

GI SPECIAL 3B81:

ENOUGH BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A caisson carries the casket of Army Staff Sgt. Christopher N. Piper through the streets of Marblehead, Mass., June 27. The 43-year-old soldier from Marblehead died of wounds he suffered during an attack on his convoy in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

“Soldiers Dying Mysteriously-My Son Also-Specialist Dustin M Brim”

The doctors could not believe that Dustin was turned away so many times for medical help and still managed to endure as long as he did in his magnitude of pain all while carrying 80 lbs on his back. It was because of his good health and fitness he was able to fight as long as he did.

From: Lori Brim: Myangeldust82@aol.com

To: GI Special

Sent: Monday, July 04, 2005 9:41 AM

Subject: Soldiers Dying Mysteriously-My Son Also-Specialist Dustin M Brim

Hi,

I just read your article and am moved to share my son's sacrifice as well with you.

I lost my son 9/24/04 from cancer that afflicted him in Iraq.

The irony is that he came home Christmas on leave to surprise us; as usual he was fine. Early March he started having pain in his side.

During that month he said he went to the doctors on base 11 times with severe pain only to be told he was probably constipated, given colace and told to work it out.

The later 2 weeks of March he could not keep anything down, the last email I received from him he advised me that he didn't think he could stay in Iraq much longer because his pain was so persistent and unbearable he was afraid that he would lose focus and let his buddies down.

On March 31st he passed out from pain and breathlessness, his Sgt happen to be with him and got him to the doctors on the base whom even then thought he may be experiencing gall bladder and sent him to the hospital in Baghdad.

After being assessed and heavily induced with Morphine the doctors allowed him to call us to advise that he was very ill with cancer.

He had a huge mass in his chest positioned on his esophagus restricting his airways to breathe, a collapsed lung, loss of a kidney, numerous blood clots and a tumor progressing on his liver.

Dustin was flown to Germany then to Walter Reed. The doctors struggled trying to determine the exact type of cancer. They ruled out leukemia and testicle focusing on Lymphoma but then they struggled with what type because his cancer cells did not have defined characteristics.

It was like he had different types of cancer cells taking over his body.

They agreed on Non-Hodgkins Diffuse Large Cell B Type. From April 6th thru Sept 24th, Dustin went thru 6 different types of Chemo Regimes. Each one would seem to work for a few days by recessing the most aggressive cells but always a few days later the aggressive cells would just attack new organs.

It was like the cancer was smarter than any medicine.

He was treated for Lymphoblastic, Burketts, etc only for the different regimes to be effective for a couple of days.

Walter Reed's Oncologist's worked with John Hopkins, Bethesda, a cancer hospital in New York all in trying conquer something that seemed just to be unleashed and ravaging my son's body.

The doctors could not believe that Dustin was turned away so many times for medical help and still managed to endure as long as he did in his magnitude of pain all while carrying 80 lbs on his back. It was because of his good health and fitness he was able to fight as long as he did.

At Walter Reed my son suffered tremendously. Because of the position of the mass in his chest he could not be sedated for any procedures. There were so many times we almost lost him but he would somehow overcome for the moment.

It was horrific and no one should ever have to experience or watch their only child slowly be eaten away by this illness.

I knew from the start that Dustin had been either exposed to something in Iraq or possibly the vaccines they had to take did something to his immune system.

In the beginning the doctors would not comment on my thoughts (being a military hospital) but at the end they agreed they had never seen anything like it.

Unbeknown to me they did an autopsy on Dustin. I received the results in the mail which stated that every organ in Dustin's body was enclaved by tumor but his heart and his brain.

I want accountability for my son's life but seem just to hit brick walls.

I have his medical records from Walter Reed but have not been able to get his records from Iraq or previous.

When I lost Dustin I lost myself.

This is something that should not have happened or should happen to anyone else.

There is something going on but no one wants to talk about on the record.

<p>I am sharing my son with you in hopes that maybe you have the means of sharing my son's story with others; that perhaps will make a difference as so many of our children serving our country will be righteously accounted for -- their and our sacrifices.</p>
--

Dustin was beautiful and had a big heart.

Thanks for listening to me..
Lori Brim

MORE:

“Dustin's Voice Needs To Be Heard”

From: Lori Brim
To: GI Special
Sent: July 04, 2005 9:56 PM

What I summarized to you was just a bit of the suffering Dustin endured over the last 6 months of his life.

We live in the Daytona Beach area of Florida.

Dustin was born and grew up here. All he wanted to do was to come home and pet his dog Buddy.

