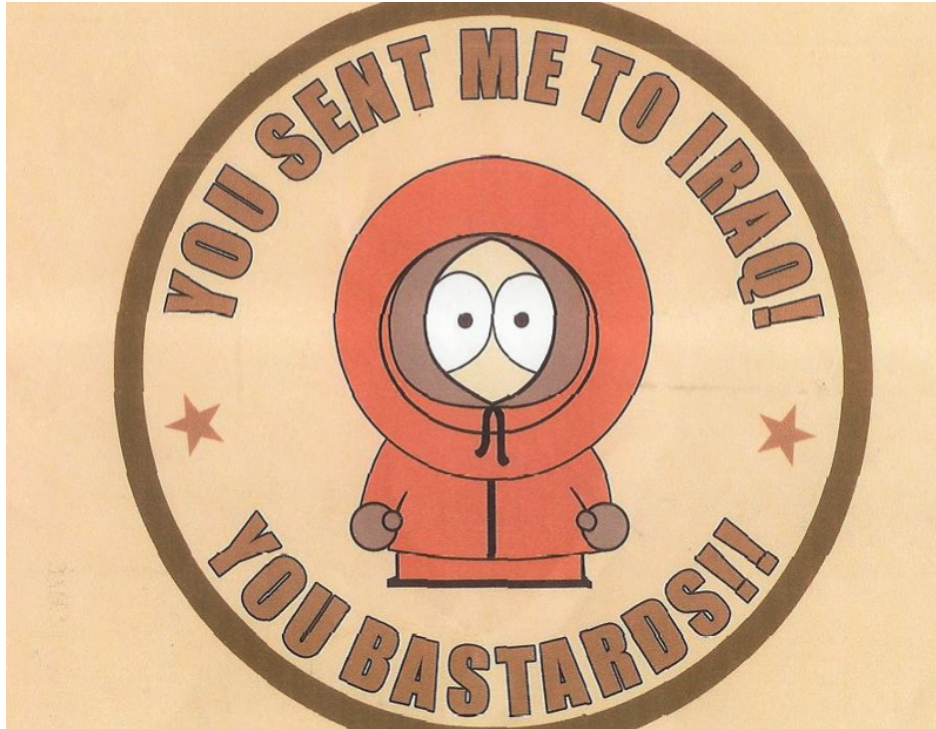


GI SPECIAL 3A90:



I ran into gamer-theorist-turned-military-consultant JC Herz at the Emerging Technology conference last month and she gave me a print out of this underground bit of infringing trench-art that's being circulated among soldiers stationed in Iraq. April 1, 2005 boingboing.net

**"He Thought It Was The
Wrong War For The
Wrong Reasons"
Fort Campbell-Based Soldier
Returns Home, Disappears**

"All he would tell me was that he was fired on and that he had to fire back," Tileston said. "But he told some of his friends that he had had to shoot people. He just wasn't prepared for that psychologically. He didn't deal with it very well."

Tileston said her son was never a very political person, but had made it clear after he came home that he opposed U.S. intervention in Iraq.

Apr. 04, 2005 Lexington Herald-Leader

STANFORD, Ky. - An Army specialist who served with the 101st Airborne Division has not been seen nor heard from by family since February 2004, just months after he returned from duty in Iraq.

Army Spec. Levi Moddrelle, 21, returned to Stanford in 2003 after serving as a Chinook helicopter mechanic near Mosul at the height of combat in Iraq.

His mother, Susan Tileston of Stanford, says her son may have been distressed by his experiences in combat around Mosul at the height of the war that he ran away from the Army to avoid the possibility of another tour in Iraq.

"At this point, I just want to know that he's OK," Tileston said. "It's terrible not knowing whether he might be hurt or lying in a ditch somewhere."

Army spokeswoman Martha Rudd confirmed last week that Moddrelle has been absent without leave from his unit at Fort Campbell - Bravo Co., 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment - since Jan. 31, 2004, and is now listed as a deserter.

Tileston filed a missing person report on her son with the Kentucky State Police. Tileston said banking records and other information suggests her son might be in Florida. Police said Moddrelle apparently received a traffic citation in Florida last fall, but provided no details, Tileston said.

Moddrelle didn't say much about his time in Iraq after returning to Kentucky in December 2003, his mother said. But Tileston said he did reveal that he was assigned to combat duty, and was in firefights involving convoys around Mosul, even though his primary training was in repairing helicopters.

"All he would tell me was that he was fired on and that he had to fire back," Tileston said. "But he told some of his friends that he had had to shoot people. He just wasn't prepared for that psychologically. He didn't deal with it very well."

Tileston said her son was never a very political person, but had made it clear after he came home that he opposed U.S. intervention in Iraq.

"He thought it was the wrong war for the wrong reasons," she said.

