street, one of the city's main streets, was teeming with footballers, who sought to capitalize on vehicles ban on election day.

"We have been dying for a soccer match for long and today is our day," Hadi, 25, told IslamOnline.net avidly.

"I have been on a two-day holiday and decided to go out with my friends to play soccer instead of staying home and follow up elections on TV," he added, taking a deep breath after an exhausting match.

His colleague Yasser Shaker, 28, ran out of steam following a seven-hour play. "I just can't see the point of holding such elections. I was totally left in the dark and hadn't got the faintest idea about any candidate. Football is much more interesting," he told IOL.

“Instead Of One Having One Torturer, Now We Have Four Torturers.”

January 30, 2005 Democracy Now

AMY GOODMAN: And this is Democracy Now! as we move from Kurdistan back to Baghdad, to get response from retired Iraqi engineer Ghazwan Al-Mukhtar, a retired Iraqi engineer speaking from his home in Baghdad.

Unemployment is very high; it's at about 60%. People are starving.

This is the basis for the resistance.

It's not the Mussabu Al Zaraqawi and Abu, I don't know who, or the terrorists coming from the outside of Iraq. It is the indigenous Iraqi resistance.

While we were told that Saddam Hussein was torturing us, we are finding after 22 months that the Americans are torturing us, the British are torturing us, the Danish are torturing us and now we discover that the Iraqi forces, the ING is torturing us.

So, instead of one having one torturer, now we have four torturers. And you want us to be happy with the election.

Exercise In Futility: Resistance Cells Come Back After 72 Hours

January 31, 2005 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times staff writer

Even after a successful raid, Lt. Col. William Salter said, it's difficult to know whether a mission has wiped out an insurgent cell, or merely dented it.

“A lot of times, we just don't know,” he said. A rebel group may disappear or break up, or take a month or more to recruit new members. **“But we have indications that insurgents have been able to reconstitute in as little as 72 hours,” he said.**

“It's hard to say, ‘We took down this cell, so attacks in this area will go down by X percent,’” said Capt. Dan Mark, commander of 1-7 Cav's Blackhawk Troop. “The satisfaction you try to take is in knowing that on that night, you got the bad guys.”

Four Injured In Australian Protests Of Iraq Election

[Thanks to Max Watts, who sent this in from Australia.]

31 January 2005 AFP

SYDNEY : Four people were injured, shots were fired, vehicles were damaged and a shop front was smashed during a wild brawl in Sydney between supporters and opponents of the election in Iraq, police said.

The disturbance, involving up to 100 people, happened late yesterday in the Sydney suburb of Auburn, home to a substantial community of Iraqi exiles and site of one of Australia's nine out-of-country polling stations for the historic elections.

Police superintendent Alan Harding said "On Saturday when voting was taking place police were advised of a plan by some members to hold a demonstration which we were told was protesting against the legitimacy of the election at a time when the protesters saw the country was under occupation."

Three people were released from hospital after treatment for minor injuries while a fourth was kept overnight for observation, a police statement said.

Police called to a disturbance at the same polling station on Saturday discovered an abandoned backpack that was searched by the bomb squad but found only to contain somebody's lunch.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

There It Is; The Whole Thing

31 January 2005 Bloomberg.com

Bush's policy sets up a "paradox," said Anthony Lake, the former national security adviser under President Bill Clinton, now a professor at Georgetown University in Washington.

"Our presence is fueling a nationalist reaction against us," Lake said in a telephone interview. "And so long as we are there in combat and obviously pulling the strings, which we are, we are going to be fueling the conflict that we say has to end before we can leave."

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.

A Recipe For More War

Iraqis may have voted yesterday. But they live in occupied territory, and the occupiers have other things on their minds than the basic wishes of the Iraqi people. That's not democracy. That's a recipe for more war. Bob Herbert, 31 January 2005, The New York Times

At The Doors Of Hell

January 29, 2005 RaedInTheMiddle.com

According to a poll conducted by US-based Zogby International, 82 per cent of Sunnis and 69 per cent of Shiites want US forces to withdraw "either immediately or after an elected government is in place."

The current early and premature Iraqi election is being marketed as THE event, THE peak, THE happening! as if everything will be over after the day of elections! just like in some stupid love movies where the curtain falls after the two lovers get married.

The romantic Iraqi elections will open the doors of hell.

If the majority of Shia in the southern governorates of Iraq were "waiting", they will stop waiting after elections are hi-jacked.

When the Kurds in the north have their "unofficial" referendum on "independence" from Iraq, Kurds and Arabs will stop "waiting" in the north too.

When Sunnis are completely excluded from the government, they will continue "not waiting".

What matters is not the election, what matters is what will happen next, when the Iraqi people start asking the occupying forces to leave the country, and leave their 14 permanent bases in Iraq.

When Shia start asking bushtani why is he siding with the occupation army...

These elections will open the doors of hell.

“Frauds” And “Stooges”

January 30, 2005 Eric Margolis, Toronto Sun

Will today's elections for 7,785 unknown candidates in violence-racked Iraq mark the dawn of genuine Mideast democracy, as U.S. President George W. Bush claims, or be another step deeper into the bloody quagmire in Mesopotamia?

First, no election held under a foreign military occupation resulting from an unjustified war is legal under international law. **During the Cold War, elections staged by the Soviets after invading Afghanistan, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were rightly denounced by the U.S. as "frauds" and the leaders elected as "stooges."**

Duh!

January 27 2005 blackcommentator.com

The world watches as armed-to-the-teeth U.S. troops stand on street corners, handing out election literature in someone else's country, after having flattened Fallujah, a city roughly the size of Newark, New Jersey.

Imagine if machinegun-toting Germans had performed similar electoral duties in occupied France, in 1942.

