

GI SPECIAL 3B58:

ENOUGH: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



June 13, 2005 MSNBC News Services: U.S. soldiers cover the body of a comrade killed when a roadside bomb detonated as their patrol drove by in southern Baghdad on Saturday. (Yuri Cortez Getty Images / AFP)

“This Madness Must End!” BRING THEM HOME NOW!

Our oldest son Brian is a soldier in the Army and is currently serving in Iraq. Brian went back because he felt an obligation to his buddies, not because he believes in just and noble reasons for this war.

He, along with many servicemen and women, see clearly that they are caught in a situation for which there is no other solution than to bring them home now.

Rita Clement, Maine Veterans For Peace, Veterans For Peace Newsletter, Spring 2005

Hello everyone.

My name is Rita Clement and my husband and I belong to Military Families Speak Out, an organization made up of families who have a very personal stake in this war. We are the parents of three great kids. All three have grown up to be caring, open-minded and accepting young people and we are very proud of them. Our daughter Elisa and our son Ben live at home with us and we are thankful to have them near us.

Our oldest son Brian is a soldier in the Army and is currently serving in Iraq.

Brian turned 22 this summer. After eight months in Iraq, Brian was able to come home for two weeks, during the early part of November. We all wished time could stand still and attempted to live in the moment while he was with us. Inevitably, the day he had to leave again came closer and closer until we had to let him go a second time.

Brian went back because he felt an obligation to his buddies, not because he believes in just and noble reasons for this war.

He, along with many servicemen and women, see clearly that they are caught in a situation for which there is no other solution than to bring them home now.

They were sent to Iraq against the wishes and opinion of the majority of the citizens of the world. Now there, they are confronted with situations for which they are mostly unprepared: a culture with values that are unfamiliar to us, a language they don't understand and too few translators to aid in communication, and of course the hostile feelings of a people who's country we have invaded and are now occupying.

We have done so, not to save the world from weapons of mass destruction, not to bring a better life for its citizens, as our leaders would like us to believe, but to secure the countries resources for our own use.

Then, when our military men and women finally get home, Mr. Bush is willing to show the smiling faces of those reunited with their families, yet he refuses to allow television cameras to film the return of caskets to Dover Air Force Base. He says this is to protect the families - I say it is because he is afraid, and rightly so, that America will become aware of the true cost of war.

Those of us who have loved ones in danger are afraid all the time.

All concerned, everyone at this rally, and people around the world, grieve the senseless loss of life, all life, but military families listen more intently. We listen for the "where" and "when", when casualties are announced and we hold our breath as if that would stop what we so desperately fear.

And while we grieve with others, we are thankful when it is not our own.

It is a constant fear of mine to find a military vehicle waiting in our yard when I return from work or running an errand.

Every time I come around the turn, from where our home becomes visible and I see that the turn-around is empty, I say a silent prayer, giving thanks, because once more I have made it home and Brian is o.k., for now.

I often find myself wondering how life can be so normal around me, when nothing seems normal inside. I go from being indescribably sad, hopeless and depressed, to angry as hell, to feeling nothing. This madness must end!

It is high time we learn to solve our conflicts through dialogue, allowing understanding and acceptance to guide our decisions, instead of hatred, violence, and greed.

Please continue your efforts towards building a peaceful world and when you gather with your families dining this holiday season, think about those who will be missing a loved one in their midst.

Pray that all families, no matter what nationality, will be reunited soon and that those who have had to say good-bye to someone for ever, will find peace and happiness again some day.

Rita Clement

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

Colonel Become Highest-Ranking U.S. Fatality

Los Angeles Times, June 8, 2005

The Army announced that Col. Theodore S. Westhusing, of Dallas, was killed Sunday in Baghdad. He is the highest-ranking officer to die in the Iraq war.

2 More Miss. Soldiers Killed In Iraq

June 13, 2005 The Associated Press

Two Mississippi soldiers died Saturday near Baghdad when an improvised explosive device blew up near their vehicle.

Sgt. Larry R. Arnold, 46, of Carriere, and Spec. Terrance D. Lee, 25, of Moss Point, were assigned to the Mississippi National Guard's Company B, 150th Combat Engineer Battalion in Lucedale.

The explosion occurred outside of Amiriyah, some 25 miles west of Baghdad.

Lee was taken to an area hospital, where he died. A National Guard supply specialist, Lee deployed to Iraq Jan. 14 with the Mississippi National Guard's 155th Brigade Combat Team. Lee was a 1999 graduate of Moss Point High and joined the Guard in 2002.

Lee's grandmother, Aniece Lee of Moss Point, was the first to receive the news of his death.

Aniece Lee said she peeked out a window and spotted military officials in a long white van in front of her home.

"I couldn't see who was at the door, so I pulled open the door. I said, 'No, it can't be Terrance, and there's no need for you to come here.' "

Lee's wife, Stephanie, is expecting their child in September.

