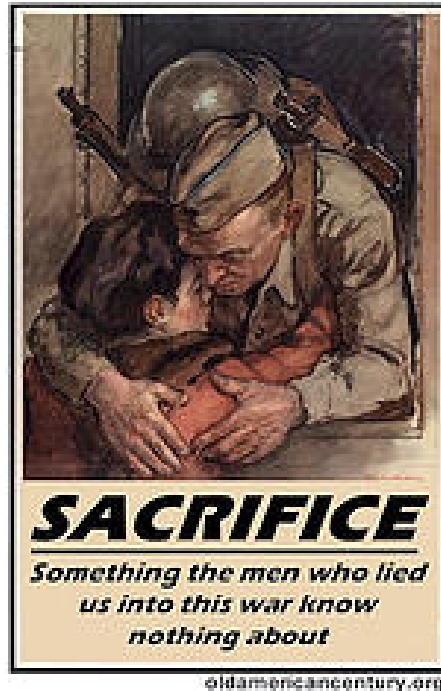


GI SPECIAL 3B35:



How Many Died? Pentagon Knowingly Issued Defective Body Armor To Marines In Combat

[Thanks to PB who sent this in.]

Faced with the imminent publication of this story, the result of an eight-month investigation by Marine Corps Times, the Marine Corps on May 4 issued a Corpwide message recalling 5,277 Interceptor vests from 11 lots that failed government ballistic performance tests — slightly more than half the total vests issued to Marines from questionable lots.

May 09, 2005 By Christian Lowe, Army Times staff writer

The Marine Corps issued to nearly 10,000 troops body armor that government experts urged the Corps to reject after tests revealed critical, life-threatening flaws in the vests.

In all, the Marine Corps accepted about 19,000 Interceptor outer tactical vests from Point Blank Body Armor Inc. that failed government tests due to “multiple complete penetrations” of 9mm pistol rounds, failing scores on other ballistic or quality-assurance tests, or a combination of the two.

“Since these are lifesaving pieces of equipment and are being used in support of the Iraq war, I urge immediate action since this technical office has little confidence in the performance of the items to provide the contracted levels of protection as defined in the performance specification,” wrote ballistics expert James MacKiewicz in a memorandum rejecting two lots of vests on July 19, 2004.

Mackiewicz is responsible for verifying that each production lot of Marine vests meets protective requirements and other quality standards. He works at the Army Soldier Systems Center in Natick, Mass., and has 18 years of experience with ballistics and armor systems.

A second government agency, the Defense Contract Management Agency, backed his conclusion and also recommended against the waivers.

But according to documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and interviews with officials at Natick, the Marine Corps and Point Blank, the service rejected that advice. Instead, the Marine program manager responsible for fielding the vests, Lt. Col. Gabriel Patricio, and Point Blank’s chief operating officer, Sandra Hatfield signed waivers that allowed the Corps to buy and distribute vests that failed to meet the Corps’ minimum standards and specifications.

Faced with the imminent publication of this story, the result of an eight-month investigation by Marine Corps Times, the Marine Corps on May 4 issued a Corpwide message recalling 5,277 Interceptor vests from 11 lots that failed government ballistic performance tests — slightly more than half the total vests issued to Marines from questionable lots.

The Corps has not said what it intends to do with the more than 4,000 other vests the testers urged to be rejected that are now being worn by Marines. Nor has it said what it will do with the remaining 10,000 that it accepted over the objections of the test labs but which haven’t been fielded.

While each vest has a unique serial number on it, Point Blank would not provide a list of serial numbers from the lots Natick said should be rejected. Point Blank said that information was “proprietary.”

Corps officials initially would not provide lot or serial number data to Marine Corps Times; when Patricio was asked in the May 3 interview if he could locate the vests and recall them if ordered to do so, a Corps spokesman abruptly ended the interview and hung up.

But a day later, the Marine Corps listed the serial numbers that correspond to the 11 production lots in a Corpwide message the service is calling a “precautionary recall.”

The message did not state how Marines could determine whether their vest belongs to one of the nine other production lots that didn’t pass muster at Natick.

The Corps faces serious challenges in even locating the vests it plans to pull back. Because lot numbers, serial numbers and other manufacturing data are handwritten on body armor labels, the writing is sometimes smeared, faded or otherwise illegible.

The commander of Marine Corps Systems Command, Brig. Gen. William Catto, refused to be interviewed. But in a written statement, he acknowledged that problem, saying “every effort will be made to locate the waived vests, with the understanding that some may not be detectable due to normal wear and tear or other reasons associated with deployed conditions.”

The Army also buys body armor from Point Blank, but service officials said they have bought several versions of the Point Blank vest and that they never accepted vests from lots that failed testing.

Facing two upcoming seven-month rotations of about 25,000 leathernecks to Iraq and ongoing deployments to Afghanistan, field commanders urged Systems Command to supply their units with vests, command officials said.

“At this critical moment, are we sure these are bad lots? Are these lots that we’re sure we do not want to put into the fight? ... That’s a judgment call,” said Lt. Col. Shawn Reinwald, director of combat equipment and support systems for Systems Command. Reinwald was Patricio’s boss briefly after joining Systems Command in late 2004.

“Had we had a lot of schedule to play with, we might have slowed down. ... The schedule was bearing down on us.”

All vests stand some chance of failing, but the vests issued to Marines from waived lots have a greater chance of being penetrated than vests that met Natick’s test criteria, experts there said.

“You have an increased risk of ballistic incident — statistically” with these vests, said Bob Kinney, director of the individual protection office at Natick. Kinney has worked on individual protection equipment such as chemical and biological defense suits and body armor at Natick for more than two decades.

The ballistics experts at Natick recommended against fielding any vests until they could identify and resolve the larger issue behind the vests’ declining quality.

“Based on ballistic test data and previously identified quality assurance failures, I do not recommend acceptance of these lots and do not recommend acceptance of future lots until this issue is resolved,” MacKiewicz wrote in an August 24, 2004, memo failing two lots.

The memo is one of many that MacKiewicz drafted from as early as January 2003, warning of poor ballistic test results and recommending the Marine Corps solve the problem before shipping any more vests to its troops.