There is so much more that could be shared about Dustin's suffering but nothing can change what it is.

If for some reason someone would like to contact me I can be reached at 386-679-6661.

Last week I visited Congressman John Mica's office. Mr. Mica was in Washington but his aide spoke with me about an hour and also agreed that Dustin's voice needs to be heard.

Perhaps his story will help prevent some other soldier and their loved ones from unnecessary pain.

Thanks again for listening and sharing my Dustin,

Lori Brim

MORE:

“God Rest Dustin's Soul, And God Bless His Mother For Speaking Out”

[This story was forwarded to ArchAngel1BL at ArchAngel, a military families committee that is concerned with medical abuses experienced by active duty troops. The reply below is in response. T.]

From: ArchAngel1BL@aol.com [out-of-service Marine]
To: GI Special
Sent: July 04, 2005 1

Thanks for forwarding the letter T.

I can only imagine what she has gone through and is still going through with her loss.

As for the medical records from Iraq, I hate to say this, but she will never see them. More than likely, those records have been destroyed to protect the military.

If you remember, the paper work from my husband's medical records that he accumulated in Iraq were missing; in fact they still are.

I wish there was something I could do to help her get them, but not to be negative, if his records didn't follow him while he was being transported to Walter Reed, then they are gone.

That is why Soldiers/Troops need to make two copies of their medical records. One to carry on themselves, and the other for a relative or close trusting friend at home. This way, if they loose their copy, all they have to do is request another copy from the family member or friend who has the second copy.

They must always request a copy of everything that is written down, don't take no for an answer, because they have every right to have a copy of their medical records, let alone anything else that is written and placed in any of their records medical or administrative.

Her comment about the cause; that should raise some questions. I agree with her when she said that he may have been exposed to something or the mandatory shots that he was given caused it.

Heck, there have been a lot of medical complaints from the troops after receiving those shots.

I remember when I was forced to take a shot before we went to Australia for training. The first thing they did was give us a shot of something, they never did tell us what it was, then they made us sign a statement that we want sue the government if something happens. Till this day, I have no idea what was injected in my arm. All I know, is that I started getting migraine headaches ever since then.

I have been told that the VA can aid in getting medical records, but in this case, I have no idea if they would be able to help her or not. All I can say is that she could try calling the local VA office and see what they say.

With this story, hopefully the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan who read your article will think twice in working a pain out that causes you to go see a doctor.

In fact, if they are hurting in a way that makes them question on going to medical or not, they should go. That kind of pain is the kind that maybe is saying "life is leaving the body," not " pain is weakness leaving the body."

Let's hope that others will step forward.

God rest Dustin's soul, and God Bless his mother for speaking out.

ArchAngel1BL

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

ONE TASK FORCE LIBERTY SOLDIER KILLED, TWO WOUNDED BY DIYALA IED

July 5, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-07-03C

TIKRIT, Iraq – **One Task Force Liberty Soldier was killed and two were wounded by an improvised explosive device at about 1:05 p.m. July 5 in southern Diyala Province.** The two wounded Soldiers were taken to a Coalition Forces medical treatment facility.

Ky. National Guardsman Killed By Bomb



AP photo

July 5, 2005 By Brett Barrouquere, The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE - A Kentucky National Guard soldier was killed and two others were injured when their vehicle struck an explosive device.

Ryan J. Montgomery, 22, of Greensburg, died Sunday while returning from a convoy escort mission near Baghdad, the Kentucky National Guard said Monday night.

Montgomery was assigned to Bravo Battery 1st Battalion 623rd Field Artillery, based in Campbellsville. His unit mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom in November and deployed to Southwest Asia in January.

Montgomery graduated from Green County High School. He joined the military in September 2000, during his senior year of high school.

Montgomery was an outgoing, top-notch student, said Nelson Pickett, a former principal at Green County High.

Pickett described Montgomery as an outspoken student who, like his twin brother, Bryan, was well-liked by many.

"If you knew one of the boys, you knew both of them," Pickett said. "They were very close."

Musically inclined, Ryan Montgomery played in the marching band and the school jazz band. He was also a volunteer firefighter.

Ryan and his twin brother, Bryan, served in the same unit.

Montgomery was the seventh member of the Kentucky National Guard killed in Iraq. There are 1,127 Kentucky National Guard soldiers in Iraq.

Four Marines Wounded By Car Bombs In Hit

7.5.05 By SINAN SALAHEDDIN

Two car bombers wounded four U.S. Marines in the western town of Hit, a U.S. spokeswoman said.