"It's so hard. He would do anything for me," Stephanie Lee said.

The couple met at Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, where they worked. Terrance Lee was a first class welder and she is a pipefitter. Stephanie Lee said the last time she saw her husband was the day he left Mississippi for Iraq.

"He loved to talk. He loved to laugh. He didn't meet any strangers," Stephanie Lee said.

"He lived to the fullest. He didn't let anything bother him," she said.

Terrance Lee also leaves behind two sons, Terrance Jr., 5, and Ramone, 3.

Their deaths bring to three the number of Mississippi soldiers killed in Iraq in less than a week.

Marine From Fowlerville Dies

Fowlerville-AP, June 13, 2005

A 22-year-old Marine from Fowlerville has died in Iraq.

Lance Corporal Andrew Kilpela was killed Friday in a roadside explosion. His family learned of the death that night, but it hasn't been formally announced by the Defense Department.

His father, Michael, says Kilpela joined the Marines in 2003 to prove himself to people who said he couldn't do anything.

Kilpela was a member of the Second Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

He's the 54th service member with known Michigan connections to die in Iraq.

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH: TIME TO COME HOME



3rd ID, central Baghdad, June 6, 2005. REUTERS/HO/US Army/Spc. Ben Brody/Handout

Senior US Diplomat Survives Iraq Car Bombing: At Least Three U.S. Troops Wounded

6.13.05 (Reuters)

A senior U.S. diplomat was unscathed on Monday when a suicide car bomber struck a U.S. military convoy in Baghdad, police sources said.

A U.S. embassy spokesman said a diplomat, whom he declined to identify, was in the area but was unaffected.

A spokesman for the Iraqi Islamic Party, a major Sunni Muslim grouping, said a senior U.S. official had just left its compound in western Baghdad when his convoy was hit by an explosion which shattered windows in the party's headquarters.

Outside the party headquarters on Monday, witnesses said a U.S. army Humvee had caught fire after the blast, and that a U.S. helicopter had arrived to evacuate the wounded. They said three U.S. soldiers had been evacuated.

An Interior Ministry spokesman and police had said earlier that a U.S. military convoy had been attacked by a suicide car bomber in the west of Baghdad at around 2 p.m.

Reuters journalists said U.S. soldiers cordoned off the area after the blast, arriving in unusually large numbers for what was otherwise a fairly routine incident in Baghdad.

The Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) has had strained relations with the U.S. military and Iraq's new Shi'ite-led government in spite of being seen as one of the more moderate Sunni groups.

U.S. and Iraqi officials have been urging it to take part in negotiations on a new constitution after it failed to contest an election in January in protest at violence in Sunni areas. Two weeks ago, U.S. troops raided the home of IIP leader Mohsen Abdul-Hamid and held him and three sons for some hours.

Mortar Hits Base Where Unit Members Are Stationed

06/13/05 By Gray Beverley, Special to the Rome News-Tribune

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — Four soldiers of the 48th Brigade Combat Team were among eight people injured in a Sunday morning mortar attack, brigade officials said.

Brigade spokeswoman 2nd Lt. Selena Owens said three of the injured brigade soldiers are being treated at 86 Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad's international, or "green," zone.

The mortar struck at 8:51 a.m., Owens said, and the victims were either in their sleeping tent or right outside of it.

Those with more serious injuries were taken to the green zone by land, Owens said. She said low visibility due to blowing sand had grounded flights.

The attack occurred at Camp St. Michael near the Iraqi town of Mahmudiyah, about 15 miles from the brigade's headquarters near the Baghdad airport.

**“No I did not get the fucking license number.
And no I do not have AAA road service.”**



US military make investigations at the scene of a car bombing in Baghdad's Yarmouk neighborhood Monday June 13, 2005. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

Resistance Attacks In Mosul: Troops Casualties Not Announced

13-Jun-05 (AKI)

New clashes are reported to have broken out between Iraqi guerrillas and US troops on Monday in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, leaving scores injured.

The Kuwaiti news agency Kuna reported eyewitnesses as saying that armed insurgents attacked American and Iraqi soldiers as they patrolled Liberation Square, in the west of the city.

The witnesses said the US troops then surrounded the whole area, attacking the insurgents with helicopter support from above.

The nearest hospital said that following the clashes, around 50 people, most of them civilians, were taken in to be treated for injuries sustained during the fighting.

No statement has been issued by the Iraqi security forces and it is not known how many troops and insurgents have been injured in the clashes.

"You Never Knew When Something Was Going To Happen" "It Was Like We Were Fighting Ghosts"

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

Jun 10 By ANTONIO CASTANEDA, Associated Press Writer

One young man cannonballed into the cool blue pool, another applied suntan lotion to his girlfriend's shoulders — and a third swung his machine gun onto a lawn chair. A pair of Black Hawk helicopters hovered above.