It is unclear whether any Marine casualties in Iraq have resulted from shrapnel or bullets that have penetrated vests distributed from the lots in question. A data sample from the Navy/Marine Corps Combat Trauma Registry provided by the Marine Corps shows that of 692 Marines wounded in Iraq between March 2004 and January 2005, eight were struck on the vest, and only two were penetrated: a fragment from a rocket-propelled grenade and shrapnel from a roadside bomb.

One beneficiary of that increased production: Point Blank Body Armor, a subsidiary of New York-based DHB Industries, which has expanded dramatically to meet the demand. In less than three months in early 2004, the company opened two new manufacturing plants in Florida, expanding its operations to meet the Army and Marines' demand for more than 1 million vests.

The first vest failures had come to light in mid-January 2003, as officials with Point Blank notified Marine contract officers of problems at their Oakland Park, Fla., test facility.

Hatfield told Marine Corps Times the failures stemmed from improper testing equipment at their ballistic lab. [Life in prison for this lying piece of shit.]

Over the next year, Natick officials assumed responsibility for testing vests from Point Blank as they investigated why the original failures occurred.

In December 2003, contract officers and testers discovered that multiple vests from two other lots failed ballistic tests, this time at the Aberdeen facility.

Vests from lots 69-9 and 69-12 suffered multiple penetrations of 9mm bullets at speeds below 1,525 feet per second. When gauging performance of a vest against that contract benchmark, testers expect that rounds will penetrate half of the time.

Those penetrations were of particular concern because previous tests yielded passing results at an average velocity of 1,620 feet per second, well above the contract benchmark, according to a document written by Mike Codega, a technical representative at Natick who worked with MacKiewicz on the Marine vest program.

Also a point of concern was the complete penetration of a vest from lot 69-12. This one was below 1,450 feet per second, a speed at which no vest penetration should occur.

"I recommended we do more testing to validate or to confirm or to find out what happened," MacKiewicz said in an April 8 interview at Natick.

"And as I continued to test, I got more failures ... it continued, it didn't stop. Which is strange because we had had about four years of experience where we had no problem whatsoever."

In further tests of lots 69-9 and 69-12, as well as four additional lots, MacKiewicz and his colleagues noticed a continued decline in the Point Blank armor's ballistic strength. Some of the vests were also showing deep indentations — though not penetrations — at speeds that, taken together with the full penetrations in earlier lots and the fact that the indentations were deeper than they should have been, prompted testers to raise a red flag.

"It shouldn't have happened ... because it was a known system for four years and the results were very high" during previous tests on earlier lots, MacKiewicz said. "To get results that low was very concerning — it was odd to us."

Problems with the Point Blank vest design used by the Marine Corps keep cropping up.

For example, as part of the competition for an Army vest contract late last year, that same model of Point Blank's Interceptor vest failed ballistic tests that simulate shrapnel hits, according to Karl Masters, the lead engineer for the Army's Interceptor body armor program. That test — a lower standard than for 9mm rounds — was conducted by H.P. White.

When asked in an interview whether he suspected any material or manufacturing flaw in the vests might be to blame for the rejections by government testers, Patricio said only that "we had the manufacturers involved in the process to the extent that the parties communicated with each other and attempted to work through the process" of addressing the failures. **[Double talk. Send this asshole to Ramadi in one of his own bad vests. He might find that an illuminating experience, assuming he doesn't get fragged first.]**

Despite the official government waiver forms she signed asking for the ballistic specifications to be reduced to meet the declining test results, Point Blank's Hatfield said she never considered the problem to be one that stemmed from a manufacturing or material flaw.

Patricio noted in a memo dated Feb. 2, 2004, that the urgent need for body armor in the war zone and the time it would take to find out for sure why the vests were failing outweighed his concerns with the vests.

He therefore would issue a "temporary waiver providing Marines with OTVs of questionable performance," promising that "if, at a later date, the performance is shown to conclusively not meet the government's performance specification, then the issue will be addressed at that time."

The waiver turned out to be anything but temporary. Over the next year, Patricio went on to issue waivers for at least 20 lots representing nearly 19,000 vests.

"The OTVs in the stated lots do not fully comply with the current Marine Corps performance specification for the OTV and do not meet existing contractual requirements," Patricio wrote in one waiver, accepting a shipment of nine lots — about 4,500 vests — that testers at Aberdeen rejected.

“The OTVs are needed by deploying units that must receive them prior to deployment in the very near future. I understand and accept the increased risk posed by accepting the reduced protection against the 9mm threat,” he wrote Nov. 24, 2004. **[He “accepts the increased risk”? This murdering bureaucrat sits safely in DC. What “risk” does he have, except not getting a fat job with a war profiteer after he retires? The enemy isn’t in Iraq. This is the enemy.]**

Natick officials said they pleaded with Point Blank to properly document and track the materials and manufacture of the vests so they might pinpoint the problem. But they said Point Blank could not deliver the information they needed.

The Marine Corps contract included a premium of about \$50 extra per vest to cover additional quality assurance procedures at Point Blank, MacKiewicz said. **[So, the war profiteer fucks up the vests, and gets paid extra for doing it!!]**

In a series of memos written over the summer of 2004, in which MacKiewicz explained his reasoning for rejecting certain lots delivered by Point Blank, the testing expert detailed his concerns.

In recommending the rejection of lot 71-12 on July 19, MacKiewicz warned of “major quality assurance deficiencies” at the company. He recommended “disciplinary action against the contractor to resolve the issue.” [What a silly man. Doesn’t he know if you manufacture shit that kills Marines, you get a bonus?]

In a July 21 memorandum to Patricio recommending the rejection of two more lots, 69-84 and 71-9, MacKiewicz wrote: “One of the significant factors, which ultimately led to award a contract to Point Blank, was their proposed quality assurance procedures for eliminating defects and tracking materials. ... **Point Blank is not compliant with their manufacturing quality control proposal and their contractual obligation for providing consistent product performance and reliability.**”

Hatfield said she was forthcoming with whatever data contract officials requested, but firmly rejected government officials’ claims that her vests had any kind of material problem, putting the blame squarely on the tests at Aberdeen. **[Right. Blame the tests.]**

The Marine Corps fielded vests from the failed lots through the end of 2004, documents and interviews show, but stopped taking delivery of Point Blank manufactured vests in early 2005. By then, the contract had not been exhausted — at least 9,000 vests could still have been purchased.