Kimberly Smith of Lexington, a former neighbor whose son is a close friend of Moddrelle, said Moddrelle spent a few days at her home just before he disappeared.

"Levi is so intelligent it's amazing," Smith said. "But you could tell something was wrong. He was sent over there to work on helicopters, and he ended up shooting people. Evidently, it must have traumatized him."

Tileston said that when she talked with Moddrelle by phone on Feb. 2, 2004, he told her he would drive home to Stanford that night. But he never arrived, and she hasn't heard from him since.

"I just hope someone will tell him to call or write his mother," she said.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT 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)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Tal Afar, Another Wounded

04 April 2005 Aljazeera+agencies

The US military disclosed on Monday that armed men shot dead a US soldier and wounded another in the northern Iraqi town of Tal Afar on Saturday.

Tal Afar, west of Mosul on the road to the Syrian border, has seen frequent attacks.

1st COSCOM SOLDIER KILLED BY IED

April 3, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-04-03C

One 1st COSCOM Soldier was killed when an IED detonated around 6:45 p.m. on April 3. The attack occurred near Bayji. Coalition Forces have secured the site and are investigating.

Two Local Soldiers Wounded

04-04-2005 KTBS 3

Two national guardsmen from the Shreveport-based 1/156th Armor Battalion were wounded in a series of attacks by insurgents in Baghdad over the weekend.

Staff Sgt. Michael McCrary of Shreveport suffered serious wounds to his face, head and jaw, as well as a broken arm, his wife, Michelle, said.

Sgt. Gary Bourgeois of Bossier City suffered a badly sprained wrist, said his wife, Amy.

More than 40 U.S. soldiers were wounded Saturday during a series of coordinated attacks in the Abu Ghraib neighborhood of Baghdad.

Casualties In Second Abu G Resistance Attack

04 April 2005 Aljazeera+agencies & (AFP) & Apr 04, 2005 By MARIAM FAM (AP)

The Abu Ghraib prison, west of Baghdad, has been hit by a blast for the second time in less than 48 hours, causing casualties among US forces.

Aljazeera has learned that a bomber detonated his explosive-laden car at the main gate of the prison on Monday.

Sources from the Abu Ghraib area told Aljazeera that five Iraqis were injured in addition to US casualties.

Iraq's interior ministry said the blast was caused by a car bomb, but a US military spokesman said it was probably a roadside bomb and was awaiting more details.

The U.S. military said the attackers on Saturday used a car bomb, gunfire, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

The military said the insurgents staged simultaneous assaults on multiple locations at the prison, focusing on two guard towers and then using a car bomb to try to penetrate a gate.

Combat helicopters helped push back the attack.

A statement by insurgents had done reconnaissance work and gathered intelligence "from our sources among the enemy" before the attack.

The statement, posted on a Web site that regularly carries Islamic material, claimed "snipers" fired more than 39 Katyusha rockets at U.S. forces before militants detonated several car bombs at the prison's main gates.

Wounded insurgents either escaped on their own or were dragged away by other militants.

Some Iraqi lawmakers have called for the release of the prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the National Assembly's newly elected speaker, Hajim al-Hassani, told Al-Jazeera television the topic will be among the first discussed by lawmakers.

Fighting In Baghdad

04 April 2005 Aljazeera+agencies

Fierce clashes erupted between US forces and armed fighters in al-Ghazaliya neighbourhood, west of Baghdad, on Monday.

US military vehicles poured into the area, closing off all connecting roads, while military helicopters were seen flying overhead.

TROOP NEWS

Radcliff Soldier Earns Purple Heart; "I'll Never Be Completely Normal Again."

04/04/05 News-Enterprise (Kentucky)

Dexter Pitts doesn't look like a guy who's had nine surgeries in the past three months. The scar on his left arm is small compared to the pain he had to go through after getting it.

Pitts, a private first class with the 10th Mountain Division, 2nd Brigade, Alpha Company, was wounded Jan. 2 in Iraq when a roadside bomb detonated near his vehicle.

He returned from Iraq shortly after his injury and spent his recovery time at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He returned to Radcliff at the beginning of March, but left for Walter Reed Sunday for additional treatment.

"It still hurts to think about that pain," Pitts said, recalling the incident.

Pitts, 20, joined the Army in 2003, after graduating from North Hardin High School. He finished basic training in November and married his high school sweetheart, Deandra, a week later.

He was stationed at Fort Drum, N.Y. for about seven months before deploying to Iraq on June 15, 2004.

His division was patrolling Abu Ghraib on Jan. 2 when the improvised explosive device wounded Pitts.

Pitts finished his turn as guard, and slid into the driver's seat of his vehicle. He remembers that the air was so thick with dust and dirt that he could taste it. He doesn't remember the roadside bomb exploding just feet from the door of his Humvee.