The men and women could have passed for American college students, but they were U.S. soldiers at Camp Liberty in western Baghdad, seeking a break from the war raging just beyond the blast walls. Hours later, some would don helmets and flak jackets, jump into armored vehicles and patrol through violent Baghdad neighborhoods.

Just last week word flashed through the camp of a big-screen showing of the new Star Wars movie, generating a flood of excitement.

But then insurgents fired a rocket into the base, slamming close to shops and fast-food eateries where the movie was to be shown, killing one soldier.

"The soldiers came in and yelled, 'Save yourselves and run to the bunker,'" remembered Jericho Aquino, a Filipino worker at the Cinnabon dessert shop close to where the rocket struck.

Future screenings were canceled.

But the most popular venue on base may be the palace pools where soldiers lie in the sun or swim with friends, ignoring the occasional explosion that reverberates in the distance.

In one pool in a man-made lagoon jutting into a pond, soldiers preparing to return to the U.S. relaxed and looked back on their year in Iraq.

"It was frustrating sometimes. It was like we were fighting ghosts," said Sgt. Wayne Brekke, of Aloha, Ore., a combat engineer assigned to the 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. **Brekke said it was difficult to fight hidden insurgents who**

detonated roadside bombs by phone or sporadically fired from neighborhoods that they could quickly blend into.

"It was mentally and physically exhausting, especially in this heat," said Brekke, two days before a flight was scheduled take him away from his 12-hour Baghdad patrol shifts and fly him to Kuwait and then to California. "You never knew when something was going to happen."

The soldiers knew the burden of a yearlong deployment was at an end and looked forward to vacation plans long in the making. "I'm going to Vegas, man," Brekke said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Four U.S. Troops Wounded In Car Bomb Attack



The U. S. forces helicopter lands near a site of blast to carry wounded in west of Kandahar June 13, 2005. The explosion wounded four American troops, the latest in a series of bloody assaults on coalition forces. (AP Photo/Noor Khan)

6.13.05 AFP

Four US soldiers were wounded in an attack by militants who drove a car packed with explosives into an American military convoy in southern Afghanistan, officials said.

Explosion Hits Kandahar



The main highway of Kandahar city in Afghanistan is blocked after an explosion on June 13, 2005. REUTERS

TROOP NEWS

Capitalism At Work:

Verizon Wireless Corporate Assholes Fire Working Mother For Using Sick Leave While Husband In Iraq

[Thanks to CWA member Dom Renda for this story.]

Communications Workers Of America: Verizon Wireless

Verizon Wireless likes to tout its inclusion on Working Mother magazine's list of the 100 best companies for working mothers

However, the company clearly doesn't deserve this honor. Far from being supportive of working mothers and the dilemmas they may face in balancing work and family, Verizon Wireless fired Kara DeWitt, a customer service representative and working mother, for taking sick leave while her husband was serving in Iraq.

Initially, Dale DeWitt was to be deployed for only 6 months, but his tour was extended twice, and Kara was on her own for 19 months. During that time, their daughter Daisy, now 2, was born. Kara was taking care of Daisy and her sister Julia, now 4, while working full-time at Verizon Wireless. When the girls were sick, Kara of course had to stay home with them, using some of her sick days.



Kara at home with Dale, Daisy, and Julia

After using her allotted sick leave, Kara came down with pink eye and a stomach bug and took two additional sick days.

Rather than allowing her to use vacation time or work out any other arrangement, Verizon Wireless fired Kara for missing two days of work.

Kara's family lost not only her income but also their health insurance; Dale is a self-employed HVAC contractor, so the entire family was on her health care policy.

Kara described her unfair treatment at CWA's Customer Service conference in Cranford, NJ, last week. After she spoke, participants passed the hat and raised more than \$1,000 for Kara and her family.

Kara had worked at the Verizon Wireless call center in Wallingford, CT, and CWA Local 1298 is spearheading the effort to support Kara and have her reinstated. The local and other allies will be marching on Verizon Wireless in Meriden, CT, on June 1 to demand Kara's job back.

For more information, read the New Haven Register's coverage of this story, "Soldier's Wife Fired After Struggling to Mind the Homefront," May 1, 2005 (free registration required).

[So, for 1000 points, who is the enemy? Some Iraqi defending his country against George Bush's Imperial dreams, or these corporate assholes in the USA?]

Same There Same Here



An Iranian woman washes her son's grave at the Behesht-e-Zahra cemetery south of Tehran June 9, 2005. They feel they made the ultimate sacrifice for the republic, but the mothers of the soldiers killed in Iran's eight-year war with Iraq say the country is now doing little for them. (REUTERS/Morteza Nikoubazl)

[Wrong. Not "the country." The people who are "doing little for them" are the predators who own and operate the country for their own benefit, and don't give a shit for much that extends beyond their own obscene wealth, power and privilege, which always comes first. Just like right here in the U.S.A.]