Neither the Marine Corps nor the company would explain why more vests hadn’t been purchased. But in late December 2004, the Army signed a \$190 million contract with Point Blank to purchase 360,000 vests through 2006. Point Blank was chosen over 11 other bidders for the contract, the Pentagon said.

The Army, which equips its troops with different versions of the Interceptor body armor system, has never accepted vests that failed ballistic standards, and the service says it stands by the manufacturer despite the Corps’ vest failures. Army

officials in charge of equipping soldiers with body armor said in an interview that the service has never issued a waiver for ballistic performance and not one of the more than 680,000 vests fielded since 1998 is from a failed production lot.

The Army versions of the Point Blank vest, dubbed Pathfinder and Pathfinder Plus, differ from the Marine Corps' "Alpha" package in the weight and number of Kevlar sheets that make up the armor. To date, the Army has accepted nearly 500,000 vests from the company.

Nonetheless, Point Blank's stock has dropped precipitously this year. In early January, the stock was riding at \$17.86 before dropping about 61 percent over the first four months of the year.

On May 3, the day before the Corps announced its body armor recall, Point Blank parent company DHB Industries announced it had named a new president.

The company tapped retired Army Gen. Larry Ellis, who joined the company as a board member last year after retiring from the service. He led Army Forces Command in Atlanta, Ga., before retiring in July.

His appointment follows the hiring of another former Army officer, retired Col. Ishmon Burks, to be DHB's executive vice president for investor and media relations.

The appointments could help to address DHB's flagging stock value and reputation.

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

TWO U.S. SOLDIERS KILLED IN BAGHDAD DRIVE-BY SHOOTING

May 19, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-05-23C

BAGHDAD, Iraq - **Two Task Force Baghdad Soldiers died May 19 at approximately 5:40 p.m. from wounds suffered when their convoy was fired upon in central Baghdad.**

TASK FORCE BAGHDAD SOLDIER KILLED IN IED ATTACK

May 19, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-05-22C

BAGHDAD, Iraq – **A Task Force Baghdad Soldier died May 19 at approximately 11:45 a.m. from wounds suffered when his convoy struck a roadside bomb in southeast Baghdad.**

The Soldier died en route to a military hospital.

U.S. SOLDIER KILLED IN RAMADI

May 19, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-05-24C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – **A Soldier assigned to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed May 18 during an indirect fire attack on Forward Operating Base Ramadi.**

The 2nd BCT is a U.S. Army unit assigned to II MEF (Fwd)

Two Polish Servicemen Injured After Explosion Of A Mine

19 May 2005 FOCUS News Agency, Warsaw

Two Polish servicemen were injured after explosion of a mine, set aside the road, which connects Iraqi capital Baghdad and the town of Hillah, announced RIA Novosti, citing an announcement of the spokesman of the Polish Defense Ministry Zdislav Gnatovskyy.

The mine exploded at the passing of a vehicle of the Polish contingent. The two injured servicemen were transported to the nearest hospital with no danger for their lives.

Dundee Man Killed

May 19, 2005 By RYAN KARP, T-R Staff Writer

Reuben Ray Miller, 37, of Dundee became a civilian casualty of the insurgency in Iraq on May 12.

Miller, a truck driver for KBR Services of Houston, Texas, died of injuries from an explosion in Iraq, where he had been working since February.

He was making an extra delivery that evening when he drove his truck over a land mine that exploded, said his brother-in-law, James Mullet of Sugarcreek.

There were several trucks in Miller's convoy, but his was the only vehicle that was hit.

"They had sweepers that would sweep the road for mines, but occasionally (insurgents) would go behind the sweepers and plant them again," Mullet said.

Miller's family members said they did not know where in Iraq he was working.

Before leaving for Iraq, Miller had been a long-distance truck driver.

Co-workers of Miller will leave Iraq to attend his funeral in Sugarcreek on Saturday.

U.S. Forces And Resistance Troops Help Each Other Kill 10 Collaborators' Bodyguards

"The terrorists were firing at me. Why did the Americans start doing this too?"

May 19, 2005 Associated Press, MOSUL, Iraq

An Iraqi lawmaker said 10 of his private guards were killed here on Thursday during a 1-1/2 hour-long battle with insurgents and Apache helicopter-backed U.S. forces, who he accused of killing several of his aides.

National Assembly member Fawaz al-Jarba, a Sunni, said a group of insurgents started shooting at his house in the Falahi neighborhood eastern Mosul around midday.

Al-Jarba told The Associated Press that his personal security men returned fire, sparking a clash that raised the attention of U.S. soldiers in the area.

"The firing was coming from all directions and the Apaches were bombing," said al-Jarba, a senior member of the Shammar tribe, one of the largest tribes in the Gulf region.

**"The terrorists were firing at me. Why did the Americans start doing this too?"
[Maybe because nobody likes traitors?]**

Al-Jarba, a recent candidate for parliament speaker, said several Apache helicopters were flying over his home and one fired at it, leaving a large hole in his ceiling.

Eight of his bodyguards were killed during the initial battle and two died from their wounds later Thursday in hospital, he said.

TROOP NEWS

Family Hopes Marine Mends After Explosion

May 19, 2005 BY MICHELLE BRADFORD, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Inc.

Lance Cpl. Aaron P. Mankin inhaled flames and debris when a land mine exploded in Iraq, leaving his lungs permanently damaged. But the Rogers Marine's hearing and eyesight were spared during the May 11 blast, and his family has hope.

Mankin, 23, is on a ventilator in a military hospital alongside other troops who've been burned in Iraq. He faces a long and painful recovery, said Mankin's father. "It will probably take a year," said his father, Steve Mankin of Rogers. "Aaron's right-handed, and there's a lot of damage to that hand. We're not sure if he'll be able to keep it." Aaron Mankin in serious but stable condition at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

Mankin and 13 other Marines were hurt when their armored vehicle hit a land mine in northern Iraq. Two Marines died. Steve Mankin said his son was part of Operation Matador, a week-long offensive to track down insurgents near the Syrian border.