"I heard a loud ring, and a little wheezing," he said. "The whole left side of my body was paralyzed with pain. I thought I was dead or getting ready to die."

But Pitts' fellow soldiers pulled him out of the vehicle, all the time telling him he would be OK.

"I thought they were lying," he said. "I've never been so scared in my life. I thought about my wife and my family. It was pain like I'd never felt before in my life."

Pitts was transferred to Landstuhl, Germany, where doctors put plates, screws and a metal rod into his left arm.

Meanwhile, in Radcliff, his wife and mother, Idella, got a phone call from a chaplain.

"It was terrifying," Idella Pitts said. "It was the worst phone call I ever got."

The chaplain couldn't tell Deandra much information, which made it more frustrating. Eventually she was able to speak to her husband.

"He sounded hurt," she said. "It was hard."

Pitts' left arm had been broken in three places, his elbow and both bones in his forearm. He was struck with shrapnel in his back. Debris from the blast hit his face, chipping some of his teeth. The entire left side of his body ached with severe pain.

After a short stay in Germany, he was transported to Walter Reed, where he would stay for nearly two months. His wife was by his side the entire time.

"I hated that there wasn't much I could do," Deandra said.

Pitts had trouble sleeping and suffered from a minor bout of depression. He was in pain for almost the entire time he was at Walter Reed.

While in the hospital, Pitts received a Purple Heart, awarded to soldiers wounded in combat.

"I mean, it sucks I had to get it, but it's something pretty special," he said.

Pitts has so far had nine surgeries on his arm. His appointment today at Walter Reed will determine if more are needed. He expects that the Army will eventually medically discharge him from service.

It's hard to be at home while the rest of his unit is still fighting, he said. He said he was blessed because he wasn't more seriously wounded or killed, but he feels guilty when he sees the soldiers at Walter Reed who are missing limbs.

"I have friends still over there working hard," he said. "There's a lot of guilt."

The incident changed Pitts, he said. Loud noises startle him, and sometime when he's driving down the road in Radcliff, he'll find himself watching the sides of the street for roadside bombs. Then he remembers he doesn't have to do that here.

"I'm not the same person I was before," he said. "Hopefully I'll be back to somewhat normal soon, but I'll never be completely normal again."

Denton, Texas Stands Up

[Thanks to David Honish, who sent this in.]

March 20, 2005 By Dave Moore, Denton Record Chronicle



At the Courthouse on the Square Saturday, Vietnam-era veteran David Honish protests the war in Iraq during a rally marking the second anniversary of its beginning. DRC/Barron Ludlum

A second year has passed for U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq.

War protesters in Denton said they fear they will be demonstrating against the U.S. presence there for years to come.

"We're digging in for the long haul," said Steve Ivy, who was among about 60 people who attended an anti-war rally at the Courthouse on the Square on Saturday, the second anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. "I'm concerned that we'll be here 10 years from now, unless something changes. We'll be fighting these wars forever."

Ivy, who carried a skull-and-crossbones flag to characterize America's foreign policy, said he fears that as petroleum grows scarcer and U.S. dependence remains strong, the United States will continue to wage wars to protect its economic interests.

Ivy said he remains a patriot, but he can't remain silent when "it's clear that we're killing people for oil."

The protest was peaceful and occurred mostly on the Square, except for a half-hour march around the downtown area, which included playing drums, yelling anti-war slogans and getting stares from curious onlookers.

Signs read "Torture is not a family value" and "100,000 Iraqis killed." Marchers also carried replicas of two black caskets, symbolizing the deaths of U.S. troops and Iraqis.

"I think the war is wrong," said downtown resident Nan Miller. "I think the current administration didn't have the sophistication or the finesse to negotiate the situation instead of going to war."

Down the street, another resident mumbled "get a life" when the marchers passed him by.

Peace Action Denton and the Peace House organized the event, which attracted members from Veterans For Peace, as well.

"Attacking Iraq after 9-11 is like attacking Canada after Pearl Harbor," said David Honish, 50, who obtained the rank of sergeant by the time he left the Army in 1976. Honish said he served in a military hospital in the U.S. in his tour of duty, which began in 1973.

"I would hope that the government would have learned from Vietnam not to use the military to execute a political or diplomatic mission," he said of the war in Iraq.

Fellow military veteran and Denton resident Dan Burnam said war supporters are using the recent Iraqi election to justify the invasion.

"You don't have pre-emptive strikes, because intelligence can be wrong," said Burnam, 48. "Don't mislead us when you're sending our children and brothers and sisters to war."

The Denton protest forced the regular Saturday Acoustic Lawn Jam to move to the opposite side of the courthouse grounds.

"I don't have anything to say about that," said 77-year-old fiddle player Buck Ragsdale. "We just get together and play music."



Photo: David Honish

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.

