

GI SPECIAL 3B29:



Seventeen Troops Dead Since Last Saturday

13th May, 2005 Big News Network

The U.S. military is reeling from escalating casualties in Iraq.

Since last Saturday at least 15 troops have died in combat in Iraq, mostly from explosions. Another two died in action in Afghanistan

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

TASK FORCE LIBERTY SOLDIER KILLED, FOUR WOUNDED, NEAR BAYJI

May 13, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-05-18C

TIKRIT, Iraq -- **One Task Force Liberty Soldier was killed and four wounded when a vehicle borne improvised explosive device detonated next to their combat patrol near Bayji** at about 3:00 p.m. May 13. The wounded Soldiers were evacuated to a Coalition Forces medical treatment facility.

Six Ohio Marines Killed in Iraq

May 13, 2005 (AP)

Six Marines were killed and another 15 were wounded from one central Ohio squad in a major U.S. offensive near Iraq's border with Syria, a newspaper reported. The squad was one of three belonging to the 1st Platoon of Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Regiment, according to The Washington Post, which has a reporter embedded with Operation Matador.

Chief Warrant Officer Orrin Bowman, the site commander for the Columbus-based company, confirmed Thursday the company was participating in the operation and had taken casualties. He declined to say how many from the Marine reserve unit had been killed or release any names.

The military has identified two Ohio Marines with the 3rd Battalion, 25th Regiment who have died in Iraq since Sunday. Lance Cpl. Wesley G. Davids, 20, of Dublin, was killed in an explosion in Karabilah on Wednesday and Cpl. Dustin A. Derga, 24, of Columbus, was killed by small arms fire in Ubaydi on Sunday, according to the Department of Defense.

Soldier Killed In Iskandariyah

May 13, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 470-05

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier.

Sgt. John M. Smith, 22, of Wilmington, N.C., died May 12 in Iskandariyah, Iraq, from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Smith was assigned to the Army's 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Two Mississippi Marines Injured

May. 13, 2005 Associated Press, GULFPORT, Miss.

Two Mississippi Marines were wounded in a roadside explosion in Iraq earlier this week, family members say.

Cpl. Justin Rishel, 23, of Long Beach, and Sgt. Dennis Woullard, 33, of D'Iberville, were injured Wednesday when their amphibious assault vehicle exploded, relatives told the Sun Herald.

Rishel has shrapnel in his leg. Woullard has a minor chest wound.

Rishel was taken to a base hospital at Al Qaim near the Syrian border. An officer at the hospital loaned him a telephone so he could call home.

"I don't know who the officer was, but I was ever so grateful," said Paula Rishel, Justin Rishel's mother. "If I had gotten up this morning and seen that burning Amtrac on TV without knowing he was OK, I'd have gone ballistic."

Paula Rishel said doctors have decided against taking the shrapnel from her son's leg.

"He took some shrapnel in his leg, near his calf, but the doctors felt it could cause more harm than good to take it out," she said. "They're giving him antibiotics."

Woullard called his wife around midnight but didn't tell her he was hurt. However, she knew he had dragged a fallen Marine out of an ambush on Monday. The story appeared Wednesday on the front page of The Washington Post.

"I was just relieved to hear his voice," said Imani Woullard.

U.S. Offensive Stalled At Qaim: Resistance Holds City; Commands' Silly Lies About "Foreign Fighters" Nailed For 7267th Time

The U.S. military said today it was receiving intelligence from local residents, fed up with the presence of foreign fighters in the region. But residents of a government-run housing complex on the outskirts of Obeidi, which saw some of the fiercest fighting in the first days of the offensive, insisted there were no foreigners among the fighters -- only Iraqi tribesmen protecting their homes against U.S. forces.

"Those who are resisting are neither Arabs, nor foreigners," said Mohammed Abu Taha. "Let them (the Americans) close the border with Syria and see how the resistance will continue."

May 13, 2005 By Mohammed Barakat, The Associated Press, QAIM, Iraq

American warplanes roared over desert villages and plumes of smoke rose into the sky near Syria today.

But fighters controlled the rubble-strewn streets of this border town.

In the bomb-blasted streets of Qaim, where the offensive began Saturday, fighters armed with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades roamed the streets, checking vehicles as they entered and left the town.

"We are trying to protect our city's entrances, and we will prevent the U.S. forces from entering the city," declared one fighter, who covered his face with a scarf.

Near the Syrian border, residents reached by telephone in Saadah, Karabilah and Rommana said American forces were periodically shelling their villages. The U.S. military confirmed two air strikes today, one in a cave and the other in a village west of Saadah. The region is about 200 miles northwest of Baghdad.

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"Those who are resisting are neither Arabs, nor foreigners," said Mohammed Abu Taha. "Let them (the Americans) close the border with Syria and see how the resistance will continue."

The hospital in Obeidi said 16 bodies have been brought to its morgue and some 30 people treated so far. Most of the casualties were brought in from Karabilah and nearby Rommana, said a doctor, who was too afraid to give his name.

"The situation is very bad ... Most of the people have fled to the desert," said Samran Mukhlef Abed, a tribal leader in Saadah. "The Americans are all around ... and medical services do not exist here. If someone is hurt, we have to take him to cities that are far way from here and that is impossible with the situation."

IED Hits Baghdad Convoy; Humvee Burning; Casualties Not Reported

13 May 2005 Aljazeera & By Mohammed Barakat, The Associated Press

Three roadside bombs also exploded in Baghdad today, all of them targeting American patrols, said U.S. military spokesman Master Sgt. Greg Kaufman.