PTSD: A Normal Reaction To The Horrors Of War

June 10, 2005 United Press International, WASHINGTON

New Year's Eve found 22-year old Iraq war veteran Spc. Abbie Pickett huddled in the doorway of a building, crying hysterically as fireworks exploded overhead.

The explosions brought on the adrenaline rush she had grown to associate with warfare. In Iraq those lights and noises demand a reaction. Soldiers know what to do when an attack starts. That's what their training is for.

But there were the lights and the noise and the adrenaline rush, incongruous on the peaceful street, and Pickett did not know what to do. First she hit the ground, then her alarmed friends led her to shelter until she could pull herself together.

"What is considered a bizarre (reaction) in every day life is what keeps you alive in Iraq," she said Thursday.

Pickett, of Madison, Wis., is one of the many Iraq war veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. She returned in April 2004 from a year's duty in Iraq as a fuel truck driver attached to the Army's 4th Infantry Division with her National Guard unit. Supply convoys are among the most dangerous postings in the war since they are the frequent target of ambushes and roadside bombs. Fuel trucks are especially dangerous as they are bombs of their own if hit the right way.

Pickett's truck took small-arms fire periodically, but it was not until a night in October 2003 when her base in Baqubah came under attack that she experienced trauma. As trained, she ran into the building being shelled to help the wounded. She tended one soldier whose arm had been mangled; it would be months before she learned that her actions saved his limb. She transported four gravely injured soldiers in a truck to the hospital.

That is the experience to which she traces her depression and inability to concentrate in college or sleep.

It is why she had to drop most of her classes in school and why she is on Zoloft and takes sleeping pills.

Her medication is not working for her, but **she is unable to get in to see a Veterans' Administration psychiatrist because they are so backed up with other cases.**

"I miss Iraq," she said. "Most veterans will tell you, 'I miss Iraq.' You miss the adrenaline rush."

Many with post-traumatic stress disorder sign up to go back, she said -- back to a place where their jumpy nerves and over vigilance serves a purpose.

A 2004 study endorsed by the Veteran Administration says 94 percent of soldiers in Iraq reported receiving small-arms fire; 86 percent of reported knowing someone who was seriously injured or killed; 68 percent reported seeing dead or seriously injured Americans, and 51 percent reported handling or uncovering human remains.

Most soldiers -- 77 percent -- deployed to Iraq reported shooting or directing fire at the enemy, 48 percent reported being responsible for the death of an enemy combatant, and 28 percent reported being responsible for the death of a noncombatant.

Even troops who are functioning well without observable manifestations of trauma are suffering.

A Marine captain who asked that he not be identified - for fear of being made fun of or losing the confidence of his troops - reports a recurring nightmare, one of the symptoms of mental trauma. He and several of his Marines have fallen asleep at a sentry position, and their guns are far away from them, locked together.

He wakes up to see Iraqi insurgents sneaking up on his position, but he can't wake up his comrades or get to his gun. He wakes up as they are being shot to death.

That Marine is now on his second combat deployment in 14 months, after less than seven months at home.

Arms Fiascoes Inside Pentagon

New York Times, June 8, 2005

After years of not being able to contain cost overruns, senior officials, including Secretary Rumsfeld, are becoming increasingly alarmed that the machinery for building weapons is breaking down under its own weight.

War Profiteer Who Made Fucked Up Tubes For Osprey Is Indicted

New York Times, June 8, 2005

Anco-Tech, a maker of titanium tubing for military aircraft that is now out of business, and two of its former executives were indicted and accused of falsely certifying equipment sold to Boeing and Bell Helicopter from 1995 to 2002.

Big Surprise! Pentagon Wasted Supplies, GAO Finds;

Washington Post, June 8, 2005

DoD spent at least \$400 million in recent years buying boots, tents, bandages and other goods at the same time it was getting rid of identical items it had paid for but never used, GAO investigators told House members.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Transport Problems?

From: Ahmed Al-Habbabi
To: Anti-Allawi Group
Sent: May 11, 2005 3:58 PM
Subject: Transport problems?

2005-05-09 Hiwa Osman, Washington Post

Many government ministers and public officials have been stuck in their houses for weeks, even months. Some do not even visit their ministries.

Source: GI Special 3B26

Why? Transport Problems?



Road surface repairs



Parking upside down



Look! Smoking zone!



Excessive summer heat



Wide pedestrian crossing



Yes sir, we got it all under control!

Assorted Resistance Action

6.13.05 AFP & AP & (KUNA) & Reuters

Four soldiers were killed and five others wounded when a bomber blew himself up about 9 a.m. at a checkpoint outside an army base near Samarra in the Khaddar town as an American-Iraqi patrol was passing by, police said.

As emergency crews gathered, a roadside bomb detonated and gunmen in two speeding cars also opened fire.

Another soldier was killed in Samarra when a bomb exploded in the path of his vehicle, police said.