DoD Won't Fight For Help For Reservists Who Lose Civilian Pay Because Bill May Undermine Active-Duty Morale (!)

April 04, 2005 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

The Defense Department remains reluctant to endorse any initiative that uses federal funding to make up salary losses for mobilized reservists because of fears it would end up hurting the morale of active-duty forces.

Charles S. Abell, the principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said the Pentagon is studying the finances of mobilized National Guard and reserve members to get a better idea about the scope of the problem.

A frequently cited study by the Government Accountability Office found that about 40 percent of Guard and reserve members lose money when activated, while about one-third make more from the military than they do in their civilian jobs, and the rest break even.

[So, active duty troops in Iraq, working alongside mercenaries getting +\$1000 a week free and clear, are happy about that, but if some poor fuck called up from the Reserves or National Guard gets a few dollars to help keep his mortgage payments up and his family in food, the active duty troop will have a morale crisis?

[What lying, inane bullshit. You want good morale? Get the troops out of Bush's losing Imperial war in Iraq right now.]

Rose Gentle, Mother Of Soldier Killed In Iraq, Refused Entry To British Labour Party Conference

3.12.05 Socialist Worker (UK)

Rose Gentle is the mother of soldier Gordon Gentle, who was killed in Iraq last year. She has campaigned for British troops to be withdrawn from Iraq and helped set up Military Families Against the War.

New Labour refused Rose entry to the Scottish Labour Party conference in Dundee. She told Socialist Worker what happened.

I wanted to get into the Scottish Labour Party conference to hear what was said about Iraq. I phoned to ask whether I could come in and was told to bring some ID. I didn't give my name that time.

I phoned again and told them my name and that I was from Military Families Against the War. They said there was no way I would get in.

I don't see why I couldn't go in — after all Gordon did serve in the British army under this government. It was all because it was me — because I have been outspoken about what has happened. The Labour Party didn't want me in. A lot of people have been very annoyed that I didn't get in.

I went and joined the demonstrators outside the conference. I got a better welcome there.

After Tony Blair left the Scottish Labour Party conference he went to another meeting. I went there too and shouted to him, "Mr Blair, when are you going to meet me?"

He just turned his head and walked past. He's a coward. He won't meet me. I've got a lot of questions I'd like to ask him, like why did my son only get six months training before he was sent to Iraq and why did he send the boys in there.

People have been stopping me in the streets to say well done for my campaign to bring the troops home. Just this morning a young girl jumped out of her car, shook my hand and told me to keep going.

I have been getting messages of support from everywhere. I get around 30 emails a day from soldiers and other people. I have spoken to soldiers and their parents, who have been supportive.

I'm worried Blair will send the boys into Iran or Syria next. We have to keep putting the pressure on. I am doing meetings to get people out on Saturday 19 March. I'm saying that we can't give in to Blair and we can't vote for him.

I will be there to protest when George Bush comes to Scotland for the G8 summit in July as well.

March Army & Army Reserve Recruiting A "Dismal" Failure

April 04, 2005 By Jane McHugh, Army Times staff writer

Just like Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey predicted, the Army failed to drum up enough new soldiers in March to meet its monthly recruiting mission of 6,800.

According to figures released Monday by the Army Recruiting Command, only 4,650 new soldiers were accessed, making a dismal 68 percent of the monthly mission — the lowest of any month so far in fiscal 2005.

The Army Reserve fared worse, achieving just more than 50 percent of its mission, managing 861 new soldiers against a goal of 1,600.

Recruiting-wise, March was a repeat of February, only worse.

From Feb. 1 to 28, the Regular Army accessed 5,114 against a mission of 7,050, and the Army Reserve, 990 versus 1,912 — about 75 percent of the mission for both components.

So far this fiscal year, the Army is nearly 4,000 behind its year-to-date goal of almost 36,000. And the Army Reserve is nearly 1,380 behind its year-to-date mission of 7,830, according to the new figures from the Recruiting Command.

Capitalism At Work:

**AT&T Tried To Blackmail Troops To
Get More Money:
Prepaid Phone-Card Rates Won't
Increase — For Now**

March 28, 2005 By Karen Jowers, Army Times staff writer

A ruling against AT&T requiring the company to pay up to \$160 million in fees dating back to 1999 should not result in higher prices for prepaid phone cards, Federal Communications Commission officials said.

But AT&T contended before the ruling that, if required to pay the fees, it would have to raise rates on phone cards sold to deployed U.S. service members by as much as 20 percent. An AT&T spokeswoman, Claudia Jones, said, "AT&T officials "are deeply disappointed" in the decision.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell sharply criticized AT&T's efforts to shield its phone card revenues from universal service fees and its lobbying effort, which involved Pentagon officials and military advocacy groups.

"AT&T has engaged in a campaign to suggest that consumer rates would rise 20 percent or more if carriers are required to pay their fair share," Powell said.