A military official asked for Aaron Mankin on the mission because of his work as a combat correspondent, his father said. Aaron Mankin is a photographer and writer for the public affairs office at Camp Fallujah. He's assigned to the II Marine Expeditionary Force.

The day of the explosion, Marines in wider vehicles successfully crossed a buried stack of land mines, Steve Mankin said. The vehicle carrying Aaron Mankin's group was too slim to pass safely.

He was flown to Brooke Army Medical Center from Germany on Friday. Steve and Tonya Mankin flew to San Antonio this weekend.

Aaron Mankin has third-degree burns on 15 percent of his body, primarily his face, hands and arms. He's undergone skin grafts. Damage is deep on his forehead and cheeks, Steve Mankin said. His tongue and the inside of his mouth are burned.

Every morning, doctors remove debris from his lungs. The threat of pneumonia is high. "The doctor says his lungs are damaged for life," Steve Mankin said. "We won't know for a while just how badly."

While the Mankins were in San Antonio, a Marine with lung burns died at Brooke Medical Center. "His injuries were similar to Aaron's," Steve Mankin said.

Family Welcomes Injured Soldier: "I Just Wish They Could All Come Home"

(May 19) By Jeff Inglis, Editor, VillageSoup, SCARBOROUGH

Just a month after being injured in a roadside explosion in Iraq, Army Cpl. Jack Howland returned to Maine to spend two weeks recuperating at home.

Howland, whose family is almost entirely in Scarborough but whose parents live in Porter, was the guest of honor Saturday at a surprise party at the Clambake Restaurant on Pine Point Road in Scarborough.

More than 50 friends, neighbors and relatives attended the gathering, including Howland's three living grandparents, Philip and Sue Bayley and Gladys Howland.

There were four generations of each side of the family to welcome Jack home, just 24 hours after his delayed flight had landed in Portland.

Traveling with him was his girlfriend, Teena Sphar of Midway, Ga., and Teena's daughter, Taylor. They had expected to arrive far earlier in the day, but bad weather and airline schedules delayed them for hours.

When the trio finally came through the gate, family members were there with a banner, and a crowd of strangers waiting for other loved ones let out a huge cheer.

Howland, 23, had been in an Army Humvee, protecting a convoy near Baghdad, when a roadside bomb exploded, burning his eyes and lungs and injuring another soldier in his vehicle.

He had spent four and a half months in Iraq, and found himself airlifted to a U.S. military hospital in Germany and then back to the States for more treatment.

Howland's eyes are now fine, and his lungs have healed to about 60 percent of their normal function. They are continuing to heal, and Howland will return to Georgia for more medical treatment in a couple weeks.

Jack's uncle Dana Howland is the manager at the Clambake, and Jack worked at the restaurant for seven years before entering the Army three years ago. He is a member of the 94th Maintenance Company, 87 Corps Support Battalion, stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., where he met Sphar.

The party grew as Jack's arrival neared, and when he walked into the room he was totally surprised by the crowd.

"It's a totally joyous celebration for us. It could have been totally different," his mother said.

"I had no idea," Jack said with a grin, amid shaking hands and hugging friends and relations.

His grandmother Sue Bayley was glad to see her grandson – and several other grandchildren who came to celebrate – but still had her mind on Jack's comrades in Iraq. "I just wish they could all come home," she said

More Asshole Recruiters Tormenting Kids: "They Won't Leave Me Alone"

05/19/05 By Justin R. Kalmes, Daily Telegram Staff Writer

17-year-old Adrian seniors Spencer Allen and Amanda Kintner said they have both encountered pushy recruiters. **They said recruiters have remained persistent even after they expressed no interest in enlisting.**

"They still try to get you to think about the Army" even if you tell them you have other plans, Allen said.

"They won't leave me alone," Kintner said, noting she gets repeated phone calls from recruiters even after she tells them she's not interested.

Anticipating Counter-Recruitment Protest, Seattle Recruiters To Close Saturday

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

May 19, 2005 By Joseph R. Chenelly, Army Times staff writer

Recruiters in metropolitan Seattle plan to close up shop Saturday in anticipation of a protest march bound for their station.

The rare closing on a Saturday will come a day after the nationwide stand-down ordered by Army Recruiting Command in response to accusations that recruiters cheated in order to enlist otherwise ineligible individuals into the Army.

“Counter-recruitment organizations across the country, including Youth Against War and Racism (in Seattle), have made the call for actions on May 20-21 to say ‘one day is not enough,’” a flier promoting the protest reads.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Due said recruiting efforts will likely be ongoing elsewhere in the city Saturday but not at the office.

And this is not the first time protestors in Seattle have disrupted recruiting efforts.

In January, Due and Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Washington were bombarded with water bottles and other objects hurled by protestors with Students Against War Group. The soldiers had to be escorted off the campus of Seattle Central Community College.

A college spokesman told Army Times on Jan. 26 that the college president was demanding an apology from the student group. But the only time the recruiters heard from the group was when they showed upon local television saying that they weren't sorry.

MORE:

As Army Holds National ‘Stand Down’, NY City Activists ‘Stand Up’ Against Recruitment

WHEN: 5 —7 p.m. Friday, May 20th, 2005

WHERE: Times Square Recruiting Center, 43rd & Broadway

VISUALS: Pink Camouflage, Images of War Casualties

May 20, 2005, NEW YORK

As the U.S. Army Recruiting Command holds a nationwide "Army Values Stand Down Day" on May 20, activists around the country will protest military recruitment, what they see as abusive recruiting tactics, and the occupation of Iraq.

In New York, antiwar and veterans' groups will gather outside the Times Square recruiting center, the largest walk-in military recruiting center in the nation.

The "stand down" follows a rash of complaints that recruiters are resorting to unscrupulous tactics to enlist new soldiers, in particular a Houston Army recruiter's threat to arrest a young man if he didn't immediately report to the local Army recruiting station, as reported by Houston's 11 News Defenders. The Army says it will use the day to retrain its recruiters in ethics and legal recruiting tactics.

But activists argue that no amount of retraining can remove what they say is mounting pressure on recruiters to find recruits at all costs, in the face of the Army's failure to meet its recruiting goals for the third month in a row in April.