There were no immediate reports of casualties, but Associated Press Television News footage showed a U.S. Humvee, its hood open, consumed by flames at the scene of one blast in the Khadra area of the capital on the highway to the airport.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Uprising Against Occupation Grows: Afghans Rage Against U.S. -- "It's Like A Tsunami, Anything Can Happen."



Burning the US flag - protesters vent their frustration. (BBC)

While US military officials say the Taliban has been severely weakened if not crushed, thanks to US-Afghan military operations to root them out and to the co-opting of some 50 high-ranking Taliban leaders into Karzai's government, recent attacks prove the contrary.

[Thanks to PB who sent this in.]

13 May, 2005 BBC & By Daan van der Schriek in Kabul, ISN Security Watch & Aljazeera.Net & AFP & By STEPHEN GRAHAM, Associated Press Writer & 12 May 2005 By Carlotta Gall, The New York Times

At least nine more people - including civilians and policemen - have been killed in a fourth day of anti-US protests in Afghanistan, officials say.

The BBC's Andrew North in Kabul says the violence appears to be spreading with reports of disturbances coming from across the country.

Many demonstrations started after traditional Friday prayer meetings.

The protests started after a report that US guards at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre desecrated the Koran.

Newsweek magazine reported on 9 May that interrogators at Guantanamo Bay placed Korans on toilets to upset suspects, and in one case "flushed a holy book down the toilet".

Police officers are reported to be among four dead in Ghazni province, 150km south-west of the capital, Kabul, after security forces clashed with protesters.

Interior ministry spokesman Lutfullah Mashal told the BBC that some of the demonstrators involved in the Ghazni protest were armed with AK 47s and handguns.

"They tried to attack the governor's house and office", he said, "and fired on police and afghan army troops."

Shooting broke out as protesters swarmed toward a police station and the governor's residence after Friday prayers, chanting "Death to America" and pelting the buildings with rocks, witnesses said.

Shafiqullah Shafaq, a doctor at the city's hospital, told AP that two civilians and a police officer were fatally shot and **21 people were wounded, including the provincial police chief.**

Officials said a protester was killed when police fired during a riot after prayers in the northwestern town of Qala-e-Naw and another died from a gunshot wound in Gardez, near the Pakistani border.

"It's like a tsunami, anything can happen. It's difficult to predict," provincial police chief Shah Jahan Noori told Reuters news agency, adding that demonstrators had fired on aid agency offices.

Security sources say one person was killed in the city of Gardez south-east of Kabul and another protester shot in the north-western town of Qal-e-now.

US forces are reported to have gone to the aid of a UN compound in Gardez when it was besieged by demonstrators.

Thousands of people also took to the streets in the northern provinces of Parwan, Kapisa and Takhar, Laghman in the east, Logar and Khost in the southeast and the southern province of Kandahar.

Meanwhile one person died and four were wounded when rioters attacked a police station in the Chak district of Wardak province, which borders Kabul, and a weapons store exploded, interior ministry spokesman Lutfullah Mashal said.

Deaths occurred in Faizabad, capital of Badakshan province, when more than 1000 people demonstrated against the alleged abuses, deputy provincial governor Shams-ul Rehman told reporters.

Three people were killed after police opened fire on what reports described as hundreds of protesters in Baharak district who were shouting "Death to America!" Twenty-two people were reported hurt, including three police officers.

Angry protesters torched the office of Focus Canada, an aid agency mainly funded by the Aga Khan, the billionaire spiritual leader of the world's 15 million Shia Ismaili Muslims.

"Protesters had been shouting anti-American slogans and marching through the streets of the city but it was now *more* under control," the deputy governor said.

"We respect the Koran and support those who demonstrate," Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, who heads the country's peace and reconciliation commission, told worshippers in Kabul's main Blue Mosque.

Friday's deaths come after seven people were killed in protests on Wednesday and Thursday.

In Jallalabad, the governor's office was set on fire, as was the Central Statistics Office, destroying the census records, said a spokesman for the Interior Ministry,

Foreigners were evacuated from the city as their offices came under attack, and the air filled with smoke and gunfire.

The United Nations and foreign aid agencies evacuated hundreds of workers from Jalalabad fearing further violence.

The unrest in Jalalabad began as a peaceful protest by medical university students but numbers swelled to between 5,000 and 10,000 and the demonstration descended into violence, witnesses and a local police source told AFP.

Beyond the current desecration outrage, the students in Kabul were also engaged in other political issues, demanding that the Afghan government deny permanent military bases to the US. They said the creation of permanent US military bases would threaten the independence of Afghanistan.

The demands come only days after US-backed Afghan President Hamid Karzai got green light from more than 1,000 tribal elders and officials to go ahead with a partnership

with the US that would most likely include the creation of permanent US military bases in the country.

The US has long-term plans for Afghanistan, and until this week, the establishment of permanent US military bases in the country seemed more or less a foregone conclusion, with few obvious obstacles.

The US is keen to have a military presence in Afghanistan that can secure its long-term interests in the region.

While US military officials say the Taliban has been severely weakened if not crushed, thanks to US-Afghan military operations to root them out and to the co-opting of some 50 high-ranking Taliban leaders into Karzai's government, recent attacks prove the contrary.

Veteran Afghan analyst Rahimullah Yusufzai said the protests gave the public a chance to vent their anger at President Hamid Karzai's government and the United States itself, but were unlikely to be coordinated.