U.S. Patrol Bombed In S.W. Baghdad: "Several Casualties"

7.5.05 AFP & Canadian Press

The US military said one of its patrols was hit with a roadside bomb in southeastern Baghdad and that “there were several casualties transported to hospital,” without providing further details.

The attack came three days after military commanders announced that an Iraqi army battalion backed by marines would be stationed in the town.

U.S. Military Drone Crashes In Iraqi City Of Mosul

July 5 (Reuters)

An unmanned U.S. military surveillance drone crashed in Iraq's northern city of Mosul on Tuesday, the U.S. military said.

The drone landed on a factory in the commercial district of Duwasa and witnesses said a fire broke out before the U.S. military removed it. A spokesman for the military said there were no initial reports of casualties.

Robbers Target US Cargo Ship Near Iraq Port

Jul 5, 2005 LONDON (Reuters)

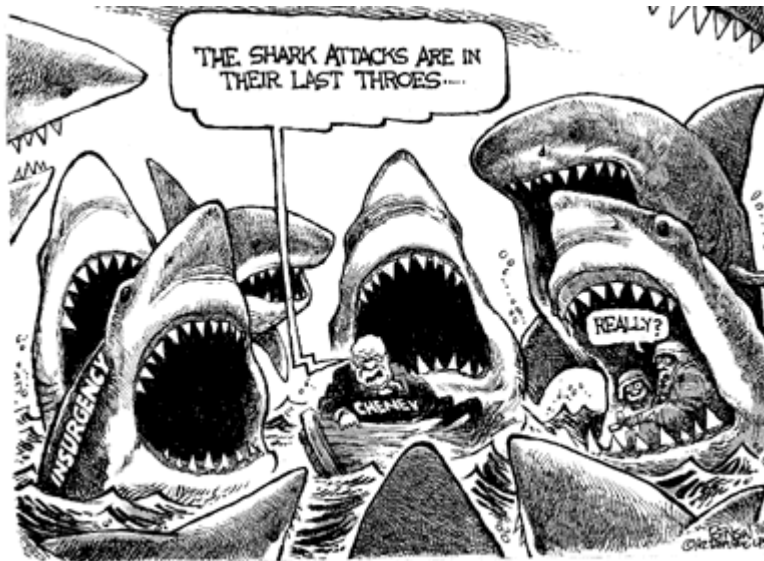
Thieves armed with guns have raided a U.S.-flagged cargo ship close to Iraq's main port of Umm Qasr, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said on Tuesday.

It said the raid, on a roll-on roll-off vessel carrying U.S. cargo to be used in the reconstruction of Iraq, happened in the early hours of June 30.

The ship was en route to Umm Qasr when the incident happened.

"They fired shots and held the crew at gun point and stole cash and the crew's personal belongings," the IMB said.

No injuries were reported.



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[Thanks to Kate, who sent this in.]

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two SEALS Found Dead, Another Still Missing

July 05, 2005 By Amir Shah, Associated Press, KABUL, Afghanistan

Two Navy SEALS missing in Afghanistan have been found dead, a senior U.S. defense official said Monday night.

The fate of a fourth SEAL was unknown.

TROOP NEWS

Update: A Visit With James Webb

[Yesterdays' GI Special reported on James Webb, a wounded soldier now in Georgia, getting kicked around generally, and in particular impoverished by the

delay in getting his benefits. Debbie Clark, Veterans For Peace, visited him. Here is her news. T]

From: Debbie Clark, US Army ('76-'84), Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: July 05, 2005 12:30 AM

This evening, [July 4] I visited James Webb in the VA Hospital in Decatur, GA.

He was in good spirits and we had a great visit!

This was, to me, a very meaningful way to spend the 4th of July.

He had made friends with another Iraq vet there in the same ward - an impressive-looking Delta force soldier who had also sustained spinal injuries and was up walking about.

James told me that they are going to be starting group sessions there at the VA hospital with veterans from the Iraq war, first Gulf War, and Vietnam war.

I told him this reminds me a little bit of how Veterans For Peace is -- indeed, I am hoping we might be able to hold some local VFP meetings there in the future, if they will let us.

James told me he has found great value in talking with Vietnam vets there at the hospital in terms of sharing experiences and understanding his PTSD.

I mentioned that Michael Hoffman of Iraq Veterans Against the War speaks of the same thing."

[Veterans For Peace is a terrific organization that walks the walk. T]

Heavy Toll On National Guard: More Killed Than In 'Nam

July 5, 2005 New York Daily News

As U.S. casualties continue a grim upward arc in Iraq, citizen-soldiers of the National Guard bear an ever-increasing share of the burden.

