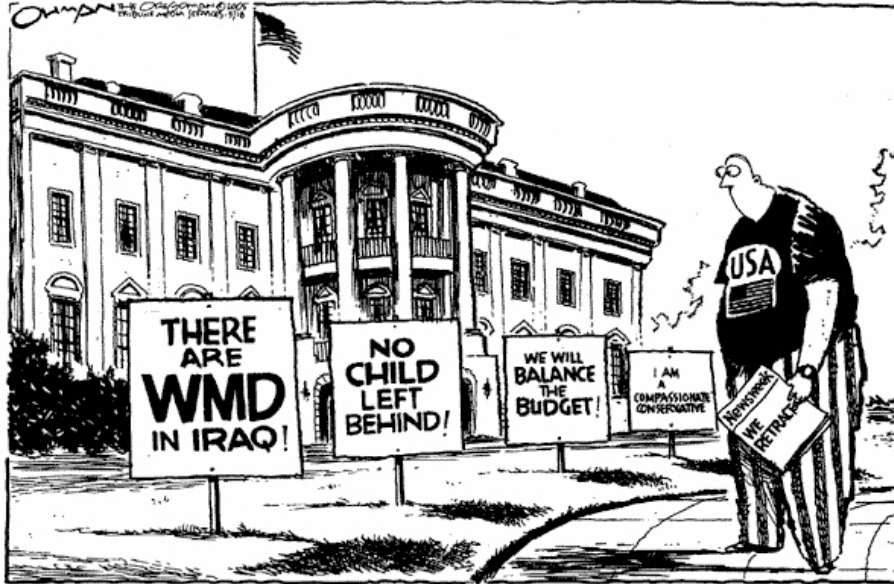


GI SPECIAL 3B39:



STILL WAITING FOR A RETRACTION.

[Thanks to Phil G.]

Article 15: "Long Live The Empire Sir"

From: Soldier X
To: GI Special
Sent: May 21, 2005
Subject: Article 15

"I hate to be the bearer of bad news" my slightly over weight NCO that resembled Homer Simpson told me.

"You are being read your fifteen at sixteen hundred."

The huge smile on my face twisted into rage. I couldn't control myself. From deep down in my guts a rumble began. In snowballed up threw my chest pulling my innards with it. As it passed my lungs it gathered a velocity and mass. In light

**speed it shot through my throat and out my mouth.
"FFFFFFUUUUUCCCCCKKKKKK!!!!!!!"**

The bastards had me on the ropes.

Jeff and I had the rented a car and it was packed for a trip to Paris for the weekend. However, in four hours I had to report to the Company Commander and First Sergeant to learn of my punishment on the [deleted to protect ID] incident.

An Article fifteen is a punishment that meant I could be losing the privilege to leave base and I could be forced to do extra duty, lose money, or even lose rank.

It was especially bad because I had been skipping formations and shamming out of work enough to bring the attention of the dark powers upon me. I had to sign a counseling statement earlier that day. This had all been a planed hit on my last weekend in Europe. I was doomed.

At Four O'clock Max and I were side by side against the wall outside the XO's office waiting to report. Max went in first and came out soon after with a confused look on his face. He told me that he had to tell the Commander what happened and then they kicked him out to discuss the matter.

He went back in for awhile. When he came out he was smiling. "Restriction for seven days" he said. That gave me some hope. Restriction sucked, but hell it beats working all weekend from nine am to midnight and six to midnight on work nights. That makes for a shitty week.

It was my turn.

I knocked three times loudly and waited for them to yell enter, which they did.

I was thinking how silly the Army is with their rules. They have about twenty written pages on how to officially report to an officer. I stepped a few feet in front of the Commander's desk stopped facing ninety degrees away from him. Then made a sharp right face to a position of attention. A gave a solid salute and did the ole "Specialist Jefferson reporting as ordered Sir."

He swung a lazy salute back. What a jack ass I thought.

The salute goes back to the days of knights. It is supposed to represent a respectful gesture of raising your helmed visor so you can look your leader or fellow soldier in the eye as you pass.

It was a courtesy that I had often poked fun at. Sometimes if we were in a group we would spread out in a long line with space between us. So if an officer passed us he would have to salute four or five people in a row instead of one large group. Or, we would say clever things like "Kill them all Sir" "Long live the Empire Sir" or "Scouts eat their dead Sir".

I feel like sometimes it is the wild west, where I have to draw my salute before the officer does. But today it seemed offensive.

After I explained my story I was deep in thought while the Commander mumbled away the details of my infraction and why I was being screwed.

After a few droning Roger Sirs I snapped out of it as he came to what my punishment entailed. He scribbled down on my Article 15 "7 days rest." and under that "7 days X-tra Duty".

Again that dirty word wiggled in my stomach. It popped around a bit and I swallowed it hard with what little pride I had left. The burning anger heated my skin and made me dizzy. I signed the paper work and gave another salute. This timing chiming the 2-63 Headquarters motto "No Slack Sir"

He paused before saluting, forcing me to stand there with my hand up to my eyebrow. I wanted to open my mouth and vomit fiery lava all over him. I wanted to roar so loud he would be crushed by the concussion. I wanted to summon thunderstorms inside the room and see these ass holes shredded in violence. All I could do is stare straight forward stiff as the power tripping egotist stood over me smug and happy he finally had me.

He gave another half ass salute that resembled more like a motion some royalty might give a serf to leave his presence.

With a tight quivering lip I turned and walked out. I imagined slamming the door with enough force to knock him over, knock his picture of him off the wall, and shattering his windows.

I didn't. Instead I walked quickly outside into the cool air looked up into heaven and shook my fist at the evil deity that damned me. Then with a point I cursed him back "I will fucking get you for this".

Without a co-pilot Jeff joined the boys for another wild night in Nuremberg.

They were enjoying themselves at the pub while I was doing various janitorial work around the company. I swept, mopped and scrubbed an entire building the size of a large collage dorm. My last days in Europe and I am just a laborer slave cleaning up after dirtiest creatures on the face of the planet, US Soldiers.

As we have lived in the most miserable circumstances in the world we have learned to exist happily in trash and stink. An Army barracks can become pretty nasty.