"This is the biggest protest campaign in Afghanistan since the ouster of Taliban regime," the Pakistan-based analyst said.

Previous anti-US protests in Afghanistan were sparked by the deaths of civilians in US military operations and by the Iraq war but none have been so large.

TROOP NEWS

Deranged General Thinks Iraq War Could Go On For Nine Years

May 13, 2005 By Mohammed Barakat, The Associated Press

At the Pentagon, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, indicated Thursday that the insurgency could last for many more years.

"This requires patience," he told a news conference. "This is a thinking and adapting adversary. ... I wouldn't look for results tomorrow. One thing we know about insurgencies, that they last from three, four years to nine years."

[There is no possibility whatever of this lunatic fantasy playing out the way General Myers proposes. With help from U.S. civilians, the soldiers will end the war long, long before three, four or nine years have come and gone. Generals used to babble the same kind of bullshit in Vietnam, not long before they ran for the helicopters to escape with their lives. It was once said of the Bourbon Kings

of France --- the French revolution cut off the last Kings head --- that "they had learned nothing and forgotten nothing." It would appear the same is true for politicians like Myers, who have nothing in common with U.S. troops, and will have nothing to say about when the troops decide the war is over.]

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.

Pentagon Advisors Say Resistance Gaining Strength: Encircling Baghdad; U.S. Troops Now "A Nuisance" Factor

Noah Feldman, a New York University law professor who worked for the U.S. coalition in Iraq, said "There is no evidence whatsoever that they cannot win."

2005-05-12 TIMOTHY M. PHELPS, Newsday (New York)

"Everything we thought we knew about the insurgency obviously is flawed," said Judith Kipper of the Council on Foreign Relations. "It was quiet for a little while, and here it is back full force all over the country, and that is very dark news."

Pat Lang, the former top Middle East intelligence official at the Pentagon, said now the 140,000-plus U.S. troops in the country are mainly "a nuisance" factor in the insurgents' overall goal of preventing the new government from consolidating.

"They understand what the deal is here," Lang said, "to start applying maximum pressure to the economy and the government and make sure it will not work." **Their roadside bombs are intended to keep U.S. forces inside their bases, he said.**

All the while the insurgents are gaining strength, he said. "The longer they keep going on the better they will get," said Lang, a student of military history. "The best school of war is war."

The Sunni insurgents could win the battle if they persevere long enough to sour U.S. voters, Feldman said.

Noah Feldman, a New York University law professor who worked for the U.S. coalition in Iraq, said "There is no evidence whatsoever that they cannot win."

With security experts reporting that no major road in the country was safe to travel, some Iraq specialists speculated that the Sunni insurgency was effectively encircling the capital and trying to cut it off from the north, south and west, where there are entrenched Sunni communities. East of Baghdad is a mostly unpopulated desert bordering on Iran.

Got That Right #1

THE TEXAN soldier guarding Camp Bucca Prison, who had signed up for the National Guard to get through college, looked perturbed: "I dunno why we're still here," he said, "we just seem to be making Iraqis more angry. I think most of the people in here haven't done anything wrong." – 5.11.05 Justin Alexander, Member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams

Got That Right #2

From: JF
To: GI Special
Sent: May 13, 2005 10:30 PM

Cindy Sheehan, whose son, K.C., died two weeks after he arrived in Iraq, said, "I was told my son was killed in the war on terror. He was killed by George Bush's war of terror on the world." -- 13 May 2005, Marjorie Cohn, Truthout Report

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.

Karpinski Blames General Miller For Prisoner Torture: "MPs Did Not Come To Abu Ghraib With Dog Collars And Dog Leashes"

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

May 13 Reuters

The former commander of the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq blamed a ranking officer for introducing the use of human pyramids and dog leashes in the abuse of detainees and said in an interview on Thursday that abuse may be continuing there.

Col. Janis Karpinski, a former one-star Army Reserve general who was punished in the scandal, said she had no idea what was going on at the prison and blamed Gen. Geoffrey Miller for the methods that were used to humiliate detainees.

Miller headed the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and was sent to Iraq to recommend improvements in intelligence gathering and detention operations there.

"I believe that Gen. Miller gave them the ideas, gave them the instruction on what techniques to use," she said in excerpts from an interview on the ABC News "Nightline" program.

Asked if she was referring to the positioning of prisoners in human pyramids and putting dog leashes on detainees, Karpinski said, "I can tell you with certainty that the MPs (military police) certainly did not design those techniques, they certainly did not come to Abu Ghraib or to Iraq with dog collars and dog leashes."

Karpinski told ABC she believes officials up the chain of command knew or should have known what was going on at Abu Ghraib. Asked if that included Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, she said; "Well absolutely. And I would say that it is consistent with his direction for the military."

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)

Pentagon Panic: 15 Month Hitch Offered As Recruiting Fails



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, Desmond, and PB who sent this in. PB writes: 15 months would be just enough time to serve a one year tour in Iraq - assuming you don't get stop-lossed or called back as a reservist/guardsman that is.]

5/13/2005 By Dave Moniz, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The Army, faced with a severe and growing shortage of recruits, began offering 15-month active-duty enlistments nationwide Thursday, the shortest tours ever.

The typical enlistment lasts three or four years; the previous shortest enlistment was two years.

Recruits in the new 15-month program then serve two years in the Reserve or National Guard. They would finish their eight-year military obligation in the Guard or Reserve, volunteer programs such as AmeriCorps or the Peace Corps, or the Individual Ready Reserve, a pool of former active-duty troops who can still be called to duty but aren't affiliated with any military unit.