Today the Guard death toll is 268, including Sgt. Manny Hornedo, the Brooklyn soldier killed in a car bombing last Tuesday. By contrast, 97 Guardsmen died during the entire Vietnam War, and none was lost during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

"We Should Get Out Now"

One Woman's Death Brings Iraq War Home To Small-Town America

July 4, 2005 Jamie Wilson in Rhode Island, The Guardian

It is the weekend when Americans wrap themselves in the flag, but on this Fourth of July the stars and stripes in the gardens and on the porches of Marshall Circle remain at half-mast. The war was brought home to this tree-lined street at 10pm last Thursday in the hands of Major Jon Woodcock, a United States Marine instructor stationed on Rhode Island.

Driving a government van and wearing green trousers, khaki shirt and tie, garrison cap and black patent leather shoes buffed until you could see your face in them, Maj Woodcock rang the doorbell of No 74, a pale green wood-clad house with a pretty little garden, and changed the lives of Holly Charette's parents for ever.

Earlier that day their daughter, Lance Corporal Charette, 21, had been sitting in the back of a 7-tonne truck with other marines on their way back from a checkpoint outside Fallujah. Seconds later the suicide bomber rammed his explosive-packed car into the side of the truck. Holly and three other female marines were killed and seven injured in the most deadly attack on women soldiers since the beginning of the Iraq war.

Maj Woodcock's face creased as he recalled breaking the news. "They took it pretty hard. It's the worst possible news you can give to any parent."

Most of Coventry, a sprawling, semi-rural town in the middle of Rhode Island, turned out for the wake on Friday at the Robert Lanotti funeral home. A long, silent queue of mourners began forming outside the building before the 3pm start, some wearing yellow ribbons, usually a sign of hope for a safe return home, pinned to badges showing the young marine's dimpled, smiling face.

Inside, a video screen flashed up pictures of Holly, while Elvis played over the loudspeakers. But the war hung heavily over the day, from the marines in dress uniform standing sentry at the front door to the flag-draped coffin inside.

In the line of family greeting mourners was another marine, Holly's fiancé, Alex Rodriguez. They had met at training camp and planned to settle down when she returned from the Middle East.

The marine corps flew him home from Iraq so that he could attend the ceremony. "They were so similar. They both joined up because of 9/11. And now she's given her life to save his," his sister, Jennifer, said, dissolving into tears.

Nobody wanted to talk about whether Holly should have been in Iraq in the first place. The suggestion that she may have died for a cause people no longer believe in was met with angry stares. They wanted to talk about the "little ray of

sunshine", as her aunt Darleen Fortier called her. But away from the ceremony the people of this predominantly blue-collar east-coast town were more willing to offer an opinion on the war.

The death of a soldier in Iraq no longer makes the national headlines - there are too many dying for that - but in small towns like Coventry the impact should not be underestimated. As the war drags on and the death toll rises, opinion polls show support for the war hemorrhaging.

President George Bush tried to rally support for the cause last week in a prime-time speech in which he urged the American people to "complete the mission".

"It made me so sick I could not even bear to watch him," one neighbour of Holly's family, who did not want to be named, said. "When something like this happens on your own doorstep ... I don't know. It just feels like too many people are dying."

The flag was also flying half-mast for Holly behind the town's Little League baseball field, where the under-15s were playing against local rivals, a typical all-American scene, fitting for the Fourth of July weekend.

"I was for the war when it started, but now it's gone on too long," said Kevin O'Loughlin, a chef at a local casino. "They don't want us out there any more, so we should get out ... I guess it does bring it home when something like this happens in your own town."

Mike Grossor, a construction worker sitting in a different section of the bleachers, agreed. "We should get out now. We have done what we wanted to do - brought down Saddam and given them democracy, but now it's time to leave them to their own devices."

In Iraq, Holly became known as the marine who brought good news. Her job was to deliver the mail around Camp Fallujah, a dusty city of more than 2,000 marines in the troubled Anbar province. According to a story published on the marine corps website in May, she made her rounds dressed in full battle uniform, flak jacket, helmet and M-16 rifle, a large yellow mail bag slung over one shoulder. "I never thought too hard about being a mail person," she told the website. "But it's a really important job and people depend on me."

The job must have suited her, because she said she wanted to join the US postal service when she finished her tour of duty in Iraq next March. "It won't be the same as being a marine, but at least I'm still in uniform," she said.