Especially since almost all of us are on a giant drinking binge to expel the memories of war or catch up on the year of partying that we feel we missed out on.

My fellow extra duty partners were enjoyable. Being able to talk to some of the soldiers that share the commands disdain and share my hatred for the Army.

I learned of that one kid, while injured in Iraq, went to Anaconda for treatment and came down with something. He had such a high fever that he didn't realize were

he was and left the tent hospital. He was found two days later in an empty connex.

The doc's thought he left to his unit and his unit reported him AWOL. The Mps took him in, all the while he was sick as a dog. He was hallucinating and at one point threatened the Mps and his Sergeants. But no one believed he was so sick he could lose control like that. They just thought he was faking and trying to get out of trouble for shamming in Anaconda rather than returning to his units base.

There was also Williams who punched a kid down range. He is a PTSD case, who hit his wife during leave when he thought she was an Iraqi.

And Amendola, who pissed hot on a urine analysis when we got back.

The last was a soldier that went AWOL because he said he had some family issues to straighten out when he was home for leave. He missed his flight, but came in a week later.

All kids with problems and could use some help instead of being punished and treated like criminals.

No P-town, no leaving base, no having fun for a long nasty week.

I hate the Army and the Army hates me,

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Stark County Soldier Injured In Iraq Dies

May 23, 2005 WKYC-TV

STARK COUNTY -- Army 1st Lt. Aaron Seesan, a graduate of Massillon High School, has passed away after being injured in a weekend explosion.

He is the son of Tom Seesan, the superintendent of the Stark County Board of Retardation.

Aaron Seesan was 24.

THREE TASK FORCE FREEDOM SOLDIERS KILLED, ONE INJURED IN MOSUL

May 23, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-05-26C

MOSUL, Iraq – Three Task Force Freedom Soldiers were killed and one was injured in two separate attacks in Mosul May 22.

The injured Soldier was taken to a combat hospital for treatment.

TASK FORCE LIBERTY SOLDIER KILLED BY TIKRIT IED

May 23, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-05-27C

TIKRIT, Iraq -- A Task Force Liberty Soldier died of wounds sustained in an attack at 10:00 a.m., May 22 when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was detonated near a combat patrol, just north of Tikrit.

TASK FORCE LIBERTY SOLDIER KILLED IN KIRKUK VEHICLE ACCIDENT

May 23, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-05-28C

TIKRIT, Iraq -- A Task Force Liberty Soldier died of injuries sustained in a vehicle accident near Kirkuk at about 2:30 p.m., May 22. The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Three Fort Lewis Soldiers Die In Separate Incidents

May 23rd By Matt Misterek; The News Tribune

MOSUL, Iraq – Three soldiers based out of Fort Lewis were killed in a pair of enemy attacks that occurred early Sunday morning, Stryker Brigade officials confirmed.

One member of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division was shot to death by insurgents while he was helping clear a house during a search. One assailant was killed at the scene; a second person was injured and detained.

Another Stryker soldier died and two others were wounded on an overnight mission when a roadside bomb exploded near their vehicle. One of the men was gravely injured and died Sunday night.

The deaths marked the 29th, 30th and 31st fatalities to beset Fort Lewis' second Stryker brigade since it deployed to Iraq in October.

That the incidents came within a few hours of each other was devastating to brigade leaders after a span of more than three weeks without an attack in which a Stryker soldier was killed.

THREE U.S. TROOPS WOUNDED IN RAMADI



Holes in a U.S. armoured vehicle which was hit Sunday night by a roadside bomb in the al-Tamim area of Ramadi May 23, 2005 wounding three U.S. soldiers. (AP Photo/Omar Aboud)

Four U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Samarra

May 23, 2005 AFP & AP

In Samarra, 125 kilometres north of Baghdad, three bombers struck early Monday outside a US military compound in the city.

Two drove car bombs at the perimeter walls, while the third, wearing a jacket packed with explosives, ran up after the initial attack in an attempt to kill soldiers emerging from the first onslaught.

Four US soldiers were injured in the attacks, the US military said.

Highly Professional Resistance Attacks Slaughtering Mercenaries: “Recruiters Have Hit The Bottom Of The Barrel”

Security specialists said the terrorists appeared to have calibrated mortars in advance of the attack, permitting direct hits on the five-vehicle convoy just as it hit a series of hidden bombs laid out in a "daisy chain" along the road.

May 23, 2005 By Sharon Behn, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Iraq's insurgents are conducting increasingly sophisticated and lethal attacks on the private security companies.

These contractors and officials point to the surprising level of planning and brutality involved in a May 8 attack on the British security company Hart Security Ltd., which provides protection to convoys, homes and individuals in Iraq.

Twelve out of 18 Iraqi and international guards were killed in the attack, in which insurgents ambushed a convoy escorting cargo for the U.S. forces from Baghdad to a base in al-Asat, about 90 miles west of the city.

Once resistance from the security team ended, the attackers moved in to finish off the wounded, then piled several of the bodies on top of a bomb so they could not be removed without setting off an explosion, sources said.

Security specialists said the terrorists appeared to have calibrated mortars in advance of the attack, permitting direct hits on the five-vehicle convoy just as it hit a series of hidden bombs laid out in a "daisy chain" along the road.

The militants then managed to split up the convoy and systematically wipe out members of each smaller component.

Such attacks "have become much more organized and much more complex," said one retired special-operations officer working as a security manager for a firm operating in Iraq.

"In 2003, they were random small-arms fire. Then they escalated to roadside bombs -- sometimes command-detonated or with tripwires. Then they escalated to car bombs that would run a ramp and pull into a convoy or traffic circle.

"And now they are very well organized, rehearsed, orchestrated, using a combination of rocket-propelled grenades, (roadside bombs) set in a daisy chain to get the wounded as they exit the vehicles, heavy machine guns, small arms and hand-thrown grenades," he said.

At least 93 security operators have been killed in Iraq since April 2003, icasualties.org reported. The Web site showed the number of contractor deaths spiking in April with 20 killed, the most since 31 contractors died in August 2004. So far, seven have been killed this month.