Chris Dugan, a former Marine recruiter, now a student at Hunter College and member of the Campus Antiwar Network, charges, "The Army wants to retrain its recruiters not so that they don't use adverse methods of recruiting, but so that the recruiter is better at hiding the lies they tell."

Sponsors of the protest in New York include the Campus Antiwar Network, Code Pink New York, International Socialist Organization, Iraq Veterans Against the War, No Draft No Way, Not in Our Name, NYC Chapter 034 Veterans for Peace, and Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Protests are also planned in other cities across the U.S. in what the Campus Antiwar Network, Code Pink, American Friends Service Committee, and other groups have called a "national day of action."

Contact:

Elizabeth Wrigley-Field / Campus Antiwar Network / wrigleyfield@nyu.edu / (646) 320-6880

Courtney Lee Adams / Code Pink New York / newyork@codepinkalert.org / 212. 920. 1344

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.

Here's A New Recruiting Pitch:

JOIN THE ARMY AND GET RAPED; THE PENTAGON DOESN'T GIVE A SHIT

11 May 2005 From: The Miles Foundation

The Pentagon released a report last week which noted a twenty-five percent increase in the number of sexual assault cases reported to military criminal investigators between 2003 and 2004. Military criminal organizations received 1,700 reports of sexual assault including rape, nonconsensual sodomy, indecent assault and attempts to commit sexual assault.

The reported cases with service member victims rose 25 percent over the number in 2003 and 41 percent over the number in 2002. In addition, 425 cases in which civilian victims were assaulted by service members were noted for the first time.

The escalating numbers cannot be explained by larger numbers of women serving in the US Armed Forces, larger numbers of women being mobilized into combat, or more victims coming forward to report to authorities, or any combination of the above.

The Pentagon was mandated by Congress within the Defense Authorization Act for 2005 to develop policy directives relative to privacy and confidentiality for victims, services for victims, training and education among first responders and military personnel, review of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and command response initiatives.

The Pentagon announced during press conferences conducted in January and March the development of directive type memorandums including a Commander's Checklist, Reporting and Nonreporting Options for Victims, Victim Services, Collateral Misconduct, Training, and Administrative Separation.

The directives have not addressed privacy and confidentiality for victims who are not uniformed military personnel; victims of domestic violence or stalking; and victim advocates, civilian and military, who have been subpoenaed and threatened with arrest while safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of clients.

The Pentagon has not implemented a myriad of recommendations developed by advocacy groups and task forces over the last decade.

Some have suggested the development of a task force or commission to review implementation of the various policy directives and recommendations from past commissions, panels and task forces. To date, twenty- three commissions, reports, reviews, and panels have been conducted on the issues relating to domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual harassment over the last several decades.

Please also note the task forces, panels and commissions have routinely excluded survivors associated with the US Armed Forces.

Further, the Department of Defense has failed to implement the Office of the Victims' Advocate as appropriated by Congress in 2004. Congress authorized the establishment of the Office as an independent entity at the Secretary of Defense level in order to ensure timely and appropriate victim services, networking among civilian and military entities, and oversight and protections for victim advocates within the military departments.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

General Strike Against Occupation In Ramadi: "Down With America"

21 May 2005 by Simon Assaf, Issue 1952, socialistworker.co.uk

Iraqis in the city of Ramadi and neighbouring towns held a general strike last weekend in a protest against a blockade by US troops.

Sheikh Majeed al-Gaood, of the Duleim tribe from Ramadi, spoke to Socialist Worker by telephone from the Jordanian capital, Amman. He said that on Friday 7 May, after US troops surrounded the city, "a call came from the mosques for a general strike in Ramadi and neighbouring towns. Schools, markets and offices shut down in protest at the blockade".

"The civilian and military resistance distributed leaflets calling for the two-day strike," he added.

Sheikh Majeed spoke on behalf of the Patriotic Forces Rejecting the Occupation (Wahaj Al-Iraq).

The Sunni city of Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, is on a key junction along Highway Ten, which links the Iraqi capital with Syria and Jordan.

Reports from the Iraqi resistance say the US blockade started after an attack on US troops patrolling the southern edges of Ramadi. Soldiers imposed a curfew and launched raids arresting dozens of young men.

According to a report in the Iraqi daily al-Zamman, US soldiers drove through Ramadi with loudspeakers urging people to break the strike. But they were ignored.

“There is no peace in Iraq,” the sheikh said. “The two-day strike is a blow to those who claim that ordinary people do not support the resistance.”

The US military claims the town is a stronghold of “Baathist remnants” and Al Qaida. But, according to Sheikh Majeed, the resistance is local and organised by tribes and the mosques.

Far from being a centre of support for the Baathists, Ramadi saw huge demonstrations against the Iraqi government in 1995. Over 2,000 locals were arrested and held without trial by Saddam Hussein’s regime.

The city has continued its tradition of resistance by opposing the US-led occupation. In June 2003 residents demanded that US troops hand back the mayor’s office which they had taken over.

The protest turned into a full-scale revolt and the occupation forces have been battling to regain control ever since.

Hospital employees at Ramadi general hospital demonstrated after an overnight raid by US troops on 27 April. The doctors said that troops blocked access to the hospital and searched it for weapons after clashes between them and resistance fighters.

The Arabic banners read “Down with America” and “America — accept our demand for freedom”.

Samir al-Obeidi, an administrator at the hospital, told the Times that soldiers “came after the curfew without prior notice. They started searching all the wards, for men and women. Lots of people were horrified. They didn’t know what was happening. They kicked in any of the doors in the staff accommodation that were locked.”

Sheikh Majeed al-Gaood told Socialist Worker that the US broke an agreement with the resistance not to raid hospitals.

The agreement, brokered by religious leaders in the area, specified that neither the US troops nor the resistance would set up positions in or near hospitals.

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

Al-Sadr Launches “Step On An Oppressors Flag” Campaign

19 May 2005 Francis Curta, Mail&Guardian

Moqtada al-Sadr called on Muslims to paint US and Israeli flags at the entrance to mosques for worshippers to step on in protest at the alleged desecration of the Qur'an at the US detention camp in Guantánamo.

Several Shi'ite mosques in Baghdad and the holy city of Najaf, where al-Sadr lives, started painting the flags on Thursday, news agency AFP's correspondents reported.