David Segal, a military personnel expert at the University of Maryland, said the 15-month enlistments are no panacea. Fifteen months, Segal said, is often not enough time to learn complex tasks in a high-tech Army.

Jim Martin, a retired Army officer who teaches military culture at Bryn Mawr College, said parents and teachers "see the Army as a real risk, a real danger" because of the war in Iraq. That, more than the length of service, is the major obstacle to recruiting.

More than halfway through its fiscal year, the Army has not been able to make a noticeable dent in the public's reluctance to enlist its sons and daughters. That's

despite record-high bonuses paid to recruits, a new advertising campaign that targets parents and a dramatic increase in the number of recruiters throughout the nation.

Hurt In Iraq? Too Fucking Bad: Bush Regime Wants To Close Outstanding VA Hospital

May 9, 2005 By Lisa Murphy, Brooklyn Syline

Joe Bello is a relatively young veteran, having served in the US Navy from 1984 to 1995 - but he's still very concerned about the future of medical facilities run by the Department of Veterans Affairs here in New York.

Over 300 veterans packed the Brooklyn Marriott during a public hearing last Tuesday to voice their displeasure regarding the possible consolidation of Brooklyn and Manhattan health care services.

"This is something we are very, very passionate about," Bello said. As an advocate for veterans, he wants soldiers to have their chance to speak out.

"The notification about this hearing was very poor. A lot of veterans didn't know about it," he said.

With an estimated 1.3 million veterans in the New York metro area and a six-month waiting list for up to 100,000 veterans seeking treatment at VA hospitals nationwide, transferring vets to either facility would place unnecessary hardships on the veterans and the hospitals.

According to 2004 figures provided by the New York University School of Medicine, nearly 800 veterans from the Bronx and Queens received inpatient treatment at the Manhattan facility, on top of more than 1,000 veterans from Manhattan and 300 from the Hudson Valley, Westchester and Long Island.

Speculation about the real estate value of the Manhattan location has led some to believe that it's a motivating factor in merging the hospitals.

"While the Manhattan VA Hospital may sit on valuable real estate, the services it provides to veterans are priceless. The VA should be in the business of serving veterans, not speculating in real estate. Veterans should not have to spend hours traveling so the VA can gain a temporary real estate windfall," said Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.

Situated in what is known as “Bedpan Alley,” the Manhattan VA Hospital is easily accessible for thousands of veterans throughout the region. Because of its proximity to world-class hospitals, the Manhattan facility is able to enter into affiliation agreements that enhance the quality of care for patients.

The Manhattan VA Hospital has been designated a center of excellence in specialties like cardiac surgery, neurosurgery, cardiac-vascular surgery, comprehensive rehabilitation, HIV/AIDS care and dialysis.

No other centers of excellence in these specialties exist within 100 miles of the Manhattan facility.

A proposed network of clinics simply would not provide the same level of care. Few physicians or medical professionals associated with the Manhattan VA Hospital’s affiliates would be willing or able to transfer to a different facility.

Dr. Matthew Pincus, chief of pathology at the Manhattan VA Hospital, said his department is already performing with half the staff while dealing with increasing patients.

“We’ve already consolidated to a bare minimum, and closing either one of these facilities will hurt the standard of care,” he said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

13 May 2005 Aljazeera & SA & By Mohammed Barakat, The Associated Press & Anatolia.com Inc & By Michael Howard, Dawn

According to a western diplomatic source in Baghdad, 135 car bombs exploded in Iraq in April, up from 69 in March. And if May continues as it has started, it could be the worst month yet.

Two Iraqi soldiers and a civilian have been killed by a bomber who drove his car packed with explosives into a truck transporting soldiers in central Iraq.

About 40 soldiers were on the truck when the car bomber struck at 08:00 Friday in Baquba, 60km northeast of Baghdad, the army said.

At least six others were wounded in the 8am (0400 GMT) blast in the town, army Colonel Abd Allah Shimmari said.

Four more soldiers were wounded in a second car bomb attack on a convoy in the nearby village of Saif Saad.

In a separate incident one policeman was shot dead and three wounded when armed men opened fire on their patrol in western Baghdad on Friday, security officials and medics said.

Snipers opened fire on the motorcade of the Interior Ministry's undersecretary, Maj. Gen. Hikmat Moussa Hussein, in western Baghdad, killing one of his guards and wounding three others, police Maj. Moussa Abdul Karim said. Hussein escaped unharmed.

In Hillah, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, mortars slammed into an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing three soldiers and wounding three others, police said.

In northern Iraq, two soldiers and three rebels were killed in clashes near Shurgat, south of the region's main city of Mosul.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

NF: Respect & Honor To Your Dad

From: NF May 13, 2005 7:26 PM

I come from a long line of military men, and my dear old Dad used to say "You can't win an occupation."

He was a strategic analyst for the Pentagon all the way up until 1963 or so when he told them the US would lose the war in Vietnam and quit.

So, I was pretty sure that 150,000 or so soldiers and some 40,000 military contractors couldn't control a population of 26,000,000

**Choice Quotes From S. Hersh:
"We're Back In The Body Count"
"We're Still Fighting The War We Started,
Folks."**

The Stryker? “It’s Called An I.E.D. Magnet”

“We Patrol, Which Is Stupid To Begin With”

The military joke about the Striker. It's called an “I.E.D. magnet” inside, in the military, it's a magnet for these bombs.