Her friends described Holly as a "girlie girl" with blonde hair, shiny dark brown eyes and a big smile, who played field hockey and was a cheerleader for her high school ice-hockey team. She never took life too seriously and was always ready with a silly face or a joke.

But then came September 11 and, like so many young Americans, something in Holly changed. "She watched the twin towers collapse on the television and she wanted to go and do something," Ms Fortier said.

She joined the marines and after three years' training was deployed to the dangerous Anbar province in western Iraq.

Did Holly want to go to Iraq? "She was a good marine, she followed orders," said Ms Herrera, her fiancé's sister.

"People talk a lot about how women should not be on the front line, but there is no front line over there, the war is everywhere."

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.



Rose Gentle, who's son died in the Iraq war, and who leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now: July 2, 2005 Rally, Edinburgh, Scotland. (Photo from indymedia.org.uk)

Central Asian States Ask US Troops To Get Out And Go Home

05 July 2005 Reuters

Astana – Russia, China and the Central Asian states told US-led troops on Tuesday to fix a date for their departure from military bases in Central Asia that were set up to support operations in Afghanistan in 2001.

The United States operates military airbases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

The call was made at a meeting in Kazakhstan of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which groups the five former Soviet “states” with Russia and China,

“Member states of the SCO believe that participants in the anti-terrorist coalition should define a deadline for the temporary use of infrastructure and their military presence on SCO member state territory,” a joint SCO declaration said.

Used, Hurt And Thrown Away: V.A. Cutting Services As Iraq Vets Come Home

“I just find it kind of odd that there was funding to get us over there, but there wasn’t funding to get me what I needed when I was there. I didn’t have a flak jacket,” she said.” Now they can’t find funding to take care of what I see is a war wound, post traumatic stress.”

July 05, 2005 By Anne C. Mulkern, Denver Post Staff Writer

Washington – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – blasted by Congress last week for underestimating the cost of veterans’ health care by as much as \$2.7 billion through 2006 – faces growing patient loads and stretched services as troops return from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many veterans fresh from the Iraqi battlefield say agency services already are overwhelmed.

Doctor-to-patient ratios are climbing, waiting periods to see specialists are growing, and the time that psychiatrists spend with the most troubled patients – those with post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD – is shrinking.

In 2000, systemwide, the VA’s patient-to-doctor ratio was about 335 patients for every one doctor. For the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2004, it was 531 patients for every one doctor, according to the VA and congressional testimony.

At the VA hospital in Grand Junction, appointments are being canceled and rescheduled further out, said Ronald “Doc” Ross, chief service officer for the Colorado chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America.

In Portland, Ore., the minimum wait for non-emergency surgeries is six months.

Many returning soldiers have had limbs amputated, yet the VA doesn't have enough clinics or staff needed to fix prosthetics.

VA already has trouble meeting the demand of its PTSD patients. In a September 2004 report, the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, said the VA "does not have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of new combat veterans while still providing for veterans of past wars."

VA officials at six of seven medical facilities contacted by the GAO said that "they may not be able to meet an increase in demand for PTSD services."

In the past few months, in Denver, Grand Junction, Salt Lake City and at other hospitals, patient appointments with psychiatrists, held once every four months, have been cut from 60 minutes to 30 minutes or eliminated altogether.

In Kansas City, Mo., the clinic treating veterans with PTSD has seen patient levels rise from 55 people four years ago to nearly 1,000 currently, said Randy "Doc" Barnes, a board member for Vietnam Veterans of America national group and the Kansas City, Mo. Chapter.

That's as the number of full-time mental health professionals has fallen from 4.5 to 2.5, with one more scheduled to leave Aug. 1.

"I have nothing but disdain for the president and the administration for the way they have treated active duty military and the troops returning from the Middle East," Barnes said. "There's no way they could not have known (that the Afghanistan and Iraq wars) would create this many problems."

The overload affects people like Abbie Pickett, 23, of Madison, Wisc., who spent 11 months in Iraq with the National Guard. A combat support engineer, she rushed to help a wounded soldier when a military base came under attack.

The soldier was bleeding profusely. She later heard that the man had lost his arm. She felt guilt wondered if she had done everything right.

After returning home, she couldn't sleep, waking every 45 or 50 minutes. She had nightmares. She relived the attack. While driving she saw debris in the road she thought was improvised explosive devices, the bombs that wounded so many in Iraq. She couldn't see a VA psychiatrist for four months.

After getting in, she missed an appointment and now has not had access to a VA doctor since January. Her medications no longer work.