Assorted Resistance Action:

May 19, 2005 Associated Press & CNN & Reuters

Two Iraqi police officers were killed by a roadside bomb in the town of Baqouba, northeast of Baghdad.

In Baghdad, oil Ministry employee Ali Hamid Alwan al-Dulaimy, 31, walked out of his house toward his car when three men firing pistols from a minivan killed him, his brother, Ahmed Hamid Alwan al-Dulaimy, said in a telephone interview.

Drive-by shootings by gunmen in minivans with sliding doors have become prevalent in Baghdad in recent weeks.

In Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, gunmen assassinated policeman Omar Majeed Shakir al-Dosh and his father on Thursday, said police Lt. Qassem Mohammed.

In Baquba on Thursday, two Iraqi police were killed and two others wounded -- a police officer and a civilian -- when a roadside bomb detonated near a police convoy in front of the Diyala University Medicine School, police said.

One Iraqi soldier was killed and another nine were wounded in an attack by a car-bomb in the Southern part of Baghdad. The attack was performed against a patrol checkpoint of the Iraqi police. A passerby was also wounded in the attack.

In Baghdad four Iraqi soldiers were captured.

In the northern town of Baiji, four soldiers from the Iraqi army were captured at dawn.

In Iskandariya, just south of Baghdad, another roadside bomb attacked killed a policeman and wounded three, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

AN ILLEGAL GOVERNMENT:

5.7.05 Whatreallyhappened.com

If you accept that the US Government intentionally lied about weapons of mass destruction to take this nation to war in Iraq, then you must accept that the US Government, by the commission of that act, is no longer a legal government of the people, but an illegal occupation serving private interests.

The majority of Americans now know that the US Government is criminal. They know that the US Government has lied to start wars of conquest, and that it has knowingly tortured innocent people because the lie required it. The majority of Americans now know that the US Government, unless stopped, will continue to do more of the same.

Great people know that freedom is impossible under a government that lies because lies are tools of enslavement, and that chains built of false beliefs hold slaves tighter than chains made of steel.

Slaves will cower before a government they know lies to them, bless the face that lies to them, and ask for more. And now the world watches to see if Americans are a great people, or just slaves living under the delusion they are a free people.

Free men or slaves. Time to choose. The whole world is watching.

The Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

**“Eventually, It's Going To Bare Its
Teeth And Bite”**

May 07, 2005 Ed Naha, Smirkingchimp.com

Okay, granted, the public's outrage over Bush's policies is only on "simmer," but it's clear that the Republican Party is oblivious to it all.

The deal is: you can smile every time you wallop your dog, giving it mixed signals. But, eventually, the dog is going to ignore the smile and just concentrate on the wallop. Eventually, it's going to bare its teeth and bite.

So, to all those in the bubble known as D.C..

Time for a reality check, please.

Before this dog known as "the people" ignores the smile and bites you on the ass.

Big Time.

Mr. Galloway Goes to Washington "1,600 American Soldiers Sent To Their Deaths On A Pack Of Lies"

"Have a look at the \$800 million you gave to American military commanders to hand out around the country without even counting it or weighing it.

05/17/05 By John Nichols, The Nation"

Norm Coleman is a fool.

Not an ideological nut case, not a partisan whack, not even a useful idiot -- just a plain old-fashioned, drool-on-his-tie fool.

The Minnesota Republican senator who took Paul Wellstone's seat after one of the most disreputable campaigns in American political history has been trying over the past year to make a name for himself by blowing the controversy surrounding the United Nations Oil-for-Food program into something more than the chronicle of corporate abuse that it is.

The US media, which thrives on official sound bites, was more than willing to lend credence to Coleman's overblown claims about wrongdoing in the UN program set up in 1996 to permit Iraq -- which was then under strict international sanctions -- to buy food, medicine and humanitarian supplies with the revenues from regulated oil sales.

Even as Coleman's claims became more and more fantastic, he faced few challenges from the cowering Democrats in Congress.

But when Coleman started slandering foreign politicians, he exposed the dramatic vulnerability of his claims that the supposed scandal was much more than a blatant example of US corporations taking advantage of their powerful connections in Washington to undermine official US policy, harm the national interest and profit off the suffering of the poor.

The Senate investigation that Coleman sought regarding the Oil for Food program has already revealed that the Bush Administration failed to crack down on widespread abuse of the Oil for Food program by US energy companies, and that US oil purchases accounted for the majority of the kickbacks paid to Saddam Hussein's regime in return for sales of inexpensive oil.

Indeed, the report concludes, "The United States (government) was not only aware of Iraqi oil sales which violated UN sanctions and provided the bulk of the illicit money Saddam Hussein obtained from circumventing UN sanctions. On occasion, the United States actually facilitated the illicit oil sales."

Instead of forcing the President, his aides and the executives of Bayoil, the Texas oil company that the report shows paid "at least \$37 million in illegal surcharges to the Hussein regime" -- money that helped the Iraqi dictator solidify his grip on power -- Coleman started to make wild charges about European officials such as British parliamentarian George Galloway.

The problem for Coleman is that Galloway is not a standard-issue American politician -- the kind who has nothing to say and says it poorly. He is a veteran of the rough-and-tumble politics of Glasgow and the equally rough-and-tumble politics of the British Parliament.

Galloway called Coleman's bluff and flew to Washington for a remarkable appearance before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. "I am determined now that I am here, to be not the accused but the accuser," Galloway announced as he stood outside the Capitol Tuesday. "These people are involved in the mother of all smokescreens."

The member of Parliament tore through Coleman's flimsy "evidence," issuing an unequivocal denial that began, "Mr. Chairman, I am not now, nor have I ever been an oil trader, and neither has anyone been on my behalf. I have never seen a barrel of oil, owned one, bought one, sold one, and neither has anybody on my behalf." He accused Coleman of being "remarkably cavalier with any idea of justice" and pointed out error after error in the report the senator had brandished against him.

For instance, Galloway noted that he had met Saddam twice -- not the "many" times alleged by the report. "As a matter of fact I have met Saddam Hussein exactly the same number of times that Donald Rumsfeld met him," said the recently re-elected British parliamentarian. "The difference is that Donald Rumsfeld met him to sell him guns."