"They have gone so far as to take the extraordinary step of conscripting consumers into a lobbying effort directed at this commission and members of Congress. **Shamelessly, they trumpet the impact of this decision on our soldiers serving in Iraq.**

"**What is remarkable about this allegation is that other carriers are offering comparable rates to people serving in the military ... without taking funds from our rural universal service program or programs designed to help low-income individuals.**"

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“We Rejected Saddam’s Oppression, So How Could We Work With An Occupation?” Resistance Leaders Speak In London

We are not against the American people, or the British people or other peoples. These people went out and protested and we respect them for that.

2 April 2005 Socialist Worker (UK)

Sheikh Hassan al-Zarqani

Sheikh Hassan al-Zarqani is the foreign affairs spokesperson for Moqtada al-Sadr, the rebel Iraqi Shia cleric. Sadr’s Mahdi Army launched an armed uprising against the US occupation of Iraq in April 2004. Sheikh al-Zarqani lives in exile in Lebanon after the US issued a warrant for his arrest. He represented Moqtada al-Sadr’s movement at the Cairo Conference.

The situation with the occupation is very difficult. Human rights are under threat everywhere in Iraq. Death or near-fatal injury is a constant threat for ordinary, innocent people — children and old people, women and men.

Millions are unemployed, there is no security, services are non-existent and electricity is just a dream. Health care has become a fairy story.

Every aspect of life, all the basic necessities, are in a real state of crisis in Iraq. If that’s the situation in Baghdad, the capital, think how bad it must be in the provinces. We have to end the occupation, in all its forms, even if it becomes a “peaceful” occupation.

There were some in Iraq at the time of the invasion who were tricked by the occupiers’ slogans of freedom and democracy, and who wanted to get rid of Saddam Hussein’s regime.

So they welcomed the invasion. But as time passed it became clear that the occupation is worse than Saddam’s oppression. We rejected Saddam’s oppression, so how could we work with an occupation which has been more damaging to the Iraqi people?

I have a message to the British people. In recent times, it has been possible to distinguish between two groups in Britain.

There is an official, government position, which has used terrorism against the Arab people and the Iraqis in particular. Then there are British people of good conscience who reject intervention in other countries.

We have seen there are many more decent people in Britain than we could have ever imagined, and we've seen very positive steps by those who oppose the occupation of Iraq. There were bigger demonstrations in Britain than in some of the Arab countries. This tells us that we should respect those who are responsible, despite the policy of their government.

We hope the anti-war movement will spread, gain a clear voice in government, and so change our view of Britain, which unfortunately we see locked into a "fateful triangle" with the US and Israel.

Sheikh Majid al-Gaoud

Sheikh Majid al-Gaoud is the assistant general secretary of the National Front of Iraqi Intellectuals. This is the main political grouping which led demonstrations on 13 November 2003 from Ramadi in Anbar province to Firdaws Square in Baghdad calling for an end to the occupation.

Our organisation has lost many martyrs. **The general secretary, Dr Salam al-Gaoud is in prison, and the deputy general secretary, Mahmud al-Samarra has been in jail since the beginning of the occupation.**

I am from Ramadi, but we were in Fallujah during the first battle and the second battle which is still going on. The Americans are preventing journalists from entering.

The occupiers have paid a heavy price in Fallujah and they have lost the political battle by imposing a failed government on us. They have also suffered heavy casualties.

The Iraqi resistance has its own tactics and its own policies, and is increasing its resources. I think that the future is for the resistance. This resistance is part of what will be the future government of Iraq.

We hear a lot about problems between Sunni and Shia Muslims but this is a lie. Iraqis are a mixture of many different religious and ethnic groups.

The Sunnis and the Shias are one. Nor do we have any problem with our brothers the Kurds, the Christians or the Turkmen. **There is a difference between ordinary Shias and the exiles who came in the back of the US tanks.**

The destruction of Fallujah saddened the Iraqi people. Children, women and old people were killed. Thousands of houses were completely flattened, and many others were partially destroyed. Up to 80 percent of the city has been destroyed. Then there is the pollution. The US used banned weapons. They have used these weapons across the Anbar province. We hear propaganda which says they want to make the whole of Anbar like Fallujah.

We are not against the American people, or the British people or other peoples. These people went out and protested and we respect them for that.

We have every respect for people who are defending the free people of the world. I greet our British friends who came out and demonstrated and say thanks for what they've done.

We oppose the criminal acts which have taken place in Iraq, such as the kidnapping of journalists, which present a distorted picture of Iraq and its capital Baghdad, which is known as "Dar-al-Salam" — the house of peace.

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.

Shia Clergy Speak Of Overthrowing The Government

"If there was a choice for protests, the protests wouldn't be typical. They would be protests in the millions," Rubaii said Saturday from Fayadh's headquarters in this sacred city. "In other countries, thousands of protesters can overthrow a government."