Two Iraqi police commandos and two soldiers were killed in fighting that pitted more than 70 insurgents against members of the security forces in Samarra, Lieutenant Colonel Maimed Mohammed said.

In Tikrit, another car bomber killed two police officers when he blew himself up in Al-Ihtifaalat road after being surrounded by security forces, police Lt. Col. Tariq Alwan Al-Jibouri said. A firefighter was also killed, he said, but the circumstances of his death were unclear.

The Iraqi Army has said that four Iraqi soldiers were killed in clashes with gunmen near Tilul al-Baj area in Ninawa Governorate, in northern Iraq, last night.

Also on Monday a member of Iraq's infrastructure protection force was shot dead near the northern oil refinery town of Baiji, and an Iraqi businessman was gunned down as he left a US base at the airport in Dhuluiyah.

In another development, Al-Dawr police said that the body of an Iraqi soldier was found in the River Al-Rusafi, one of the tributaries of the Tigris. It said that the body carried the signs of several gunshot wounds.

"Three bodies, including two policemen brothers, were discovered in Baladiyat, in eastern Baghdad," on Sunday, a police source said.

In Baghdad's western Radwanya district, another Iraqi army soldier was killed and four were injured by a car bomb that blew up next to a patrol of police commandos, an elite police unit, hospital officials said.

Guerrillas killed a female Interior Ministry employee in Baghdad's Sadr City district, police said.

Insurgents attacked an Iraqi police checkpoint on the main road between Baghdad and the town of Baquba on Monday, killing four policemen and injuring 10, police said.

Gunmen in three cars approached the checkpoint and began firing, killing four policemen and injuring seven before fleeing the scene 25 km (15 miles) south of Baquba.

Minutes later, a car bomb blew up near a police car that was travelling to the scene of the attack, injuring a further three policemen.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Imperialism 101

From Chapter 1 of Against Empire by Michael Parenti

The preponderant thrust of the European, North American, and Japanese imperial powers has been directed against Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

By the nineteenth century, they saw the Third World as not only a source of raw materials and slaves but a market for manufactured goods.

By the twentieth century, the industrial nations were exporting not only goods but capital, in the form of machinery, technology, investments, and loans.

To say that we have entered the stage of capital export and investment is not to imply that the plunder of natural resources has ceased. If anything, the despoliation has accelerated.

Of the various notions about imperialism circulating today in the United States, the dominant view is that it does not exist.

Imperialism is not recognized as a legitimate concept, certainly not in regard to the United States. One may speak of "Soviet imperialism" or "nineteenth-century British imperialism" but not of U.S. imperialism.

A graduate student in political science at most universities in this country would not be granted the opportunity to research U.S. imperialism, on the grounds that such an undertaking would not be scholarly.

While many people throughout the world charge the United States with being an imperialist power, in this country persons who talk of U.S. imperialism are usually judged to be mouthing ideological blather.

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

A Question:

June 13, 2005 James Patton, Anti-Allawi-group

Bush called the Amnesty report "absurd," Rumsfeld denounced it as "reprehensible," and Cheney claimed he "was offended" by it.

More to the point, how many millions around the world find Bush "absurd", Rumsfeld "reprehensible" and are "offended" by all three of them?

Net Revenge!

From: Earthlink

**Pick an obnoxious Web site.
Pick a horrific disaster to befall said Web site.**

Sit back and watch the carnage.

Drown the site in a flood. Let Martians attack it. Unleash dinosaurs or worms.

The choice is yours. Have fun.

Bring on the Doomsday! <http://www.netdisaster.com>

OCCUPATION REPORT

Shocking News! Iraqis Think U.S. Empire After Their Oil

Washington Post, June 8, 2005

Zalmay Khalilzad, the president's nominee to become the next ambassador to Iraq, said the administration is "not doing very well" in convincing Iraqis and others in the region that it does not have any designs on Iraq's oil or other underhanded motives.

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)

"Selections Not Elections"

June 10, 2005 by Aaron Glantz, Common Dreams

Look at the way America arranged Iraq politically.

Rather than encouraging elections after the fall of Saddam, the Bush Administration hired a North Carolina company called Research Triangle International (RTI) to appoint new political leaders for the country.

For the princely fee of \$427 million dollars, RTI implemented a policy they called (and this is not a joke) "selections not elections."

They would invite everyone in a particular community to attend a meeting. At the meeting, the company would pick the new government making sure to reserve a specific number of seats to Iraqis from each of the country's major ethnic and religious groups - Sunni Arab, Shia Arab, Turcoman, Kurd, and Assyrian/Caldenian Christian.

Under RTI, Iraqis were required to organize on the basis on their ethnic and religious background.

Imagine, if a similar plan were implemented in one of America's more diverse cities.

Imagine if a foreign company came to San Francisco to pick a new government and said: "Okay, we need 8 white heterosexuals, 5 gays, 5 Asians, 3 African-Americans, and 3 Latinos." People in San Francisco would have no choice but to organize on the basis of their race rather than ideology. Is it any wonder, then, that after this January's election Iraqis organized themselves on sectarian grounds?