Security operators think the numbers are higher. About 130 private security companies, each with hundreds of operators working in Iraq, are hired to defend personnel, facilities and convoys.

Some guards also say recruiters have hit the bottom of the professional barrel and are hiring anyone who knows how to handle a gun.

Security companies are making huge profits providing clients with a line of armored cars, low-visibility cars, armed guards known as "shooters," and drivers.

With the intensity and sophistication of terrorist attacks increasing, and with the constant fear of kidnapping, the cost of security has mushroomed to account for 16 percent of the total reconstruction budget.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Troops Death Rate In Afghanistan Higher Than In Iraq

May 23, 2005 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

American commanders say the Taliban is a viable resistance force in Afghanistan even three years after the Islamic radicals fell, but the U.S. military's fight to undermine their influence and bring stability is showing signs of progress.

The assessment follows a stretch in which U.S. troops in Afghanistan have been killed at a higher rate than those in Iraq, where there are about eight times as many American soldiers and where the situation is widely perceived as more dangerous.

As a proportion of their total numbers, U.S. troops in Afghanistan recently have been dying at a slightly higher rate than in Iraq, where there are about 135,000 troops.

Since early March, 27 American military personnel have died in Afghanistan, according to Pentagon figures, or about 1.6 per 1,000; the latest death came from a bombing Saturday, with a purported Taliban spokesman claiming responsibility.

During the same time period in Iraq, at least 124 have died, a rate of about 0.9 per 1,000.

During a visit to Afghanistan in April, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld was told by the top commander there at the time, Lt. Gen. David Barno, that the capabilities of the Afghan police ranged from "pretty good to extraordinarily bad."

Barno also said that in some parts of the country the Taliban are still able to intimidate villagers enough to gain their tacit support. [Translation: Popular support for Afghan resistance to foreign occupation is growing --- a few thousand year-old Afghan tradition, most recently expressed in the defeat of the Russian occupation army. The Bush occupation is weaker. Time to come home.]

One U.S. Soldier Wounded In Paktika: Afghans Demand End Of U.S. Occupation Arrests: Bush Tells Karzai To Fuck Off

May 23, 2005 By Daniel Cooney & Jennifer Loven, Associated Press

Saturday's fighting in eastern Paktika province left one U.S. soldier slightly wounded. Spokesman Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara said rebels had sneaked across the border from Pakistan and opened fire on American and Afghan forces.

After a winter lull, loyalists of the ousted Taliban regime and other militants opposed to Karzai's U.S.-backed government have ramped up their insurgency.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai called for an end to U.S. raids on Afghans' homes unless the government is notified beforehand. The Defense Ministry said all arrests should now be made by Afghan authorities.

President Bush said Monday that U.S. troops in Afghanistan will remain under U.S. control despite Afghan President Hamid Karzai's request for more authority over them.

TROOP NEWS

Remember the Dead & Fight for the Living

Memorial Day Commemoration for Peace

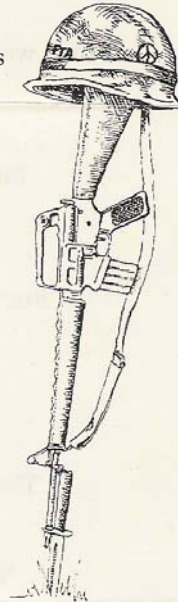
This year Memorial Day again finds us taking and inflicting new military and civilian casualties every day in the already brutal, now more and more pointless occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Join with veterans and military family members to remember those we've lost and to call for an end to the occupation and the safe return of our troops to their homes.

On Sunday May 29 we will gather at the NYC Vietnam Veterans Memorial in downtown Manhattan for a short observance.

From there we will hold a solemn procession to the Battery Park waterfront where people can remember those lost and cast a flower in the water in their memory.

All are welcomed.



Sunday, May 29th at 1:00 PM

NYC Vietnam Veterans Memorial

55 Water Street (2 blocks from the Staten Island Ferry)

Take #1 or 9 subway train to South Ferry and walk east on Water Street.

SPONSORED BY:

**Veterans For Peace • Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Iraq Veterans Against the War • Black Veterans For Social Justice
Military Families Speak Out • Gold Star Families For Peace**

FOR MORE INFO, CALL: (212) 726-0557 or (201) 876-0430

"My Boys Should Die In Baghdad? For What?"

23 May 2005 By Bob Herbert, The New York Times

Potential recruits are staying away from the armed forces in droves. Most Americans want no part of the administration's hapless venture in Iraq.

A woman in Connecticut with two college-age sons said to me recently: "My boys should die in Baghdad? For what?"

Now the military is in a fix. Many of the troops have served multiple tours in Iraq and are weary. The insurgency remains strong, and the Iraq military has proved to be a disappointing ally.

Only 41% Now Support The War

Only 41 percent of Americans think the war in Iraq is "worth fighting" and only 42 percent think it's going well. 22 May 2005, Frank Rich, The New York Times

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)

Deadly Disease Hits Hawijah Troops: "This Whole Country Wants To Either Sting You, Bite You Or Kill You"

WARNING!

[This article says: “The skin version is nasty, but it won’t kill you; the other, which manifests internally, can prove fatal if not properly treated.”

[This article, as usual, confuses the problem. There are no different “versions.” The infection is produced by a parasite. The internal infection is from the same parasite, migrating from the skin infection to the internal organs, where it kills.

[Just because the skin infection has cleared up, without further testing there is no guarantee that you do not have the parasite internally, where it will kill you.

[And guess what: the Army isn’t exactly letting that news be known.

[Why, if troops knew that, they might demand testing and further treatment if the tests are positive for the parasite internally. And that costs money, and means the soldier leaves the unit for treatment. Oops. Can’t have that. Let’s just pretend if the skin clears up, everything is fine. If the soldier dies ten years later, no loss for the Pentagon, right? T]

May 23, 2005 By Kevin Dougherty, Stars and Stripes

HAWIJAH, Iraq — Last year, two out of three soldiers sent to Hawijah in north-central Iraq caught a pesky little bug called sand fly fever.

“We’re kind of holding our breath,” said Army Maj. John Dubose, the battalion field surgeon for Task Force Grizzly, the unit now assigned to the area. “We’ve had a mild summer so far.”