For good measure, Galloway used the forum Coleman had foolishly provided to deliver a blistering condemnation of Coleman's war.

"Now, Senator, I gave my heart and soul to oppose the policy that you promoted. I gave my political life's blood to try to stop the mass killing of Iraqis by the sanctions on Iraq which killed one million Iraqis, most of them children, most of them died before they even knew that they were Iraqis, but they died for no other reason other than that they were Iraqis with the misfortune to born at that time.

"I gave my heart and soul to stop you committing the disaster that you did commit in invading Iraq. And I told the world that your case for the war was a pack of lies," Galloway informed the fool on Capitol Hill.

"I told the world that Iraq, contrary to your claims, did not have weapons of mass destruction. I told the world, contrary to your claims, that Iraq had no connection to Al Qaeda. I told the world, contrary to your claims, that Iraq had no connection to the atrocity on 9/11, 2001.

"I told the world, contrary to your claims, that the Iraqi people would resist a British and American invasion of their country and that the fall of Baghdad would not be the beginning of the end but merely the end of the beginning.

"Senator, in everything I said about Iraq, I turned out to be right and you turned out to be wrong, and 100,000 people paid with their lives; 1,600 of them American soldiers sent to their deaths on a pack of lies; 15,000 of them wounded, many of them disabled forever on a pack of lies.

"If the world had listened to Kofi Annan, whose dismissal you demanded, if the world had listened to President Chirac, who you want to paint as some kind of corrupt traitor, if the world had listened to me and the antiwar movement in Britain, we would not be in the disaster that we are in today. Senator, this is the mother of all smokescreens. You are trying to divert attention from the crimes that you supported, from the theft of billions of dollars of Iraq's wealth," argued Galloway.

Then the Brit turned the tables on Coleman and steered the committee's attention toward "the real Oil for Food scandal."

"Have a look at the fourteen months you were in charge of Baghdad, the first fourteen months when \$8.8 billion of Iraq's wealth went missing on your watch. Have a look at Halliburton and other American corporations that stole not only Iraq's money but the money of the American taxpayer," Galloway said.

"Have a look at the oil that you didn't even meter, that you were shipping out of the country and selling, the proceeds of which went who knows where.

"Have a look at the \$800 million you gave to American military commanders to hand out around the country without even counting it or weighing it.

"Have a look at the real scandal breaking in the newspapers today, revealed in the earlier testimony in this committee. "That the biggest sanctions busters were not me or Russian politicians or French politicians. The real sanctions busters were your own companies with the connivance of your own Government."

MORE:

“Kickbacks Indeed. They Saved Our Lives”

5.19.05 Kelebdooni, Anti-Allawi Group

There is an aspect to the infamous "kickbacks paid to Saddam Hussein's regime in return for sales of inexpensive oil" that so few seem to click to at all.

You see, "Saddam Hussein's regime", for better or worse, happened to be the then current government of Iraq.

The people of Iraq needed the government, as any people in a civilized society today do, to provide the services that governments and only governments can, i.e. security, civic services, public transport, education, ...etc. You name it.

How can the people continue to live under those unprecedented sanctions and strictest embargo for 13 years if the government cannot get some income to import and supply some of the basic requirements for the said services and for its own machinery to keep ticking over at a minimum?

If the government could not get some income on the side, the food ration distribution system would have collapsed. Local agriculture that supplied a major portion of the peoples' food needs could not have survived without government subsidized fertilizers, agri-chemicals, and machinery. Famine would have been inevitable.

Kindly, leave Saddam aside for a moment. Iraq is not Saddam. Iraq is a country. There are millions in that country who wanted to live.

The sanctions, whatever the causes and justifications, were designed to cripple the country in every respect, and in actual fact, to make the invasion and occupation eventually possible.

Responsible Iraqi people, whether in official capacities or privately, naturally did all they could to circumvent the evil sanctions. Everyone did what he could if he could. It was the call of the day. Saddam is simply a distraction here. He's not the issue.

The sanctions led to deaths of people, exceeding a million in fact. That's a much higher figure than anything alleged against Saddam. So let's be fair here. Who was the greater criminal by far?

A million plus is the scale of deaths attributable to the sanctions, not to count other deprivations and deteriorations of the quality of life for those that remained somehow living.

As a calamity of this scale did not happen during the era of Satan Hussein before the sanctions, then there is every reason to presume that if more "kickbacks" were achieved, more Iraqis would have been actually saved.

It's simply sickening.

Who had the welfare of the Iraqis in mind?

Those who devised the sanctions and followed their execution with the utmost cruelty?

They are the criminals, not those who paid, or even those who got paid. All those involved in "kickbacks" for whatever personal reasons, shady or altruistic, actually averted genocide and saved a people from impending extinction.

Kickbacks indeed. They saved our lives.

Idiotic Reporters Spew Puke

May 10, 2005 By Ted Rall

NEW YORK--If you read newspapers, listen to the radio or watch television, you know that the media has assigned Muqtada al-Sadr a peculiar job title: radical cleric.

"Gunmen fired on supporters of the radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr on Friday," reports the Associated Press wire service. National Public Radio routinely refers to "radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr." "The protesters were largely supporters of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr," says CNN. Even Agence France-Press refers to him the same way: "Followers of a radical Shiite cleric marched in Baghdad."

I wonder: Does he answer his phone with a chipper "Muqtada al-Sadr, radical cleric!"? Does it say "radical cleric" on his business card?

It's a safe bet that neither al-Sadr nor his Iraqi supporters considers him particularly "radical."

And, if you stop to think about it, there's nothing inherently extreme about wanting foreign troops to leave your country.

Radical is a highly subjective word that gets thrown around without much reflection.

What's more radical, invading another nation without a good excuse or trying to stop someone from doing so? But that's the problem: the media has become so accustomed to absorbing and regurgitating official government propaganda that they never stop to think.

A Google News search of the terms "Muqtada al-Sadr" and "radical cleric" brought up 616 news and opinion stories, the latter derived from the former.

Despite the prime minister's obvious status as an American-appointed puppet, "Iyad Allawi" and "collaborationist" yielded zero results.