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Blind Pundits Of The Left: How To Call Defeat "A Major Victory"

The "major victory" line on the enemy combatant Supreme Court rulings serves only to disorient the left and the public at large. No matter how bad it gets, there are those who insist on maintaining a certain official optimism whereby even defeat is transformed into victory. New categories of criminality like enemy combatants or domestic terrorists are invented and imposed on the body politic, but, not to worry, our progressive leaders have everything under control. Leave it to them.

Marc Norton, Spring 2005, Number 78 Covert Action Quarterly [Excerpts]

***"If my thought dreams could be seen,
they'd probably put my head in a guillotine."***

Bob Dylan, It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)

Both the corporate media and the pundits of the left claim to see a "major victory" for the "rule of law" in the June 28, 2004 Supreme Court rulings on Guantánamo and "enemy combatants."

But the fundamental aspect of these decisions is that they have enshrined the concept of enemy combatants into our legal system.

"MAJOR VICTORY"

The hearing before the Supreme Court on the Guantánamo prisoners was held in late April. The Padilla and Hamdi cases were argued about a week later -- ironically, on the same day that the torture photos from Abu Ghraib were broadcast on CBS's Sixty Minutes for the first time.

The Court's rulings on all three cases were delivered in late June.

The corporate media and most progressive civil liberties organizations proclaimed these rulings to be a severe rebuke to the Bush regime. Steven Shapiro of the American Civil Liberties Union called the rulings "historic" and a "strong repudiation" of the administration. "This is a major victory for the rule of law," claimed Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights, "and affirms the right of every person, citizen or non-citizen...to test the legality of his or her detention in a U.S. Court." Everyone "can now have their day in court," said Jamie Fellner from Human Rights Watch.

With all due respect, the need to declare "victory" doesn't turn a sow's ear into a silk purse.

A week after the rulings, the San Francisco Chronicle ran a piece that challenged some of the hot air about the decisions. "Last Monday's rulings," wrote staff writer Bob Egelko, grant enemy combatants "the right to go to court and challenge their confinement." But, "virtually everything else about their cases was left up in the air -- for example, which courts will hear them, what rules will apply, and what role military tribunals might play... The court did not order the release of any prisoner and did little to interfere with day-to-day military control of the detainees."

An examination of [the] cases reveals their real essence.

PADILLA RULING: BACK TO SQUARE ONE

Most of the commentary on the enemy combatant decisions has dismissed the Padilla ruling as a mere footnote to the real story. But it probably doesn't feel that way to Padilla. By a 5-4 vote, the Court declared that Padilla's habeas corpus petition had been filed in the wrong court. Padilla was told to go back to ground zero and start all over again.

In this world of cascading ironies, the Court majority was none other than the same five justices who turned the Presidency over to Bush in 2000, known to many as the "Felonious Five" -- Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Anthony Kennedy, Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. Just as they tore up all those ballots in Florida, they tore up Padilla's petition and threw it in the trash.

Padilla's attorney filed the case in New York, where Padilla had first been held as a material witness. According to the Court majority, the petition should have been filed in South Carolina, where Padilla is currently in custody. Instead of naming Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as the defendant, the Court declared that the right defendant should have been Melanie Marr, Commander of the Consolidated Naval Brig in South Carolina.

The strongly-worded dissent, written by Justice John Paul Stevens, has barely been mentioned in the media, either corporate or progressive. This dissent tears the majority's ruling to shreds.

The Defense Department first took custody of Padilla in New York, not in South Carolina. All the proceedings concerning Padilla's detention as a "material witness" took place in New York. Padilla's attorney wasn't informed that he had been moved to South Carolina until after she filed the habeas corpus petition in New York. **"If jurisdiction was proper when the petition was filed," wrote Stevens, "it cannot be defeated by a later transfer of the prisoner to another district."**

Stevens further argues that the President had expressly designated Rumsfeld, not Melanie Marr, to detain Padilla. Rumsfeld has shown "both his familiarity with the circumstances of Padilla's detention, and his personal involvement in the handling of Padilla's case."

But Stevens goes beyond technical arguments. He lays into the Felonious Five, calling portions of their argument "disingenuous at best." That's parlor-room talk for lying.

Padilla's case, Stevens goes on, poses "a unique and unprecedented threat to the freedom of every American citizen... At stake is nothing less than the essence of a free society... For if this Nation is to remain true to the ideals symbolized by its flag, it must not wield the tools of tyrants even to resist an assault by the forces of tyranny."

Strong stuff. No victory here.

HAMDI RULING: FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

In mid-October, over two months after the July Supreme Court rulings, Hamdi was released from the brig he shared with Padilla, and flown to Saudi Arabia, bereft of his U.S. citizenship, and with a whole slew of extraordinary conditions. The negotiations that led to this outcome began with the July ruling on his case.