May 11th, 2005 AMY GOODMAN, Democracy Now, Interviews Seymour Hersh

[Hersh:]

But anyway, in the paper today, it's the lead story in the *Times*, 100 rebels killed in western Iraq. **We're back in the body count, by the way.**

Sometimes we call them “insurgents” or “rebels,” that's a great word because -- I'm wacko on this word “insurgency.”

Just so you know, an “insurgency” means, suggests you've won the war and there are people who disagree. They're rebels or they're insurgents, as I said.

No. We're still fighting the war we started, folks.

We started a war largely against Sunnis and Ba'athists, in many cases tribal groups that supported Saddam or were at least frightened enough to support him. We started a war against the people we're still fighting.

They gave us Baghdad very quickly. They retreated. They simply are not fighting the war in the way and the manner we want them to, that our press, you know, wants to tell you they did, that the government wants to tell the press, wants to suggest that we won and that an insurgency broke out again. We're fighting a resistance movement.

So the suggestion of the story is that 100 rebels or insurgents who normally would be happily going along blowing up American vehicles – **the military joke about the Striker. It's called an “I.E.D. magnet” inside, in the military, it's a magnet for these bombs.**

They instead would choose to stupidly stand up and fight us one for one and die. It doesn't make sense to me. I don't trust the story. I don't trust much that I hear that comes out of Baghdad. I don't trust it at all. Ask me later specifics. I know, since I did Abu Ghraib, lots of emails from lots of kids involved.

It's complicated because what happens is we're going along -- the way the war is, it's sort of this dreary pattern.

We're going along, our troops, and they're going down roads. It's really sort of astonishingly stupid. We patrol, which is stupid to begin with. What good does that do? They go down roads, certain fixed roads, certain times, certain places, usually in groups of three, four, five Humvees, Bradley tanks, Strikers, other heavy vehicles. One gets blown up. The Americans start screaming in pain. The other vehicles stop, run out.

The soldiers are jammed into the back. You've seen some tapes or TV stuff about how they do it. They come running out and they shoot at anything that runs. And that's the war.

In one case -- after I did Abu Ghraib, I got a bunch of digital pictures emailed me, and -- was a lot of work on it, and I decided, well, we can talk about it later.

You never know why you do things.

You have some general rules, but in this case, a bunch of kids were going along in three vehicles. One of them got blown up.

The other two units -- soldiers ran out, saw some people running, opened up fire.

It was a bunch of boys playing soccer. And in the digital videos you see everybody standing around, they pull the bodies together. This is last summer. They pull the bodies together. You see the body parts, the legs and boots of the Americans pulling bodies together. Young kids, I don't know how old, 13, 15, I guess. And then you see soldiers dropping R.P.G.'s, which are rocket-launched grenades around them.

And then they're called in as an insurgent kill. It's a kill of, you know, would-be insurgents or resistance and it goes into the computers, and I'm sure it's briefed.

Everybody remembers how My Lai was briefed as a great victory, "128 Vietcong killed." And so you have that pattern again.

You know, ask me why I didn't do this story.

Because I didn't think the kids did murder.

I think it was another day in the war. And even to write about it in a professional way would name names and all that.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Losing Hearts And Minds:

“There Is No Mission”



An Iraqi man pleads with US Army 1st Lt. James Meeks of Newton, Mass. while his wife looks on at their house near Al Barra, north of Baghdad May 3, 2005. (Reuters)

If all that soldiers can now accomplish is curse at baffled Iraqi families and berate people in the streets for exercising what we consider the right of free speech to tear up a newspaper, then there is no mission.

May 13, 2005 By Derrick Z. Jackson, The New York Times Company

WHEN THE Abu Ghraib prison scandal exploded a year ago, President Bush said it was "an insult to the Iraqi people and an affront to the most basic standards of morality and decency." He said, "These humiliating acts do not reflect our character." He also said, "American soldiers and civilians on the ground have come to know and respect the citizens of Iraq."

On Wednesday, National Public Radio broadcast a piece that made it appallingly clear that we have not cleaned up our character in Iraq. Humiliation remains a primary weapon.

For all the soldiers who have a heart, a lot also appear to have lost their minds.

NPR reporter Philip Reeves followed American soldiers around Mosul.

At one point, the soldiers decided to take over a civilian house for two hours as a surveillance post. A lieutenant said to the surprised family of the house, "Listen to me. Let me make this really clear for you. We need to be in your house for two hours. Everybody in this house will stay here."

When the family continue to appear to be "baffled and unhappy," another soldier stepped in and said (with obscenities bleeped out by NPR):

"Look, check this out. You tell them this. You're not [bleep] leaving. Nobody's [bleep] leaving this house. You're not using the phone. Anybody comes, they're going to

[bleep] stay here. OK? You give me a [bleep] hard time, I'll turn you [bleep] guys into the commandos, and they'll [bleep] you up."

In the background, one soldier said, "Hey don't translate that." Another soldier added, "Yeah, don't say that." The soldier with the foul mouth said, "That's what I tell them all the time." Again, a soldier said, "You shouldn't say that."

Bush has boasted how "Iraqis have laid the foundations of a free society, with hundreds of independent newspapers." The reality was a bit more totalitarian.

The featured soldiers handed out a newspaper full of favorable news about the US-installed government. When they saw that two young Iraqis had ripped up the newspaper, a soldier took one aside and asked, "Why are you ripping up the paper? Why are you ripping up the paper?"