Technically, summer hasn’t started yet. But as U.S. troops who have deployed to Iraq know, the seasons down in this part of the world are somewhat of a mirage. Basically, it’s divided between cool and varying degrees of hot, from Arizona dry to oven bake.

The phlebotomus papatasi, the entomological term for sand fly, thrives in the heat. Sand flies like standing water, but they don’t need it to live and reproduce. Brush and even trash bins will do, according to Dubose, an internist and pediatrician who serves in the South Carolina National Guard.

To hear Dubose talk, Hawijah must seem like heaven to a sand fly. No other locale in Iraq reportedly has as high of an incident rate of sand fly fever as the area around Hawijah.

“They’re all around,” said Staff Sgt. John Crawford, a team leader at the aid station on McHenry, the main forward operating base for 1st Battalion, 163rd Infantry Regiment.

Base officials have taken extraordinary steps to lower the incident rate of sand fly fever, which is currently at about 7 percent, according to Dubose. Nearby brush has been burned, standing water gets treated with a solution that’ll kill the pests and trash cans get emptied on a regular basis.

Soldiers also like to put their air conditioning units — if they're lucky enough to have one of those small hardened shelters — on full blast. Better to freeze than to face them flies, they figure.

In addition, health officials are strongly urging the more than 500 soldiers at the base to treat their uniforms and bed nets with permethrin, and to use repellent lotion on exposed skin. Those steps plus properly wearing their uniform to cover as much skin as possible can decrease bites by 95 percent.

"It's all about establishing a perimeter zone around your own body to keep them away," Dubose said.

The more a person gets bitten, the more susceptible they are to sand fly fever. Symptoms can include a 103-104 degree fever, headaches, chills, muscle aches, malaise and nausea. Fortunately, the fever is not contagious.

On average, sand fly fever can sideline a soldier from three to 14 days, Dubose said. So an outbreak in a war zone like Iraq isn't mission friendly.

Last year's outbreak "had a huge impact on operations," 1st Lt. Eric Rosenbaum, a medical battalion leader, said, referring to the previous unit.

A bite from a sand fly can also lead to a potentially fatal disease known as leishmaniasis, which has an incubation period of up to one year. The skin version is nasty, but it won't kill you; the other, which manifests internally, can prove fatal if not properly treated.

"This whole country wants to either sting you, bite you or kill you," said Sgt. 1st Class Bill Unger.

A North Carolina National Guard unit based 80 miles southeast of Kirkuk had the misfortune of being in an area where sand flies carry the parasitic disease. Of the 180 soldiers at forward operating base Rough Rider, now closed, there were 15 documented cases of leishmaniasis, Dubose said.

"It created quite an uproar," he noted.

And all the clamor was caused by a tiny brown female fly that is one-third the size of a mosquito, makes no noise and needs blood to fertilize her eggs.

There is hope on the horizon to minimize the destructive nature of this puny, perky pest.

The Israeli medical community is testing a topical cream to treat the cutaneous (skin) version of leishmaniasis, Dubose said. That's significant because this type, while not fatal, can cause lasting sores that leave scars. **[Here's the stupidity that can kill you. See above. There is only one "type. One parasite. This is not rocket science. And Dubose is a pediatrician. Case closed.]**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action: Top Anti-Insurgent General Killed By Insurgents

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

May 23, 2005 By PAUL GARWOOD, (AP) & By Michael Georgy, Reuters Limited & The Guardian & Carol J. Williams, The Los Angeles Times & May 24, 2005 AFP

Two carloads of guerrillas killed an Iraqi general who was one of the key figures in charge of controlling the insurgency, Maj. Gen. Wael al-Rubaei, the new commander of a special operations room recently set up by the ministry for national security to coordinate the fight against insurgents, and his driver in Baghdad's latest drive-by shooting.

A truck bomb exploded in the town of Tuz Khurmatu south of the oil city of Kirkuk, killing the brother of a senior official in one of Iraq's main Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, police said. The official, Mohammed Mahmoud Jigareti, was wounded in the blast. Both men had been in a car that was entering the mayor's office compound when the bomber struck.

In Samarra, two Iraqi soldiers were killed and one was wounded when insurgents fired 10 mortar bombs at a joint army-police base, Army captain Salam Hadi told AFP.

In Baghdad's southern Dora neighbourhood, guerrillas killed a policeman as he was heading to work at a local court, police said.

Roadside bombs killed an Iraqi policeman near the northern city of Kirkuk.

Bad Lunch Break **Cops Restaurant Blown Up: Collaborator Cops & Troops Open Fire On Each Other**



The scene at the site of a car bomb which exploded at lunchtime outside the popular Habayibna restaurant. (AFP/Ahmad al-Rubaye)

May. 23, 2005 Associated Press & AFP

A car bomb exploded Monday at a Baghdad restaurant popular with police, killing at least seven people and wounding at least 113.

The car bomb in the busy Talibia neighborhood was detonated outside the Habayibna restaurant at a time when police officers usually meet there for lunch, said police Lt. Zaid Tarek. Several cars parked on the street were ablaze and bodies could be seen on the street.

"The car was parked in front of the restaurant before it exploded," police Lt. Zaid Tarek said. He said the explosion occurred at 2:15 p.m. (1015 GMT) when police officers usually meet at the restaurant for lunch.

Casualties were taken to three Baghdad hospitals, including three dead and 54 injured at al-Kindi hospital, according to admission records.

There was chaos outside al-Kindi, where police and army soldiers exchanged gunfire for no apparent reason. At least one police officer was injured.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Kill Every Iraqi In The Country?”

May 23, 2005, Marcus Hale, Executive Editor Southeast Asia News

Iraqis have been defending their country from professional military plunderers such as America, England, France, Russia and Iran for decades and are not afraid to die protecting their families, their culture and their possessions.

What choice have they? They have now adapted their war into a nationwide guerrilla resistance. This is virtually impossible to overcome unless the Americans kill every Iraqi in the country.