The decision in the Hamdi case consists of four different written opinions. None alone commands a majority.

The ringleaders in the Hamdi decision, who signed the controlling opinion, are a subset of the Felonious Five -- Rehnquist, Kennedy and O'Connor. O'Connor wrote the decision. These three were joined by Stephen Breyer.

The key finding by this gang of four is to uphold the concept of enemy combatants, for citizens and non-citizens alike. "There is no bar to this Nation's holding one of its own citizens as an enemy combatant," they boldly declare.

Having so blithely dispensed with the fundamental issue, the gang gets down to the work of defining what "due process" rights a person has once they have been declared an enemy combatant. Here they are venturing out into uncharted territory.

Since the whole concept of enemy combatants is make-believe to begin with, there are no laws or precedents on which they can rely. So they just make it up as they go along.

Innocent until proven guilty? Nope.

"The Constitution would not be offended by a presumption in favor of the Government's evidence... Thus, once the Government puts forth credible evidence that the habeas petitioner meets the enemy-combatant criteria, the onus could shift to the petitioner to rebut that evidence..."

Commenting on this, Elaine Cassel, writing for CounterPunch online, says, "Now that will be kind of difficult, won't it, since Hamdi has been incarcerated for going on three years, has no contact with anyone in the outside world, and will have a hell of a time coming up with witnesses to refute the conclusion of the government that he was indeed fighting with the Taliban or al Qaeda against the U.S. Let's see, even if he knew people to subpoena to support an alibi -- if he has one -- federal marshals don't serve subpoenas in Afghanistan."

What kind of evidence can the government submit? Just about anything, apparently. According to the ruling, even hearsay is fine, as it "may need to be accepted as the most reliable available evidence..."

Right to an attorney?

Sort of, sometimes, maybe. Hamdi's attorney argued that his client should have had the right to an attorney when he was first detained. But, according to the gang of four, while Hamdi "has the right to access to counsel in connection with the proceedings on remand," since Hamdi now has an attorney, "no further consideration of this issue is necessary at this stage of the case." Punt that ball.

Trial by jury? Don't be silly.

Be satisfied with "a meaningful opportunity to contest the factual basis for that detention before a neutral decisionmaker," whatever that means. Indeed, the ruling explicitly states that an "appropriately authorized and properly constituted military tribunal" would probably meet "the standards we have articulated."

Indefinite detention?

The decision states that "indefinite detention for the purpose of interrogation is not authorized." But, "if the record establishes that United States troops are still involved in active combat in Afghanistan," Hamdi's detention is just fine, until whenever. Anybody taking guesses on when the "war on terror" in Afghanistan will be over?

Notably, these proposals for the evisceration of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights for enemy combatants are only an outline. In the words of the gang of four, "enemy combatant proceedings may be tailored to alleviate their uncommon potential to burden the Executive at a time of ongoing military conflict."

Now, put all this in the context of O'Connor's much-quoted statement that "We have long since made it clear that a state of war is not a blank check for the President when it comes to the rights of the Nation's citizens." This decision may not give the President a blank check, but if you win the lottery, you aren't going to complain too loudly about not getting a "blank check."

The redoubtable David Cole, the legal affairs correspondent for the Nation, inadvertently put this ruling in the proper perspective, even while attempting to trumpet the major victories line. The rulings, he says, "make it likely that all the detainees will get some sort of hearing to assess their status."

Major victory!

THE ROAD AHEAD

The "major victory" line on the enemy combatant Supreme Court rulings serves only to disorient the left and the public at large. No matter how bad it gets, there are those who insist on maintaining a certain official optimism whereby even defeat is transformed into victory. New categories of criminality like enemy combatants or domestic terrorists are invented and imposed on the body politic, but, not to worry, our progressive leaders have everything under control. Leave it to them.

But, today, Jose Padilla continues to languish in a navy brig. Yaser Esam Hamdi lives in exile in Saudi Arabia. Hundreds of prisoners in Guantánamo are still caught in a legal black hole. And many more rot away in secret detention facilities in countless untold places throughout the empire.

Ali Saleh Kahlab al-Marri, a citizen of Qatar, is locked away today in the same navy brig as Jose Padilla. Like Padilla, he was arrested in the U.S., while attending graduate school in Illinois. First, he was held as a "material witness." Then he was charged with making false statements. Finally, he was declared an enemy combatant.

His attorneys filed a suit, but in early October, the Supreme Court declined to consider his petition, because his attorneys allegedly filed his suit in the wrong court, just like Padilla's attorney. Al-Marri's lawyer claims that he was declared an enemy combatant because he refused to plead guilty. Al-Marri desperately needs a "major victory."

One of my old Mafioso-style labor leaders had a line about lawyers. Listen to them, he said, think about what they say, but remember that you are in charge, and do what you have to do. That was good advice. It is even better advice when you run into lawyers acting like they are also political leaders.