A staff sergeant told NPR, "When a guy tears up a paper in my face, it looks like he's disrespecting everything we're trying to do. Maybe he knows somebody. Or maybe he is somebody. But it's just blatant for him to tear it up in my face and then lie about it. It's blatant. He blatantly disrespected everything that we're trying to accomplish."

Finally a supervising soldier, playing the benevolent occupier, told the young Iraqi, "If you tore up the paper, that's fine. If you didn't tear up the paper, that's fine. Don't tear up the papers in the future, OK?" [If "the young Iraqi" doesn't like it, he can go back to the country he came from, right?]

This is not to tear up the soldiers. They are but pawns of President Bush, who declared major combat operations over under the banner of "Mission Accomplished" two years ago.

If all that soldiers can now accomplish is curse at baffled Iraqi families and berate people in the streets for exercising what we consider the right of free speech to tear up a newspaper, then there is no mission.

In a sign of their morass, the soldiers described themselves in lowly terms far removed from the pre-invasion build-up, when Vice President Dick Cheney said "we will be greeted as liberators."

The supervising soldier in Mosul told NPR as his armored vehicle cruised the streets, "If you look on the walls here, you can see all this graffiti. We've really taken to the streets here kind of like a gang unit would in, say, LA. It's a giant gang war, and we've got the biggest gang, so every time we see graffiti, we mark it out, we tag it with 'US Forces,' and we say, 'Hey look, this is our block.' "

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

International Monetary Fund Says Iraq Too Dangerous To Exploit

May 12, 2005 IslamOnline.net

The International Monetary Fund said Iraq is too dangerous a place to open an office.

IMF spokesman Thomas Dawson told reporters "the security situation has made it impossible in terms of visiting and reestablishing a funds presence in Iraq."

But he added that the IMF "remains in contact with the transitional government and various technical counterparts to review the 2004 record as well as prospects for 2005."

Welcome To The Occupation Sewer: Bush Buddies Charged \$27 Million To Move \$100,000 Worth Of Fuel: Iraq "The Biggest Corruption Scandal In History"

But Jawad, a Shiite with no brief for his former leader, said: "I'd say that about 10 per cent of business was corrupt under Saddam. Now it's about 95 per cent. We used to have one Saddam, now we have 25 of them."

May 2, 2005 by Paul McGeough, The Age Company Ltd.

Over lunch on a sultry Baghdad day, Iraqi businessman Mohammed Jawad talked camels and corruption.

"Iraq is like a camel," he said. "If it is healthy, no one can kill it. But when it is sick on the ground, the camel dies by a thousand knives." The knives are wielded by corrupt ministers and their cronies - tribal and family - who force contractors to inflate tender bids for contracts worth billions so they can gouge millions for themselves.

The new Iraq receives foreign aid worth close to \$US100 billion (\$A126 billion) and the corruption watchdog Transparency International says it could become "the biggest corruption scandal in history".

Jawad taps into the economy at various levels - he's an engineer and builder, he supplies government departments and he represents foreign companies. He said: "After I went to the Transport Ministry with a proposal for flights to Iraq from Scandinavia, I had a call from the minister's cousin to say that there would be no deal unless I paid a bribe of \$US500,000."

He cited the case of another ministry - electricity - in which he said a fellow tribesman had been appointed ministerial bagman. "If you don't pay 5 or 6 per cent of the contract price on the side, you're told the ministry wants to work with a different company," he said.

He said contractors had told him of the manipulation of a recent tender: "The work was worth about \$US15 million. But the minister's staff wanted a rake-off of about \$US40 million. So they advised the bidder to inflate the price to \$US70 million, so that they could have their cut and the bidder would make a good profit too."

Like many other Iraqis, businessmen invariably make then-and-now comparisons with Saddam Hussein. Saddam ran his own massive corruption of the UN oil-for-food program and he and his cronies regularly demanded a cut of any new business or contract.

But Jawad, a Shiite with no brief for his former leader, said: "I'd say that about 10 per cent of business was corrupt under Saddam. Now it's about 95 per cent. We used to have one Saddam, now we have 25 of them."

Audits of US spending in Iraq have criticised a lack of competitive bidding for contracts worth billions in a race dominated by corporations close to the Bush Administration.

An investigation of the spending of Iraq's oil revenue in the first 15 months of the occupation found that close to \$US9 billion had been spent without proper accounting, including an electrical contract worth \$US340 million, let without tendering.

A Pentagon audit has accused Halliburton, a Houston-based oil services conglomerate formerly run by US Vice-President Dick Cheney, of overcharging on one contract by more than \$US100 million; and one of the company's subsidiaries is under investigation for charging more than \$US27 million to transport from Kuwait to Iraq fuel worth less than \$US100,000.


A section of the report by contributor Reinoud Leenders and Justin Alexander begins: "Wednesday 9 April 2003 was not only the day that most Iraqis rejoiced at the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. In the eyes of many Iraqis, it was also the day that marked the beginning of a new era of intensified theft of state property, corruption and conflicts of interest.

"When asked to give their views on the birth of the new Iraq, the probability is high that Iraqis will refer not only to the widespread looting by 'Ali Babas' but to the looting by Iraq's new democratic leaders."

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

SHARON THREATENS TO EAT PALESTINE WITH IRON SPOON



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Cartoon by Dave Brown (won Political Cartoon Society's Cartoon of the Year prize in England in 2003)

May 13, 2005
From: Solidarity, Z
To: GI Special

Tel Aviv, 5/13/05 ***NEWSFLASH***

Speaking to a graduating class at Zhabotinsky Imperial University, Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon regaled the newly unemployed young people with colorful stories of his heroic deeds as a veteran fighter against Palestinian civilians.