“For A Mass, Non-Exclusionary Antiwar Movement”

[Excerpts from a longer article: International Socialist Review Issue 41, May–June 2005]

A majority [of Americans] (53 percent according to an April CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll) says the situation in Iraq “was not worth going to war over.” And Bush himself is even less popular. Now only 44 percent of Americans now approve of his administration, the lowest for any reelected president in living memory, according to a mid-April Harris poll. In fact, everything Bush has attempted—from privatizing Social Security to his cynical manipulation of the Terri Schiavo case—has only undermined his support.

Although the war has been thoroughly discredited in the minds of millions of Americans, some sections of the antiwar movement continue to retreat since Bush’s electoral victory.

Some earlier opponents of the war in Iraq, eager not to offend an imaginary “ordinary American,” have moderated, if not abandoned, continued opposition to the occupation. Moveon.org, an organization that stumped for prowar John Kerry, finally took the next logical step and shifted its focus away from criticizing Bush’s Iraq policies to highlighting only domestic issues.

The Education for Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC), an organization that had been more clearly identified with opposition to the Iraq occupation, recently declared its opposition to the demand “Troops out now.” According to EPIC’s executive director Eric Gustafson, “An immediate U.S. withdrawal from Iraq is not responsible. The only way out of Iraq is through sustained multilateral nation building.”

Anthony Armove, from the ISR’s editorial board—who, along with several others, resigned from EPIC’s speakers’ bureau in protest over Gustafson’s statement—argued in an April 6 debate with Gustafson:

“Many of the people who spoke out against this invasion, marched on February 15, who opposed sanctions for years before that now are suggesting that U.S. troops should stay in Iraq for the benefit of the Iraqi people, that the people who have been carrying out these abuses, these crimes, and have been involved in torture and killing, and, before

that, in sanctions on Iraq, that the U.S. government, the military troops sent into Iraq should stay for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

“Thus, we confront a strange situation of the antiwar movement mobilizing against the war and then supporting an occupation that is a direct result of that war. I think it’s an incoherent position and one that we have to absolutely reject.”

Either the U.S. has the right to occupy Iraq to determine Iraq’s future or Iraqis have the right to determine their own future. It is not possible to hold both positions.

This is not a new debate. During the early years of the anti-Vietnam War movement, there were sharp debates around the slogans “negotiations now,” or “out now.” At the 1965 mass Vietnam Day teach-in held in Berkeley, California, socialist Hal Draper debated liberal peace activist Robert Pickus. According to James Petras, who edited a collection of the speeches from the event,

“[Pickus] said that he was opposed to U.S. violence in Vietnam, but he declined to support the withdrawal of U.S. soldiers. To oppose American intervention in Vietnam, as Hal Draper pointed out in his debate with Pickus, is to call for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. To call for it “later” (under whatever pretense) is to legitimize violence in the here and now—since one cannot impose utopian dreams on what the U.S. army does in fighting a war of conquest. One would not be too irreverent to refer to this type of “peace” approach as “War now—peace later.”

Draper’s argument for immediate withdrawal could easily be addressed to a contemporary audience.

While formally opposing the occupation, a national antiwar organization United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) is not immune from the same logic.

Many of UFPJ’s constituent organizations spent last year campaigning for pro-war John Kerry, to the detriment of the movement. Rather than concluding that campaigning for Kerry was a mistake, these organizations have followed the Democrats in searching for votes in America’s “conservative heartland.” As a result, UFPJ and its close ally, Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), have adopted a political perspective emphasizes appealing to Democratic politicians, most of whom support the continued occupation of Iraq.

Even the PDA-supported Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.), who sponsored a resolution calling for the withdrawal of U.S. forces said:

“Let me be clear: I am not advocating a cut and run strategy. It would be irresponsible for the United States to abandon the Iraqi people. We must play a role in facilitating their transition to stable democracy. We ought to work with Iraq, the Arab League and the United Nations to create an international peacekeeping force that would keep Iraq secure.”

It is hard to spot a difference (if there is one) between Woolsey’s position and EPIC’s.

But tailoring a political appeal so that it is acceptable to Democrats and liberals has the corollary effect of declaring as “unacceptable” other political positions and perspectives in the antiwar movement.

And rather than encouraging debate and discussion about these issues within the movement, the (usually unelected) minorities directing different antiwar formations have used bureaucratic maneuvers to exclude and marginalize others who don’t share their political perspectives.

For instance, UFPJ leaders in New York City refused to endorse (and therefore, discouraged its supporters from attending) the March 19 demonstration in Central Park—the main protest in the country’s largest city on the second anniversary of the invasion—in part, they said, because “some of the early materials for this protest” contained “language about supporting the Iraqi resistance...a position strongly opposed by some groups in our coalition.”

No doubt, these objections came from pacifist groups tied to UFPJ; but it is also the case that some members of UFPJ’s leadership support the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), which has collaborated with U.S. occupation by accepting positions in the Bremer and Allawi administrations.

Worse is the experience of Carl Webb. Webb is a soldier refusing to ship out to Iraq on grounds that he considers the war “an unethical and illegal aggression” for “oil and profits.”

Some members of Military Families Speak Out, an important antiwar organization, cancelled Carl’s April 6 speaking engagements on the West Coast on the grounds that his Web site expressed support for Iraqis right to resist the U.S. occupation. In a similar vein, earlier this year, the MFSO declined to speak in Boston on the same platform as Howard Zinn and Ralph Nader—two of the country’s leading voices against the war—on the grounds that they were too radical.

This imposition of a political litmus test on participation in the movement has its historical precedents in the early anti-Vietnam War movement, which carried an overhang of 1950s McCarthyism. In contrast to liberal peace organizations, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) established an important principle of “non-exclusion” of communists, socialists, and other radicals from the ranks of antiwar activists. Respected long-time peace activist A.J. Muste outlined the political importance of non-exclusion to the movement:

“In practice, a non-Communist coalition is in danger of becoming an anti-Communist one, though it may desire to avoid that. In any event, its program will in the long run tend to be moderate and its resistance to the war restrained in policy. It will tend to seek allies to the right. If by any chance its resistance to the war policy should be stiffened and become radical then it will find itself classified with the left, the “enemy,” anyway and in its actual withdrawal of support from the Administration and from the war actually will be in that revolutionary and noble position.”