April 3, 2005 By Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service

NAJAF, Iraq, April 2 -- The protracted delay in naming a new Iraqi government has alarmed the country's powerful Shiite Muslim clergy, who worry that growing popular frustration may endanger the government's legitimacy, senior clerics and their representatives say.

As a last resort, some said they may support mass protests as a way to break the impasse.

For now, the clerics are urging patience, and many said they expect a limited breakthrough as early as this week, perhaps Sunday. But one senior representative, echoing the suspicions of others, suggested the United States was at least partially at fault for the deadlock and warned of more forceful intervention by the most senior clergy, collectively known as the marjaiya, if delays persist.

"In the event they cannot form a leadership for the assembly and a government, the marjaiya will not remain with its hands shackled. It will not simply stand and watch. It must do something," said Ali Rubaii, the spokesman for Grand Ayatollah Ishaq Fayadh,

one of the four most senior clerics in Najaf who operate under the leadership of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani.

"If there was a choice for protests, the protests wouldn't be typical. They would be protests in the millions," Rubaii said Saturday from Fayadh's headquarters in this sacred city. "In other countries, thousands of protesters can overthrow a government."

"The street is uncomfortable," said Mohammed Hussein Hakim, the son and spokesman of another senior ayatollah, Mohammed Saeed Hakim. "

Sistani's rivals within the Shiite community, meanwhile, have sought to portray the delay as a setback for him. "Where is the rule of the majority?" taunted Sheik Nasser Saadi in a Friday sermon in nearby Kufa to followers of Moqtada Sadr, a young, militant cleric whose movement has challenged Sistani's leadership.

There remains as well a deep, if not always publicly stated, suspicion of American intentions. Some clerics see the U.S.-backed transitional law that serves as an interim constitution as a way of denying Shiites their power as a majority. Under the law, some crucial decisions require a two-thirds vote or unanimity within a three-member presidential council.

"The political crisis will continue, and the result will perhaps be that Shiites will use the weapon of millions protesting," said Mohammed Taqi Mudarassi, a senior ayatollah based in Karbala, Iraq's other sacred Shiite city. "The street only needs a match."

Mudarassi said he was not necessarily calling for protests. But he suggested that the Shiite majority should take matters into its own hands: Discard the transitional law and name a government on its own. "It's a scenario that's better than violence," he said.

Hakim and Rubaii, the spokesmen for two other ayatollahs, said it was not yet time for a demonstration, fearing it could spiral out of control.

The last mass protests were organized in January 2004 in Baghdad and Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, when the Shiite clergy and religious parties were pushing the U.S. occupation to organize elections to choose a government.

"This will mark the last stage," Hakim said. "People will impose their will directly."

The debate, though, demonstrates the confidence the clergy have in their ability to direct popular sentiments and in their own capacity to step in at decisive moments in the political process.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Challenges Petras View Of Intellectuals

From: JM
To: GI Special
Sent: Monday, April 04, 2005 12:34 AM

I cannot agree with James Petras in his article "Intellectuals Never Sell-Out, They Are Rented To The Strongest Party."

In poor countries it's the intellectuals who bring change. In the wealthy countries the rich are completely out of touch, with the poor, and the poor usually want to be rich. It's this situation that causes the problem -not being an intellectual. Some intellectuals, who come from wealthy homes, want to bring improvements -but they have never been poor - so cannot understand poverty. Some intellectuals came out of poverty - but in order to be accepted, by the wealthy class, forget their origins. This is due to the hideous class system - not being an intellectual.

Wilberforce, who worked to end slavery, Marx, Lenin, Ghandi were all intellectuals from fairly well-off, to wealthy, families. What counted was their ability, to see what was wrong and, their strength of will -to fight for what they believed to be right. Ghandi lived amongst the untouchables so he could understand their problems. Marx was reduced to poverty by opposition to what he said.

What is needed is more intellectuals of clear vision and an end to the class system, and greed, that breeds complete indifference to the plight of others. It's the system that's wrong and in order to change it something has to happen to alter way people think. Visiting war zones, and very poor countries, helps.

The inhabitants of developed countries normally only travel to the third world as tourists, staying in tourist areas, shielded from seeing how the local people live. An increasing number, of young people from wealthy, intellectual, backgrounds are going there as aid workers and human shields. Some are seeing war as servicemen who joined the reserve to pay for an education. This will be very good for the future if these young people are strong enough to resist being corrupted by wealth as they grow older. Many of these young people are also active members of the anti-war movement and contradict what James Petras says.