"Let me tell you, some of those old people were pretty tough," Mr. Sharon exclaimed with a nostalgic smile, "and the children were veritable little demons. Our enemies were countless, formidably organized, and armed with the latest weapons. Yet we fought those wicked natives intrepidly and at last prevailed, with the help of God and Uncle Sam."

Prime Minister Sharon accompanied his lecture with a gripping PowerPoint presentation entitled "The Virtual Oasis: How the Chosen People Without a Land

Made the Desert Bloom in a Godforsaken Land Without a People Except for a Few Filthy Savages."

During a lively question-and-answer session following the inspiring event, Mr. Sharon explained that anyone who criticizes Israel is evil, and swore to defend the Israeli fortress of liberty and freedom to the last molecule of his adipose tissue. "Thanks to our superlative Zionist spirit and modest material support from the leader of the Free World," he proclaimed, "we shall forever retain our sacred liberty to do as we please."

Asked about the gargantuan Iron Spoon, one of his favorite projects, Prime Minister Sharon replied it will help keep the Palestinians from moaning about their rights. "If those stubborn creatures do anything else to displease me," Mr. Sharon growled with a merry twinkle in his eye, "I will scoop up the rest of their miserable little land, and gobble it up!"

Sharon's legendary appetite has contributed to his shapely cannonball physique that is the pride of the settler state of Israel and a symbol of its healthy democracy.

"General Sharon is so zaftig," commented a starry-eyed member of the audience, "and you'd better believe it that he'll roll over anyone who stands in his way of peace."

"Prime Minister Sharon is a man of peace," reaffirmed President Bush, seated in the front row as Israel's guest of honor and holding hands with his warmly smiling Secretary of State. "If he ever becomes a Romanian Catholic," added the President thoughtfully, "we'll tell the Vatican to make him a saint."

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

The Young And The Jobless

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

May 12, 2005 By BOB HERBERT, New York Times

A recent report from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston tells us that the employment rate for the nation's teenagers in the first 11 months of 2004 - just 36.3 percent - was the lowest it has ever been since the federal government began tracking teenage employment in 1948.

Those 20 to 24 years old are also faring poorly. In 2000, 72.2 percent were employed during a typical month. By last year that percentage had dropped to 67.9 percent.

Even the recent modest surge in jobs has essentially bypassed young American workers. Gains among recently arrived immigrants seem to have accounted for the entire net increase in jobs from 2000 through 2004.

The squeeze on the younger generation of workers is so tight that in many cases the young men and women of today are faring less well than their parents' generation did at a similar age. Professor Sum has been comparing the standard of living of contemporary families with that of comparable families three decades ago.

"Two-thirds of this generation are not living up to their parents' standard of living," he said.

Uzbekistan: Bush Buddy Tottering: “The People Have Risen”

The protesters posted their own guards on the perimeter of the square. 30 soldiers who shot at demonstrators were being held hostage. Police or troops are not being seen in the streets, according to the web site.

May 13, 2005 By BAGILA BUKHARBAYEVA, Associated Press Writer, ANDIJAN & Novisti & By Jenny Norton, BBC, Tashkent

Soldiers opened fire on thousands of protesters in eastern Uzbekistan on Friday after demonstrators stormed a jail to free 23 men accused of Islamic extremism.

At least 50 people may have been killed in clashes with police and security forces, a protest leader said.

Protesters fell to the ground as the troops surrounded the crowd of some 4,000 and started shooting outside the city's administration building, which had been seized by the demonstrators. An Associated Press reporter saw 10 people who apparently had been hit, including at least one dead, and participants in the rally said two more had been killed.

As soldiers continued shooting with what sounded like large-caliber gunfire and automatic weapons, one man sobbed, "Oh, my son! He's dead!"

Andizhan, with the population of 303,000 people, is located in the Fergana valley on the crossroads of the Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the valley was the venue of fierce ethnic conflicts.

Protesters are demanding the government and President Islam Karimov's resignation. **Police or troops are not being seen in the streets, according to the web site.**

An armed group broke into the local correctional labor camp and attempted to seize the administrative building and the National Security Service, according to an official from the Uzbek president's press office.

Some of the camp inmates were released.

"The streets are littered with cars with burnt bodies inside. **People in civilian clothes carrying automatic weapons are seen among protesters in the city center. They are allegedly maintaining order,**" Fergana.ru reports.

Uzbekistan is a key U.S. ally providing an air base to support military operations in neighboring Afghanistan. But the closer ties with Washington have drawn increased international attention to widespread human rights abuses in the former Soviet republic, whose authoritarian government is seen as one of the most repressive in the region.

President Islam Karimov and other government leaders were returning late Friday from Andijan, a high-ranking Uzbek official said on condition of anonymity. **[Karimov is the asshole who boils alive critics of his government.]**

The government said it remained in control despite the chaos, although it blocked foreign news reports of the clashes for its domestic audience. Neighboring Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which share the Fergana Valley, sealed their borders.

The shootings by the soldiers followed an overnight jailbreak of the 23 Islamic businessmen, whose supporters stormed the prison where they were held. Their supporters, who seized weapons after attacking a military unit, later clashed with police.