Perhaps antiwar movement leaders who decided to exclude radicals on political grounds, real or imagined, believe that they are acting in the best interests of the movement. But they are wrong.

As Muste points out, the end result of this censorship is to tear out the guts of the movement—to remove from its center the people who are the most consistent and passionate opponents of the war.

And let's be clear: the effect isn't only directed at self-proclaimed radicals and socialists. It also stifles the emergence of activists with a deeper and more thoroughgoing understanding of the war and what it will take to end it.

When certain forces in the antiwar movement treat Carl Webb as persona non grata, what does this say to the thousands of soldiers in Iraq today who share Webb's views?

Will this give them confidence to speak out and to organize against the war?

Of course not.

The radical historian Manning Marable wrote that anticommunism in the 1940s and 1950s "retarded the black movement for a decade or more." We shouldn't have to wait another decade to end the atrocity in Iraq.

Even the whole issue of how one supports the right of Iraqis to self-determination should be a topic of debate and discussion in the movement—and not a litmus test to determine who is entitled to speak on behalf of the movement.

Many of the 300,000 Iraqis who demonstrated peacefully in Firdos Square on April 9 were followers of the fundamentalist Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. They had fought battles against U.S. troops in Najaf and other cities. Are we to determine that a peaceful demonstration is "good" resistance to the occupation, but that fighting against occupation troops when they attack your cities and homes is "bad" resistance?

There is a long history of legitimate resistance, including armed resistance, to colonization and military occupation—from the American colonists who fought the British in 1776 to the Native American fighters who stood up against the colonization of their lands to the Vietnamese resistance to the "American war" in the 1960s.

Unfortunately, instead of leaving it to the Iraqi people to decide how they will resist the occupation, leading spokespeople for the movement, such as Rahul Mahajan of UFPJ, have taken to referring to resistance fighters as "extremists"—a characterization that echoes that of the Bush administration.

What Kind Of Movement?

A movement in which minorities seek to bureaucratically control what should be an expression of ordinary people's commitment to end the war cannot develop the kind of depth and breadth it needs to end the war.

It cannot accommodate to the positions of the prowar Democratic Party or else like MoveOn.org it risks abandoning its principled opposition to the war and occupation.

It cannot be built on the basis of accepting some version of U.S. occupation, and it cannot be built without the open and democratic structures that allow it to breathe and grow in an atmosphere of open inclusion and serious debate and education.

The time has come for an open and honest debate in the antiwar movement about what kind of movement we need and how we can build it.

To ISR, the critical issues are these:

We must reaffirm that the movement's key demand should be "Troops out now."

Second, we need to build a mass and grassroots movement that maintains its organizational and political independence from the Democratic Party.

Third, we should seek to build an open and non-exclusionary movement that debates differences within it rather than seek to stifle them.

Fourth, we must support resistance inside the U.S. military, especially those brave soldiers who have spoken out and have refused to participate in the occupation and subjugation of another people. We also need to strengthen resistance at home, for example, in the fight to get military recruiters out of our high schools and colleges.

Fifth, we must support self-determination for Iraqis. Only they can determine the future of their country. And only they can determine how they will resist its colonial occupation.

Finally, we must reaffirm our support for our own right to dissent at home and to defend the rights of Arabs and Muslims whose civil liberties have been under continued assault. We believe these points provide an outline for a stronger antiwar movement—something that we crucially need today.

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.

COWARDICE IN JOURNALISM AWARD FOR NEWSWEEK

Donald Rumsfeld pointed the finger at Newsweek and said, "People lost their lives. People are dead." Maybe Rumsfeld was upset that Newsweek was taking away his job. After all, it's hard to beat Rummy when it comes to making people dead.

5.18.05 by Greg Palast, gregpalast.com

"It's appalling that this story got out there," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on her way back from Iraq.

What's NOT appalling to Condi is that the US is holding prisoners at Guantanamo under conditions termed "torture" by the Red Cross. What's not appalling to Condi is that prisoners of the Afghan war are held in violation of international law after that conflict has supposedly ended. What is NOT appalling to Condi is that prisoner witnesses have reported several instances of the Koran's desecration.

What is appalling to her is that these things were REPORTED. So to Condi goes to the Joseph Goebbels Ministry of Propaganda Iron Cross.

But I don't want to leave out our President. His aides report that George Bush is "angry" about the report -- not the desecration of the Koran, but the REPORTING of it.

And so long as George is angry and Condi appalled, Newsweek knows what to do: swiftly grab its corporate ankles and ask the White House for mercy.

But there was no mercy. Donald Rumsfeld pointed the finger at Newsweek and said, "People lost their lives. People are dead." Maybe Rumsfeld was upset that Newsweek was taking away his job. After all, it's hard to beat Rummy when it comes to making people dead.

And just for the record: Newsweek, unlike Rumsfeld, did not kill anyone -- nor did its report cause killings. Afghans protested when they heard the Koran desecration story (as Christians have protested crucifix desecrations). The Muslim demonstrators were gunned down by the Afghan military police -- who operate under Rumsfeld's command.

Our Secretary of Defense, in his darkest Big Brother voice, added a warning for journalists and citizens alike, "People need to be very careful about what they say."

And Newsweek has now promised to be very, very good, and very, very careful not to offend Rumsfeld, appall Condi or anger George.

For their good behavior, I'm giving Newsweek and its owner, the Washington Post, this week's Yellow Streak Award for Craven Cowardice in Journalism.

As always, the competition is fierce, but Newsweek takes the honors by backing down on Mike Isakoff's expose of cruelty, racism and just plain bone-headed incompetence by the US military at the Guantanamo prison camp.

Isakoff cited a reliable source that among the neat little "interrogation" techniques used to break down Muslim prisoners was putting a copy of the Koran into a toilet. In the old days, Isakoff's discovery would have led to Congressional investigations of the perpetrators of such official offence. The Koran-flushers would have been flushed from the military, panels would have been impaneled and Isakoff would have collected his Pulitzer. No more.

Instead of nailing the wrong-doers, the Bush Administration went after the guy who REPORTED the crime, Isakoff.