"I just find it kind of odd that there was funding to get us over there, but there wasn't funding to get me what I needed when I was there. I didn't have a flak jacket," she said. "Now they can't find funding to take care of what I see is a war wound, post traumatic stress."

To the surprise of many lawmakers, Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson explained that the VA didn't factor in Iraq when it computed its 2005 budget. The agency's 2005 budget was based on numbers from 2002 and did not include any projections for Iraq because the conflict had not started.

The VA in 2002 predicted it would see just 23,523 veterans as a result of the war on terror. The number came from what the Defense Department said to expect, said VA spokesman Terry Jemison. The administration never revised the budget to include those numbers.

"It just strikes me, for our veterans administration to somehow not include ... this reality that we were going to have a significant number of veterans to take care of coming out of (the Afghanistan and Iraq wars) is something that should not have happened," Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., told Nicholson.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Foreign Diplomats Come Under Resistance Attack In Baghdad; Pakistan, Bahrain Will Withdraw Them

7.5.05 By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, AP & By Alastair Macdonald, Reuters: BAGHDAD, Iraq

Insurgents ambushed two more top diplomats from Muslim countries Tuesday in apparent kidnap bids that seemed aimed at scaring off foreign governments and isolating Iraq from the Arab world.

Pakistan responded by announcing the withdrawal of its ambassador. Both envoys were to leave the country temporarily after the attacks, their governments said.

The attacks targeted diplomats from Bahrain as well as Pakistan.

"This is a message from the terrorists to the Arab countries not to open embassies in Iraq and to prevent security, economic and political overtures to Iraq," said Abbas al-Bayati, a member of the parliamentary foreign relations committee.

Bahrain's top envoy in Iraq, Hassan Malallah al-Ansari, was slightly wounded as he drove to work in the Mansour district, hospital and Bahraini officials said. Bahraini officials said they believed it was a kidnap attempt.

Police at the scene, where the envoy's white luxury saloon with red diplomatic plates was standing spattered inside with blood, said Ansari appeared to have been driving alone.

A least two bullet holes were visible in the car's plastic lights. Scratches on the paintwork indicated that armour plating had deflected other bullets.

Bahrain has close ties to the United States as host to a major US naval base in the Gulf that played a role in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Pakistan's Ambassador Mohammed Younis Khan escaped injury later Tuesday when gunmen in two cars fired on his convoy in a kidnap attack in the same district, security officials said.

"Our escort fired back at them so we were able to escape without any harm," Khan told The Associated Press. Khan, named ambassador earlier this year, said he believed one of the attackers' cars was hit by gunfire from his bodyguards, but was not sure if any of the men were wounded.

About a dozen Arab and other Middle Eastern countries maintain diplomatic relations with Iraq, although relatively junior diplomats lead most missions.

US and Iraqi leaders have urged other Arab states to give full recognition to the 10-week-old Shi'a- and Kurdish-led government of Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari by upgrading diplomatic ties.

Arab governments have been reluctant to upgrade representation, fearing that would be seen as an endorsement of the U.S. military presence, widely opposed in the Middle East.

Al-Sherif was sent to Baghdad on June 1 as a step toward appointing a full ambassador. Last week, Syria, which has only an interests section in Baghdad, sent a delegation to Iraq to discuss reopening an embassy. Results of that visit were unknown.

After anti-Jordanian protests, Amman removed its top diplomat from Baghdad in March and has not named a replacement.

Assorted Resistance Action

5 July 2005 AFP & (KUNA) & By SINAN SALAHEDDIN/Associated Press Writer & Aljazeera & The Canadian Press & newkerala

A convoy of western security guards was hit by a roadside bomb Tuesday outside the Iranian embassy in Baghdad, wounding an Iraqi civilian and damaging a vehicle, the US military and security sources said.

US soldiers on foot and in armoured vehicles were seen on the road minutes after the attack which happened at about 10:15 am (0615 GMT). They detonated red and green smoke bombs at the scene.

Iraqi Police Tuesday reported the killing of four Iraqi female workers employed at Baghdad International Airport and wounding three men in Al-Aamiriyyah, Western Baghdad.

Police sources told KUNA masked guerrillas attacked the civilian vehicle that was transporting the group to their workplace. The attack took place early Tuesday on the intersection of the airport road and Ameriyah neighbourhood, said to be the most dangerous area in the violence-ridden city.

Resistance forces captured eight Iraqis in a town on the edge of the capital as they drove to work Monday at a U.S. base in Baqouba, 30 miles northeast of Baghdad, said police Col. Modhafar al-Majmaie.