The message is clear: al-Sadr, and by extension Iraqis who oppose the U.S. occupation, are marginal wackos. Those who support it are referred to by questionable legitimizing honorifics--prime minister, in Allawi's case--because the U.S. government called a press conference to announce him as such.

Repetition is key to successful advertising. The American media uses repeated arbitrary labeling in its supposedly impartial coverage in a deliberate campaign to alter public perception.

Americans were meant to feel less sympathy for an kidnapped Italian woman shot by U.S. soldiers manning a checkpoint in Iraq after the talking heads repeatedly referred to her as a "communist journalist."

A Fox News reporter in the same story would never have been dubbed a "neofascist journalist." John McCain (R-AZ) might become president someday but "maverick senator John McCain" probably won't.

Labeling bias works to marginalize political outsiders while powerful elites receive their full honorifics. Howard Dean was antiwar firebrand Howard Dean but George W. Bush was never referred to as pro-war crusader George W. Bush.

The press calls the founder of the Moral Majority "the Reverend Jerry Falwell," not "radical cleric Jerry Falwell." Even the word "cleric" implies foreignness to a xenophobic public; American religious leaders are the more familiar "ministers" rather than clerics.

Instead of telling readers and viewers what to think with cheesy labels, why not let public figures' quotes and actions speak for themselves? Besides, well-known players like al-Sadr and Falwell don't require an introduction.

Loaded labels are commonly used to influence the public's feelings about groups of people as well as individuals. Under Ronald Reagan the Afghan mujahedeen, who received CIA funding and weapons that they used to fight Soviet occupation forces, were called "freedom fighters." Iraqis who take up arms against U.S. occupation troops, on the other hand, are called "insurgents," a word that implies rebellion for its own sake.

This was the same term used by the New York Times and other mainstream media to refer to anti-U.S. fighters in Vietnam during the 1960s. Only later, when the Vietnam War became unpopular, did American newspapers begin calling the former "insurgents" members of an infinitely more patriotic-sounding "resistance."

What hits home hits hardest. I too have been victimized by the idiotic practice of repeat labeling. "Controversial cartoonist Ted Rall" garners no fewer than 58 hits on Google. Care to guess the results for "patriotic cartoonist Ted Rall"?

[He missed one. Ramadi, Samarra, etc. are always "restive Ramadi," "restive Samarra," blahblah, as if a whole city could toss, turn and wiggle around. Another idiocy is the constant reference to resistance fighters as "gunmen," as if there were no women fighting back with arms against the occupation. But then "gunpersons" would just illustrate how silly the term is to begin with.

[The good news: every day we're a bit closer to reporting on "U.S. Imperial die-hards" and "remnants" being rounded up in Washington DC. Our troops will help with that. A whole lot of doors there badly need kicking in. T]

Ten Commandments Revised

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

NEWSFLASH

5/19/05 The Capital,

The Bureau of Right Thought of the Department of Homeland Security has issued today the following revision of the Ten Commandments, to be effective immediately:

- I. Thou shalt worship the wealthy and the powerful for they are thy Lord and Savior.
- II. Thou shalt not think for thyself nor permit such a deadly sin in another.
- III. Thou shalt not agitate against the System for it is Supreme, benevolent, and eternal.
- IV. Remember to work faithfully and humbly 24/7 to multiply thy Masters' profits.
- V. Honor thy Father who reigns in and for the Capital.
- VI. Thou shalt kill and die only at the command of thy Masters.
- VII. Thou shalt not question thy Masters' ethics for they are made in Heaven.
- VIII. Thou shalt joyfully permit thy Masters to appropriate the fruit of thy labor.
- IX. Thou shalt believe official pronouncements for they are the Holy Writ.
- X. Thou shalt happily sacrifice thyself to fructify thy Masters' noble global imperium.

Warning: Anyone violating the new Commandments is liable to be clamped into irons, transported to Devil's Island (popularly known as Gitmo, Cuba), and flushed into oblivion.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Capitalism At Work:

Profits At Record High; Wages At Record Low

Looking at it another way, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, another often written-off liberal think tank, published a report last month that in the last three years, the share of US national income that goes toward corporate profits is at its highest levels since World War II, while the share of national income that goes to wages and salaries is at a record low.

May 18, 2005 By Derrick Z. Jackson, Boston Globe

IT IS STUNNING to see the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times simultaneously devote a series to the American class divide.

The Journal reported last Friday, "Despite the widespread belief that the US remains a more mobile society than Europe, economists and sociologists say that in recent decades the typical child starting out in poverty in continental Europe or in Canada has had a better chance at prosperity."

In an echo, the Times wrote virtually the same thing, adding that in America, a child's economic background is a better predictor of school performance than in Denmark, the Netherlands, or France.

The best that could be said was that class mobility in the United States is "not as low as in developing countries like Brazil, where escape from poverty is so difficult that the lower class is all but frozen in place."

Oh joy. This is what we have come to? Comparisons to developing countries?

Another odd thing about the series is that the mainstays of the mainstream press are making a big deal out of the divide after years in which many economists warned that our policies were plunging us straight toward Brazil. For years, groups like the Boston-based United for a Fair Economy and the Institute for Policy Studies sent up smoke signals that should have been a smoking gun.

In 1973, the ratio of CEO pay to worker pay was 43 to 1. By 1992, it was 145 to 1. By 1997, it was 326 to 1.

By 2000, it hit a sky-high 531 to 1.

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This completes a perfect storm over the last quarter century of corporate welfare for those with the most among us and vilification for those with the least.

It is obvious that Americans believed that none of the inequalities long endured by the poor (because it's all their fault, right?) would seep into our lives. We were wrong. With suburban schools slashing their budgets, healthcare costs rising, retirement funds in doubt, and the next generation facing a drop in their life span from obesity and diabetes, the nation is sliding into a dangerous place.

A quarter century of a "mine, all mine" ethos continues to work for CEOs and the upper class. The rest of America finds the ladder taller and steepening. Much of the nation is now one catastrophic injury away from falling into poverty.

It is no wonder why politicians who protect the wealthy scream "class warfare" every time someone talks about inequity. It is a diversion to keep those who vote against their own interests from realizing they are victims of friendly fire.

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.iraq-news.de/>, <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>,

www.williambowles.info/qispecial,

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

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