Witnesses and officials put the toll from an earlier clash at nine dead and 34 injured. Two of the dead were children, Sharif Shakirov, a brother of one of the defendants said, adding that **30 soldiers who shot at demonstrators were being held hostage.**

Shakirov told AP the jailbreak was triggered by news that security services Thursday had started rounding up people involved in a sit-in outside the courthouse where the trial was taking place.

Uzbeks in recent weeks have shown increasing willingness to challenge their authoritarian leadership in protests, apparently bolstered by the March uprising in Kyrgyzstan that drove out President Askar Akayev and by similar revolts in Ukraine and Georgia.

The 23 businessmen who were on trial are members of Akramia — a group named for their founder, Akram Yuldashev, an Islamic dissident sentenced in 1999 to 17 years in prison for allegedly urging the overthrow of Uzbekistan's secular government in a pamphlet published in the late 1990s. He has proclaimed his innocence.

Akramis are considered the backbone of Andijan's small business community, running a medical clinic and pharmacy, as well as working as furniture craftsmen, and providing employment to thousands in the Fergana Valley.

Concerns are high that Fergana could be a flashpoint for destabilizing wide swaths of ex-Soviet Central Asia.

The trial has inspired one of the largest public shows of anger over alleged rights abuses by the government. Parpiyev said that the protesters' main demand was the release of Yuldashev.

"The people have risen," said Valijon Atakhonjonov, a brother of another one of the defendants.

Thousands of protesters massed on the square outside the administration building, where a podium was erected.

Protest organizers, some with Kalashnikov automatic rifles strapped across their chests, took turns addressing the crowd through a microphone. The protesters had posted their own guards on the perimeter of the square.

"We want to be allowed to work and do our business without hindrance," Parpiyev, the 42-year-old leader of the protest, told AP.

Many of the men wore square black embroidered skullcaps, while some were in the white skullcaps favored by observant Muslim Uzbeks.

A nearby theater and cinema were burning. Two dead bodies were splayed near the square — one with a stomach wound, another burned. Several military helicopters circled overhead.

One of the 23 defendants, Abduvosid Egomov, was holed up in a local government compound overrun by protesters who broke up pavement stones to reinforce a metal fence surrounding the compound in efforts to stave off security forces. Some were also preparing Molotov cocktails.

"If the army is going to storm, if they're going to shoot, we are ready to die instead of living as we are living now. The Uzbek people have been reduced to living like dirt," he said.

Parpiyev said Interior Minister Zakir Almatov had called him in the morning and heard the protesters' demands. Almatov initially agreed to negotiations, but later called back and said the talks were off, Parpiyev said.

"He said, 'We don't care if 200, 300 or 400 people die. We have force and we will chuck you out of there anyway,'" Parpiyev quoted the interior minister as saying.

Most of the protesters who have crowded into Andijan's central square today are local people - men and women, old people and even some young children.

They have come to call for an end to the poverty and injustice which they say have become a part of their daily lives.

Unemployment is very high in eastern Uzbekistan and many young people feel they no longer have a future in the area.

Andijan has been particularly hard hit by the Uzbek government's continuing crackdown against Islamic groups.

Hundreds of young men have been arrested, and it is common to meet people in the city who have husbands, brothers and fathers in jail.

Many men who have been released from prison complain of being mistreated.

They say vicious beatings are commonplace. All this has added to a growing sense of anger.

Cops Withdrawn From Papua-New Guinea: Australian Colonialist Above-Law Attitude Trashed By PNG Supreme Court

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

14may05 Ian McPhedran, (Herald Sun)

MORE than 150 Australian police and officials working in Papua New Guinea are packing their bags after a court withdrew their legal safety net.

The troubled nation's Supreme Court yesterday cancelled legal immunity for Australians working under the \$850 million Australian-funded Enhanced Co-operation Program. **The 154 police have been stood down and returned to barracks, and will be back home by as early as next week.**

The Howard Government will not allow its police or officials to operate in PNG without immunity from prosecution.

Tensions have been building over the Australian police presence in Port Moresby and Bougainville.

Just last week, PNG officers demanded the much higher-paid Australians leave. The Aussies must be accompanied by a local officer when making an arrest.

The court's five judges ruled that some provisions of the ECP Act were inconsistent with the constitution. **They also ruled the ECP undermined the authority of PNG's police commissioner and public prosecutor and the rights of local people to legal redress.**

Relations have been tense since the Howard Government insisted the \$300 million a year Australian taxpayers give PNG was spent directly on aid projects. **They suffered a further setback in March when PNG Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare was subjected to a humiliating security search at Brisbane airport.**

Les “Robin Hoods” Strike Back

5.10.05 By JOHN CARREYROU, Wall St. Journal

PARIS—Last June 15, two masked men marched up to French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin’s private home in western France, removed the electric meter and cut off the power.

They weren’t vandals or robbers. They were employees of Electricité de France SA, protesting the government’s decision to sell as much as 30% of the giant state-owned power utility on the stock market this year.

The raid was just one among hundreds of power cuts organized by EDF employees affiliated with France’s powerful Confédération Générale du Travail union amid a broad strike last year.

Among their other targets: the presidential palace housing Jacques Chirac, which had to switch to a backup generator, and two Paris train stations—stranding 300,000 commuters for several hours on June 28.

The [union] publishes a left-wing magazine full of articles and editorials that oppose the partial-privatization plan.

A cover story in last month’s issue profiles a group of EDF employees dubbed the “Robin Hoods” who restore power to customers who can’t pay their bills. The article calls EDF’s planned stock-market listing ‘a poison inoculated’ by the government.

Web Copies

For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/gispecial,
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