Would any civilized observer have considered such a process legitimate? Yet Bush bets that his atrocity will be seen as a light unto the nations - an amazing measure of the chasm that separates the Pirates from civilization.

“How Would You Feel?”

By Molly Ivins, AUSTIN, Texas

Why didn't the Iraqis welcome us with flowers? Wasn't Saddam Hussein about as nasty a dictator as you can find? Because we invaded their country and are now occupying it. **It is extremely difficult to convince people that you are killing them (and torturing them) for their own good.**

How would you feel?

Why U.S. Troops Are Dying

"Think of Iraq as a military base with a very large oil reserve underneath; you can't ask for better than that." -- Wall Street oil analyst Fadel Gheit. Linda McQuaig, Toronto Star, January 30, 2005

OCCUPATION REPORT

While Soldiers Died For Lack Of Armor, Bremer & Co. Thieves Blew Away \$9 Billion

January 30 By LARRY MARGASAK, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - The U.S. occupation authority in Iraq was unable to keep track of nearly \$9 billion it transferred to government ministries, which lacked financial controls, security, communications and adequate staff, an inspector general has found.

The findings were released Sunday by Stuart Bowen Jr., special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction. Bowen issued several reports on the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the U.S. occupation government that ruled Iraq from June 2003 to June 2004.

The inspector general said the occupying agency disbursed \$8.8 billion to Iraqi ministries "without assurance the moneys were properly accounted for."

Some of the transferred funds may have paid "ghost" employees, the inspector general found.

CPA staff learned that 8,206 guards were on the payroll at one ministry, but only 602 could be accounted for, the report said. At another ministry, U.S. officials found 1,417 guards on the payroll but could only confirm 642.

Australia Abandons Baghdad Embassy; Retreats To U.S. Military Base

31 January 2005 AlJazeera

Australia has abandoned its Baghdad embassy and shifted diplomatic staff to a US military base after a car bomb attack on the embassy compound on 19 January, Canberra said on Monday.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Camp Victory would be a temporary home while the Australian mission awaited relocation to a permanent embassy inside the heavily fortified Green Zone international sector of Baghdad.

Camp Victory, a major US facility close to Baghdad International Airport and the headquarters of both the US and Australian military, will accommodate ambassador Howard Brown and his two staff members for up to six months, Downer said.

Two Iraqis were killed and two Australian soldiers slightly injured in the 19 January attack in which a car bomb exploded outside the embassy's concrete blast barriers and alongside the Australian soldiers' accommodation.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Poll: Bush Losing Working Class War Support: Also Rural Areas & South

<p>Other groups that showed a significant decline were those with incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year, young men, those without college educations - groups very likely to know people serving in Iraq.</p>

Jan. 29, 2005 WASHINGTON (AP)

Some of President Bush's bedrock supporters - Southerners and rural residents - have lost confidence in the likelihood of a stable, democratic Iraq.

If it continues, the decline in optimism among groups that were part of Bush's base vote in November could make it harder to rally congressional support for his Iraq policies.

Some of the larger declines in optimism came among Southerners, Northeasterners, rural Americans and women 45 and over.

Other groups that showed a significant decline were those with incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year, young men, those without college educations - groups very likely to know people serving in Iraq.

“The trend in public opinion about the war has been steadily coming down for two years,” said Charles Franklin, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who has been closely watching the trends.

“The presidential campaign halted the slide. It tended to connect feelings about Iraq to how people were voting.

“Now that the election is over, people have a more independent view of the war,” Franklin said.

In the November elections, Bush won Southern states and rural areas with the support of about six in 10 voters. Both those groups have become less optimistic about the future of Iraq.

Almost a third of the troops killed came from the South, which has many military bases and a strong military tradition. Many of the dead and wounded came from small towns and rural areas across the country.

[Comments in brackets are from Shailmanman, Anti-Allawi group.]

Bush: US Will Pull Out If New Iraqi Leaders Request It

[How kind!]

1.28.05 WASHINGTON (AFP) - US troops will pull out of Iraq if [and only if?] the new leaders to be elected on Sunday requested it [and filled out proper forms], President George W. Bush said in an interview published by The New York Times, although he added [he would] that he expected the Iraqis to ask US troops to remain as helpers, not occupiers.

[And I thought they WERE helpers, NOT occupiers...]

"I've heard the voices **[psychotic?]** of the people that presumably will be in a position of responsibility after these elections, though you never know," Bush said.

[Yezz...presumably in a position of responsibility...is right.]

"But it seems like most of the leadership there understands that there will be a need for coalition troops at least until Iraqis are able to fight."

[But I thought the Iraqis WERE fighting...]

He said he believed "most of the leaders that are there understand that the coalition troops are very important to helping them provide the stability **[is that what you call it?]** necessary for people to gain confidence in their **[whose?]** government."

[Yez. Most of the leaders that are there understand. They do understand...especially allawi... very understanding.]

Received:

Men And Cowards

From: AH
To: GI Special
Sent: January 27, 2005
Subject: Men and Cowards

In Islam, there is an exception for really old people to not fight in the situation of war, if they really don't want to. Even the really old Muslims usually end up wanting to fight though too.

So, an Islamic army is always way more diverse than a western army of today. **In any Islamic army, you will easily find men in their fifties fighting along side of sixteen year old men. In fact, it would be straight up shameful for a man in his thirties of forties not to fight against an oppressor, unless there was some really good reason for it.**

Contrast that against all these 'Fox TV' arm-chair warriors over here that have instigated these recent wars because, they know that they will never be drafted or have to fight.

To most bush supporting Americans, saving a couple bucks on their taxes is more valuable than getting the neighbor kid all shot up in a foreign country.

REPLY:

*"I am sick and tired of war. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, for vengeance, for desolation. War is hell."
... William Tecumseh Sherman ...*

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