In Tal Afar, about 30 miles west of Mosul, guerrillas assassinated a council member, Abdul Kareem Suleiman, officials said.

A roadside bomb blast and a subsequent firefight killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded seven others in the Abu Ghraib district, police and hospital officials said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

It Is Not Withdrawal That Threatens Iraq With Civil War, But Occupation

How many more Iraqis, Americans and Britons have to die before Bush and Blair admit the occupation is the problem and not part of any democratic solution in Iraq?

July 5, 2005 Sami Ramadani, The Guardian

Most people in Britain want troops withdrawn from Iraq - and so do most Iraqis, according to opinion polls.

But many well-intentioned people argue that the US-led occupation must end only when the country is stable. A swift withdrawal, they fear, would plunge the country into civil war.

In one sense this position is the same as that of Bush and Blair, who consistently say troops will not stay in Iraq "a moment longer than necessary" and will withdraw when asked to do so by a democratically chosen government.

Those who are genuinely concerned about withdrawal should examine the facts on the ground before giving support to continued occupation.

Some pro-war commentators warned early on that the country would be blighted by sectarian violence: oppressed Shias would take revenge on Sunnis; Kurds would avenge Saddam's rule by killing Arabs; and the Christian community would be liquidated.

What actually happened confounded such expectations. Within two weeks of the fall of Baghdad, millions converged on Karbala chanting "La Amreeka, la Saddam" (No to America, no to Saddam).

For months, Baghdad, Basra and Najaf were awash with united anti-occupation marches whose main slogan was "La Sunna, la Shia; hatha al-watan menbi'a" (no Sunni, no Shia, this homeland we shall not sell).

When it became clear that the poorest areas of Baghdad and the south were even more hostile to the occupation than the so-called Sunni towns - answering the Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's call to arms - Bush and Blair tried to defeat the resistance piecemeal, under the guise of fighting foreign terrorists.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was promoted to replace Saddam as the bogeyman in chief, to encourage sectarian tension and isolate the resistance.

This propaganda has been more successful abroad than in Iraq. Indeed, Iraqis habitually blame the occupation for all acts of terrorism, not what is fondly referred to as al-muqawama al-sharifa (the honourable resistance).

The occupation's sectarian discourse has acquired a hold as powerful as the WMD fiction that prepared the public for war.

Iraqis are portrayed as a people who can't wait to kill each other once left to their own devices. In fact, the occupation is the main architect of institutionalised sectarian and ethnic divisions; its removal would act as a catalyst for Iraqis to resolve some of their differences politically.

Every day the occupation increases tension and makes people's lives worse, fuelling the violence.

Creating a client regime in Baghdad, backed by permanent bases, is the route that US strategists followed in Vietnam. As in Vietnam, popular resistance in Iraq and the wider Middle East will not go away but will grow stronger, until it eventually unites to force a US-British withdrawal.

How many more Iraqis, Americans and Britons have to die before Bush and Blair admit the occupation is the problem and not part of any democratic solution in Iraq?

“Sacrifice More Young Lives?”

July 5, 2005 Bud McClure, CommonDreams.org

The most appalling reason put forward for the continuation of this war is that we must honor those service men and women who have died by continuing to sacrifice more young lives.

The tragic truth is that those that have died have died in vain. One more death will not change that harsh reality, nor will it ennoble their deaths in anyway.

In fact, to participate in Bush's fantasy makes a mockery of their sacrifice by denying them, even in death, the truth they deserve.

Anti-Colonial Ally Or New Colonial Missionary?

July 3, 2005 Marta Rodriguez [Excerpts]

The words "insurgents" and "terrorists" are too often present in our discourse about the Resistance. The terms reinforce the notion that there's something "legitimate" about the U.S. presence in Iraq, and "illegitimate" about the Iraqis' efforts to force them out of their country.

For example, antiwar guru Noam Chomsky, in his racist arrogance, described the sham elections set up to legitimize the United States' violent usurpation of Iraqi sovereignty, as a "triumph," "not of the bomb throwers, but of nonviolent resistance."

We insist on painting the Iraqi Resistance as the source of "Islamic oppression of women," and ignore the fact that the ones who have been banning women from schools, work centers and the streets are folks like the Badr Brigades, who happen to work for the occupation. Riverbend, an Iraqi blogger, wrote about this in an article titled "What We've Lost", published by *The Guardian* in November, 2003.