There are almost no anti-war people in world parliaments or leading political parties. This should be attacked as a political failure not an intellectual one. ---- J

P.S. I support what Stan Goff and Cindy Sheehan said in the same issue of G.I. Special.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Camp Bucca Prison Uprising; Clash Leaves 16 Wounded

Apr 04, 2005 By MARIAM FAM (AP)

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Prisoners at Iraq's largest detention facility protested the transfer of several detainees deemed "unruly" by authorities, throwing rocks and setting tents on fire in a disturbance that injured four guards and 12 detainees, the military said Monday.

Friday's protest at Camp Bucca - which holds about 6,000 prisoners, nearly two-thirds of all those in Iraq -- caused only minor injuries before being brought under control, authorities said.

Murtadha al-Hajaj, an official at radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's office in the southern city of Umm Qasr, near Camp Bucca, said several al-Sadr supporters were wounded during the confrontation. He said they were protesting a lack of access to medical treatment and claimed U.S. guards opened fire, although he did not know if they wounded prisoners.

"Traitor" Picked As Parliament Speaker

03 April 2005 Aljazeera.net

Iraqi lawmakers have ended days of bickering by electing a Sunni Arab as their parliament speaker, clearing a hurdle that has held up the formation of a new government.

Some criticized Sunday's choice of Industry Minister Hajim al-Hassani, one of only 17 Sunni Arabs in parliament, saying the new speaker didn't represent the Sunni community.

Usama Abdulfatah, a 30-year-old architect, said al-Hassani's support last year of the US assault on the militant stronghold of Falluja showed he "does not have beliefs and will never do anything against his benefit."

Even though his Iraqi Islamic Party pulled out of the government over the issue, al-Hassani refused to leave his job.

"How could we just trust such a traitor?" Abdulfatah asked.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

CIA'S SOURCE OF PREWAR INTELLIGENCE SAYS BRAD AND JEN ARE STAYING TOGETHER

New Statement From 'Curveball' Raises Eyebrows

April 3, 2005 The Borowitz Report

The Central Intelligence Agency's primary source of prewar intelligence about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction made headlines again today, telling People magazine that actors Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston are staying together.

"I am telling you that Brad and Jennifer have never been happier with their marriage," said the source, codenamed Curveball. "I would be willing to go to war over that."

When asked about reports that Mr. Pitt and Ms. Aniston are heading for divorce court, he replied, "Who are you going to believe - 'Entertainment Tonight,' or Curveball?"

Mr. Curveball, who reportedly swigged from a bottle of Jack Daniels during his rambling, often incoherent interview, also predicted that the film "Guess Who" would sweep next year's Academy Awards and that Mickey Rourke would be named People's "Sexiest Man Alive."

He refused to indicate how he had obtained any of this information, saying only, "My reception has improved greatly since I started wrapping my head in aluminum foil."

The latest pronouncements from Mr. Curveball have fueled criticism of the CIA for relying on him as its sole source of prewar intelligence, prompting former CIA director George Tenet to hold a rare press conference outside his home on Sunday.

"Contrary to the reports, Curveball was not our only source of intelligence," Mr. Tenet said. "We also had two other sources, codenamed Whackjob and Nutcase."

Elsewhere, a U.S. military spokesman said that an insurgent attack on Abu Ghraib prison on Saturday was "an isolated incident," and that in the future all violence would be confined to inside the prison.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD TORTURERS!



CLASS WAR NEWS

“The Knife-Edge On Which We Are Poised”

The distinguished economic analyst William Greider recently noted, "Any profligate debtor who insults his banker is unwise, to put it mildly. ... American leadership has ... become increasingly delusional - I mean that literally - and blind to the adverse balance of power accumulating against it."

31 March 2005 By Chalmers Johnson, In These Times

In 2004, the United States imported a record \$617.7 billion more than it exported, a 24.4 percent increase over 2003.

The annual deficit with China was \$162 billion, the largest trade imbalance ever recorded by the United States with a single country. Equally important, as of March 9,

2005, the public debt of the United States was just over \$7.7 trillion and climbing, making us easily the world's largest net debtor nation. Refusing to pay for its profligate consumption patterns and military expenditures through taxes on its own citizens, the United States is financing these outlays by going into debt to Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and India.

This situation has become increasingly unstable, as the United States requires capital imports of at least \$2 billion per day to pay for its governmental expenditures.

Any decision by Asian central banks to move significant parts of their foreign exchange reserves out of the dollar and into the euro or other currencies in order to protect themselves from dollar depreciation will likely produce a meltdown of the American economy.

On February 21, 2005, the Korean central bank, which has some \$200 billion in reserves, quietly announced that it intended to "diversify the currencies in which it invests." The dollar fell sharply and the US stock market (although subsequently recovering) recorded its largest one-day fall in almost two years. **This small incident is evidence of the knife-edge on which we are poised.**

Japan possesses the world's largest foreign exchange reserves, which at the end of January 2005 stood at around \$841 billion. But China also sits on a \$609.9 billion pile of US cash, earned from its trade surpluses with us. Meanwhile, the American government insults China in every way it can, particularly over the status of China's breakaway province, the island of Taiwan.