Was there a problem with the story? Certainly. If you want to split hairs, the inside-government source of the Koran desecration story now says he can't confirm which military report it appeared in. But he saw it in one report and a witness has confirmed that the Koran was defiled.

Of course, there's an easy way to get at the truth. **RELEASE THE REPORTS NOW.** Hand them over, Mr. Rumsfeld, and let's see for ourselves what's in them.

MORE:

The Height Of Hypocrisy.

May 20, 2005, Richard Cohen, Washington Post

"I will spare you any harangue today about the mistakes and lies that got us into Iraq in the first place. Suffice it to say that for the White House and the Pentagon to come down on Newsweek for making a mistake is the height of hypocrisy."

OCCUPATION REPORT

Notes From A Lost War:

The Great Iraqi Occupation Training Farce Rolls On: "The Iraqi Police Are Corrupt As Hell" Sgt. Says

23 May 2005 By David Axe, Salon.com

On the afternoon of Jan. 27 in the Sunni city of Baquba, north of Baghdad, U.S. and Iraqi forces are hosting what they call a "peace day" at a provincial government building near one of the most dangerous parts of the city. The event is an opportunity for known insurgents to sign a pledge against violence in exchange for amnesty from arrest. Outside, Iraqi police and soldiers patrol the wide, garbage-lined streets on foot and in battered trucks that weave through traffic.

At an intersection just yards from the peace-day proceedings, a compact car pulls up alongside a police truck and explodes, scattering debris and body parts and riddling the police truck with shrapnel. Four policemen are gravely injured. Passersby drag them bleeding into a nearby shop while U.S. and Iraqi forces and ambulances race to the scene.

For several minutes after the explosion, Iraqi cops speed up and down the street in their ubiquitous pickup trucks, firing machine guns at God knows what.

Over the past several months, Pentagon officials have maintained that the Iraqi forces are steadily improving and growing in numbers -- and the top brass has talked up the prospect of drawing down U.S. troops in significant numbers by this summer, after handing off much of the responsibility for securing the country to the Iraqis.

Gen. John P. Abizaid, the top American officer in the Middle East, pointed in particular to the Iraqi police forces, who he said lack "sophistication, chain of command, and cohesion of leadership," and are susceptible to corruption and intimidation. "I don't know how much I would say time-wise they're behind, but they are behind," he said, according to the Associated Press.

"The Iraqi security forces were close to meeting their force-structure goals last summer," John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org in Washington, says, "but then the goals went way up and the forces on hand collapsed."

Pike is referring to the widespread flight of Iraqi police and army troops in the aftermath of the November 2004 battle for Fallujah.

"It all happened in two weeks," says Lt. Col. Bradley Becker of the meltdown of Iraqi police and army in his area. Becker commands a battalion of the 25th Infantry Division from Fort Lewis, Wash. Since October, Becker's battalion has patrolled the dusty approaches to Mosul, an area known to U.S. soldiers as Q-West, after its most important town, Qayyarah.

In early November, in the wake of the battle for Fallujah, Q-West, which had been pretty peaceful to that point, "fell apart," in the words of Maj. Kevin Murphy, 36, Becker's operations officer. Rather than stand and fight, most police in Q-West dropped their weapons and ran. They never came back.

By mid-November, Becker says, "I went from 2,000 police to 50." There was a similar exodus in the Iraqi army. "Let me tell you, there were some sleepless nights," he says.

Around the same time, Iraqi police in the contested city of Samarra "dissolved" under insurgent attacks, according to 42nd Infantry Division Capt. Robert Giordano. U.S. troops in Mosul, Samarra and elsewhere had no choice but to rebuild local forces from scratch beginning in November.

Today, Iraqi forces in Q-West are "capable of semi-independent operations," in Maj. Kevin Murphy's estimation.

What a "semi-independent" operation looks like is demonstrated on the cold night of March 25, near Qayyarah.

Tom Burns, a second lieutenant in the 25th Infantry Division, leads a joint American-Iraqi patrol looking for smugglers and insurgents on the area's remote, dusty roads. The Americans are in two speedy, heavily armored Stryker vehicles; the Iraqis trail behind in pickup trucks. **Every couple of miles, the Strykers have to idle to let the pickups catch up, eliciting rolled eyes and muttered epithets from Burns and his crew.**

Spotting a good vantage point atop a steep hill that only the Strykers can mount, Burns, 22, decides to leave the Iraqi trucks guarding a secondary road. But in the spirit of cooperation -- and just in case he needs someone who speaks Arabic -- Burns gestures at several young Iraqis to climb into his vehicle.

Gazing back at the Iraqis he's leaving behind, Burns shakes his head and mutters, "Like little lost sheep."

Equipment for Iraqi security forces is in short supply.

Deputy police chief Josef Hussein, working out of a compound in Qayyarah that is within blocks of several police stations destroyed in attacks, complains that his troops lack transport, radios and machine guns.

American officers in Qayyarah have promised Hussein that they will do all they can to meet Iraqi forces' needs. But privately, the same officers admit to me that funds are short.

Equipment shortages have plagued Iraqi forces since the first new army units were stood up in the fall of 2003, according to Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

In stark contrast to American soldiers, almost all of whom have their own body armor (even if they have had to pay for it themselves), many Iraqi soldiers share a limited number of armor vests and often go without. And while U.S. forces travel in up-armored Humvees, Strykers and other armored vehicles (in some cases also of their own furnishing) that protect them from snipers and roadside bombs, Iraqi forces rely on trucks -- or simply walk.

Equipment issues aside, hiring trustworthy **natives [!]** willing to stand up to insurgents is one of the U.S. military's major challenges in Iraq -- especially when it comes to the Iraqi police.

Despite their importance and the heavy casualties they've suffered, the police -- especially those in Sunni towns -- are widely considered the most corrupt and least reliable of the Iraqi security forces.

"The Iraqi police are corrupt as hell," says 38-year-old Master Sgt. Justin Lucios from the German-based 1st Infantry Division, which occupied Baquba until February. Lucios says old-school Iraqi police are more likely to flee than fight, just as they did in Q-West and Samarra last fall.

Americans continue to lead Iraqi units in all but the most permissive of environments.