Weren't you offended by the full-page ads that the Center for Constitutional Rights ran a while back, boldly declaring things like "We didn't rant and rave about our government ignoring the Geneva Convention. We sued President Bush."

Or, "We didn't whine about the Patriot Act stripping our constitutional rights. We got a key provision ruled unconstitutional."

Come off it, guys. The Center for Constitutional Rights does great legal work. The movement needs good lawyers. But, in the end, freedom and justice is won only through organized and sustained mass struggle. And, damn right, that includes a lot of serious whining, ranting and raving.

Guantánamo and the "enemy combatant" construct do not exist because a bunch of lawyers working for the Bush regime had a legal problem they needed to solve. Guantánamo and "enemy combatants" exist because the ruling class has a political problem they need to solve. In the post-9/11 world, the Bush regime and its heirs need to throw the fear of god into everyone on the planet who even thinks about getting in their way.

Just like a whole series of presidents wanted the Rooskies to think that they were crazy enough to start throwing hydrogen bombs around, the neo-cons and ex-cons and future cons in the White House want the whole world to think that they are crazy enough to lock up anybody and everybody they might get their hands on, and then throw away the key. And, guess what, they are that crazy.

Meanwhile, there's that pesky war in Iraq, the ongoing troubles in Afghanistan, and who knows where the next warmongering, white-guy millionaire president is going to take us.

We now have the construct of enemy combatants embedded, to use a modern term, into our legal and political system. That's bad news, anyway you cut it, no matter what your progressive lawyer friends tell you.

As the imperial wars of the early 21st century grow ever more bloody, as the war on the poor, people of color and the working class in the homeland grinds on, and as the fascist tendencies inherent in a decaying capitalist system come more and more to the fore, the impulse to expand the enemy combatant parallel legal universe may well prove irresistible to those who rule the empire.

It may just be that this is the historical epoch in which we will need to take our struggle for freedom and justice beyond liberalism and reformism.

(Marc Norton is not now and never has been a lawyer, but some of his best friends are lawyers.)



CLASS WAR REPORTS

Bolivia: “The Battle Of Many Armies And One Death Has Reached Its End”

Jun 9th, 2005 By Luis Gomez, Narconews.com

Kind readers, the battle of many armies and one death has reached its end. In these moments, several deputies are in the headquarters of the Supreme Court to invite the “new constitutional president,” as Hormando Vaca Diez called him, to assume command of the executive.

The new president is Dr. Eduardo Rodríguez, head of the court, a man with grey hair and glasses, connected to the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR)

But some social movements, like those in El Alto, haven't let themselves be demobilized so easily. As long as “the issue of hydrocarbon nationalization” has not been touched upon, as Edgar Patana of the Bolivian Workers' Federation said, the demonstrations and blockades will continue.

Now only the formalities remain, but the El Alto residents keep watch in the streets with bonfires burning, as do many groups in Cochabamba, and the Ayamara peasant farmers; the issue of nationalization has not been forgotten.

Received:

Public Meeting: Eyewitness Report From Basra; Iraq's Oil Workers Resist Privatisation

June 10, 2005 Iraq Occupation Focus

PUBLIC MEETING

Eyewitness report from Basra:

Tuesday 21st June, 7.30pm

Room 3C, University of London Union

Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY

(nearest tube: Goodge Street or Russell Square)

Last month in Iraq, the General Union of Oil Employees held a historic conference in Basra against the privatisation of Iraq's public sector. The conference resolved to continue the struggle to resist any future privatisation of Iraq's oil resources and called for the cancellation of Iraq's odious debts.

The conference gained support from a whole range of international civil society groups from trade unionists in Venezuela, to radical NGOs such as Focus on the Global South and academics such as Noam Chomsky and shows that resistance to the neo-liberal occupation of Iraq is growing and needs to be supported.

This meeting offers a unique opportunity to hear from members of the UK delegation who attended the conference and to discuss how best the anti-occupation movement in the UK can offer solidarity with Iraqi's resisting privatisation.

Speakers include:

Ewa Jasiewicz – Iraq Occupation Focus activist, freelance journalist and UK representative of the General Union of Oil Employees. She spent nine months living in Iraq June 2003-February 2004 working with trade unions, women's groups, Iraqi families, and human rights groups.

Greg Muttitt – a researcher at PLATFORM, a London-based organization working on issues of environmental and social justice. He specializes in the impacts of multinational oil corporations of human rights, development and environment. Since 2003 he has monitored and worked to expose the hidden plans to open Iraq's oil reserves to western corporations for the first time since 1972.

Dr Martha Mundy – Reader in Anthropology at the London School of Economics. As an academic she is a specialist in studies of kinship, law in society, and the anthropology of the Arab world. Dr. Mundy has long worked with civil society associations working for social justice in Iraq and Palestine.

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>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for purely educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. Go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml> for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.