The distinguished economic analyst William Greider recently noted, "Any profligate debtor who insults his banker is unwise, to put it mildly. ... American leadership has ... become increasingly delusional - I mean that literally - and blind to the adverse balance of power accumulating against it."

These deficits and dependencies represent unusual economic statistics for a country with imperial pretensions. In the 19th century, the British Empire ran huge current account surpluses, which allowed it to ignore the economic consequences of disastrous imperialist ventures like the Boer War. On the eve of the First World War, Britain had a surplus amounting to 7 percent of its GDP. America's current account deficit is close to 6 percent of our GDP.

MORE:

And Now For The Bad News

Average weekly earnings nudged up \$1.35 for the month - or 0.3 percent. For the first quarter of the year, earnings are up just 0.5 percent, not enough to keep up with inflation, Burtless noted.

01 April 2005 By Jonathan Weisman, The Washington Post

Gary Burtless, a labor economist at the Brookings Institution, noted that since the last economic peak in 2000, a striking demographic shift in the labor market has occurred.

There has been a 3.4-percentage-point increase in the number of 55-to-64-year-olds holding jobs, but a 2-percentage-point decline in the work-force participation of 25-to-34-year-olds. Younger workers, aged 20-34, have left the labor market in droves, Burtless said.

The post-World War II economy has never seen declines like that among younger workers, he said.

Average weekly earnings nudged up \$1.35 for the month - or 0.3 percent. For the first quarter of the year, earnings are up just 0.5 percent, not enough to keep up with inflation, Burtless noted.

Families Give Up Food, Heat In Desperate Efforts To Keep Health Insurance

04 April 2005 By Daniel Costello, The Los Angeles Times

Terri Matthews, a teacher's aide in East Palo Alto, spends \$613 a month for her family's health insurance - 24% of her take-home pay. Rather than go without coverage, she skimps on other needs; her heat has been turned off twice in the last year and she recently had to drop her car insurance.

Peggy McPhee, a 52-year-old bridal dressmaker in Santa Rosa, spends more than a quarter of her salary on health insurance. She's recently given up her cellphone, buys clothing only at garage sales and no longer turns on her heat in the winter.

Ron Dybas, of Los Banos, chose to close his lumber company two months ago after 17 years in business. He says he took a job with a company that offers benefits after he no longer could afford to spend nearly a third of his income insuring his family.

Such sacrifices for health insurance are far from rare. As employees continue to absorb more of their healthcare costs, an increasing number of people - even healthy ones - are drastically altering their lives simply to hold on to their insurance. **They are delaying homeownership, putting off saving for their children's education, or otherwise sacrificing their financial security to guard against a catastrophic medical bill.**

Many people, especially lower- and middle-class workers and the chronically ill, are beginning to spend a once-unimaginable share of their income on health coverage. In some cases, health costs have become the single biggest expense in family budgets.

Between 2000 and 2004, the number of people spending more than 25% of their earnings on healthcare - a figure normally associated with homeownership - rose by nearly a fourth to 14.3 million people, according to Washington, D.C.-based Families USA, a healthcare advocacy group. **Over the same period, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, health premiums rose an average of 59%; federal data show the average employee's earnings rose 12.4%.**

"Healthcare has always been expensive. But it's become more than that now," says Glenn Melnick, a Rand Corp. economist and a USC professor of healthcare finance. "How much of someone's income is too much to spend on healthcare? 10%? 30%?"

"More people are nearing a tipping point," says Mark Goldberg, senior vice president for policy at the National Coalition on Health Care, an organization of businesses, provider groups and pension funds that advocates for affordable healthcare. "Eventually, something has to give."

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'Digging Our Graves With Their Mouths'

From: artisan
To: GI Special
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Check out this news story: This could be one way to avoid the mistakes made in Chile prior to (US gov sponsored) Pinochet shooting his way to power re: GIS 3A88 'Digging Our Graves With Their Mouths'

Chavez Wants 1.5m Army Reservists

03 April 2005 Aljazeera

Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez has said 1.5 million people will be trained to form the military reserve in order to defend the country.

The reserve troops will be trained by military officials and will be "ready to defend, with the people, the sovereignty and greatness of this land", Chavez said during his weekly radio and television show on Sunday.

"If anyone were to come here and to try to seize the fatherland from us, we would make him bite the dust," he said.

Chavez did not say who the enemy could be, but he has repeatedly accused the US of planning to invade Venezuela and seize its bountiful oil reserves.

He has also said the US was behind the failed two-day coup in 2002, which Washington was slow to condemn.

The reserve troops will serve under Military Reserve Commander Julio Quintero Vilorio, a staunch Chavez ally.

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