According to several Army officers I spoke with, U.S. soldiers across Iraq continue to take the lead even in small-scale combat operations -- a tacit admission that Iraqi forces simply aren't up to the task. Often this means that individual American noncommissioned officers, or NCOs, sideline their Iraqi counterparts. From January to May this year, I often saw this taking place while patrolling with U.S. and Iraqi forces in the Sunni triangle, and in northern and eastern Iraq.

On one Jan. 26 patrol in the town of Kanan, 1st Division Staff Sgt. Joshua Marcum, 25, led a joint U.S.-Iraqi force on a door-to-door search of Iraqi homes looking for insurgents who'd been shooting at polling places.

At one home, while Marcum's translator cowered outside for fear of being recognized by insurgents, Marcum could only gesture the other Iraqi soldiers who accompanied U.S. soldiers inside the house. He motioned for them to stand guard over the residents in the living room while he and his American troops went room to room with a flashlight, opening drawers and cabinets and checking under furniture for any evidence of wrongdoing.

Marcum told me he didn't trust his Iraqi comrades with any but the simplest of tasks.

Back in Baquba, in the wake of the suicide bombing that gravely injured four Iraqi cops, Army reporter Sgt. Kim Snow from the 1st Infantry Division watches Iraqi police recklessly roar up and down the street in their pickup trucks, firing their weapons at nothing.

It's become clear that the sole suicide attacker, who now lies in pieces among the burning wreckage, was the only threat in the area.

The rounds from the Iraqis' weapons rain down on the surrounding streets, where civilians are quickly scattering into buildings.

Snow grimaces at the spectacle. "Business as usual," she says.

Military Operations Fuel Iraqi Opposition: “There Is Significant Support For Attacks On Foreign Troops”

Polls show that a large majority of Iraqis have little faith in coalition troops and view them as occupiers, not liberators.

There is significant support for attacks on foreign troops and a large majority of Iraqis want them to leave within a year.

18 May 2005 Carl Conetta, Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph #10, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, ABSTRACT

An examination of Iraqi public opinion data and interviews suggests that coalition military activity may be substantially contributing to Iraqi discontent and opposition. A "vicious circle" is indicated, whereby actions to curtail the insurgency feed the insurgency.

Public discontent is the water in which the insurgents swim.

Polls show that a large majority of Iraqis have little faith in coalition troops and view them as occupiers, not liberators.

There is significant support for attacks on foreign troops and a large majority of Iraqis want them to leave within a year.

But attitudes about the occupation vary significantly among communities.

Kurds are uniquely positive about the occupation and postwar order. Sunnis express the strongest opposition. Shiites often represents a midway position. Like the Kurds, Shiites felt very positive about the 2005 election.

However, regarding foreign troops: Shiite opinion is closer to Sunni, although it varies in accord with coalition military action.

A mix of nationalism and the desire to avenge some wrong or humiliation is apparent in interviews with Iraqis who oppose the occupation.

One relevant factor is the war's death toll. Since March 2003, approximately 30,000 Iraqis have died due to military and terrorist activity. An additional 30,000 may have died due to the war's indirect effects, including increased criminal violence. Twenty-two percent of households report having been "directly affected by violence". The incidence of such reports is three times higher among Sunnis than Kurds and almost twice as high among Shiites as Kurds.

Ten percent of Iraqis report having had "very negative" encounters with coalition forces. Fifty-eight percent claim that US forces behave badly.

But US troops face a difficult dilemma.

Their mission involves intrusive and coercive measures, which stimulate opposition. Occupation duty, like war, is beset by "fog" and "friction" that contribute to errors. In this circumstance, the goal of "force protection" gains precedence over "winning hearts and minds", which further increases tensions and mishaps.

Overall: there is a correlation between Iraqis' experiences of violence, negative appraisals of US troops, and support for insurgent attacks.

The geographic pattern of coalition military activity corresponds with the distribution of these attitudes, which peak in Sunni areas and Baghdad.

As much as 80 percent of US military activity during the occupation has focused on Baghdad and Sunni areas.

Initially, postwar military activity aimed to assert US control locally, capture regime personnel, and curtail possible supporters of the former regime, including tribal leaders.

But there were significant collateral effects. Support for the coalition subsequently plummeted and insurgent activity surged, increasing three- or four-fold during the first year.

Polls in June 2004 showed that the chief reasons for the sharp negative turn in Iraqi opinion were (in order): Abu Ghraib, the Falluja attack, "bad" or violent behavior by troops, and the failure to provide security.

A series of deadly incidents and accidents in spring and summer 2003 may have been pivotal in consolidating anti-coalition sentiment among Sunnis. More important: several incidents involving Sunni tribal leaders and former Iraqi soldiers protesting for back pay may have been key in boosting insurgent activity and organization

MORE FROM THE SAME REPORT:

05/17/05 Information Clearing House

Strong majorities in the Sunni and Shiite community oppose the occupation – and significant minorities have registered support for attacks on US troops.

"What drives these attitudes more than anything else," says Conetta, "are nationalism, the coercive practices of the occupation, and the collateral effects of military operations."

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

Received:

Jane Fonda Attacks Iraq War

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

April 8, 2005 By WENN [GreenLeft Discussion]

Barbarella star Jane Fonda resumed her outspoken ways last night (06APR05), when she attacked the current war in Iraq.

The 67-year-old actress, who was both praised and vilified for her protests against the controversial Vietnam War in the 1960s and early 1970s, made an appearance on David Letterman's US TV show on Wednesday night, where she was asked how she felt about the current conflict.

She sparked applause from the studio audience when she responded, "I think the war is wrong. I think it's a mistake and I think that we should get out."

Chilean Soldiers Story

From: Artisan
To: GI Special
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2005 2:50 PM

Thanks for including the story on the missing and dead Chilean soldiers in your last issue.

The whole country is grieving, many of them were 18 & 19 yr olds without proper training (some of them had been recruited only a week or two earlier) and, most crucially, lacked proper equipment, clothing or supplies when faced with temperatures around -25C and disorienting blizzard conditions.

Most of the dead recruits came from the countryside and had joined up because it was a choice between working in the fields or getting shelter, food, may b even a trade and a bit of money to take home.

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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