It's ironic that those of us who demonize the resistance on "feminist" grounds expect the Iraqis to settle things amiably with cruel and ruthless occupiers who are responsible for the rise of prostitution in Iraq, who have caused the impoverishment of Iraqi women and their families, who are behind most of the violence these women face on a daily basis, and who have used rape as a weapon to terrorize those who oppose the occupation.

One of the most arrogant propositions that often surfaces in the anti-resistance discourse is that the antiwar movement cannot allow "the Islamic fundamentalists" (read

"the resistance") to take over in Iraq. Apparently the United States government is not the only one in dire need of a Self -Determination-for-Beginners course.

The U.S. liberal-left's condemnation of the Iraqi Resistance and the attempts of some to promote anything other than that resistance, even if it turns out to work in the service of the occupation, is all the more infuriating and offensive because it comes from the very citizens of the aggressor country that is devastating Iraq.

Since when do the citizens of aggressor nations get to dictate how the victims of that aggression defend themselves?

We need to stop thinking that we have the right to ignore, condemn, or replace the resistance movements of the countries the U.S. assaults if they are not to our liking, because our responsibility to those movements goes beyond the international solidarity which some of us seem to think we can give and take back as if it were charity.

The American left's obsession with what it calls the presence of "Islamic fundamentalism" in the Iraqi and Palestinian resistance would be humorous if the issues that produced those resistance movements weren't life-and-death issues, and if one weren't able to notice the Christian/Zionist biases behind that obsession.

It wasn't long ago when much of this same left was extolling the virtues of "liberation theology" in the struggles to free El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the rest of Central America from its neocolonial relationship to the U.S. That theology has its roots in the movements of South America, which in the 1960' s saw Catholics like Colombian priest Camilo Torres taking up arms and joining the guerrilla movements of the region in an effort to materialize the egalitarian principles and goals of their faith.

Those who would say there's a difference between Christian revolutionaries and Muslim fundamentalists might want to remember that those Christian revolutionaries weren't necessarily ready to give their lives for reproductive freedom and gay liberation.

Yet no one took the position that Latin America should remain enslaved to the United States until the liberation movements worked out every kink in their programs, or learned to pursue said liberation by linking arms and singing "We are a Gentle Angry People" in front of U.S. embassies on summery Saturday afternoons.

We didn't demand feminist credentials from the Berrigan brothers, who did so much to call attention to the crimes of the U.S. in Vietnam but were against the right of abortion.

We don't flinch when Christians and Jews credit their religions as reasons to support certain causes. Yet we expect that Muslims who pursue the liberation of Iraq and Palestine jettison their Korans and if possible, their religion, altogether. How much more western-centric are we going to get?

A January 16 article by Peggy Gish titled "Economic Nonviolence Empowers Iraqi Women", described a teach-in where Iraqis were being encouraged to "resist the occupation silently," "without killing," by engaging in boycotts against American and other foreign products.

Since American pacifists in Iraq have made no bones about their being there to "take the initiative from those who would do violence," including the resistance, it's not hard to surmise that this teach-in is a product of their handy work.

There' s nothing wrong with boycotts or other nonviolent forms of struggle, as a resistance against occupation requires a wide variety of tactics, which will allow as many people as possible to undermine the efforts of the occupation and prevent it from taking root.

The problem here is the arrogance of American antiwar activists in assuming that they have something better to replace the methods employed by the Iraqis to fight their enemies, though their people have never experienced the kind of aggression and intrusion that Iraqis and other Arabs have faced.

If we truly want to help the Iraqis, we must focus our energies on the U.S. government's crimes against them, and what we must do to put an end to those crimes.

No one has to embrace any tactic of the resistance that's at odds with her or his sense of ethics, but we should be respectful and humble enough to recognize that Iraqis are the only ones who have the right to make decisions about their self defense, and the kind of society they're to have after the occupiers are gone.

The antiwar movement needs to decide if it wants to be an ally to the Iraqis as they struggle to rid themselves of their occupiers, or the new colonial missionary. I hope we opt for the former.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Imperial Stupidity Up Close And Personal

July 3, 2005 By Larry Diamond, Knight Ridder Newspapers

The coalition government relied heavily on a revolving door of diplomats and other personnel who would leave just as they had begun to develop local knowledge and ties, and on a large cadre of eager young neophytes whose brashness often gave offense in a very age- and status-conscious society.

One young political appointee (a 24-year-old Ivy League graduate) argued that Iraq should not enshrine judicial review in its constitution because it might lead to the legalization of abortion.

A much more senior Iraqi interlocutor (a widely experienced Iraqi-American lawyer) became so exasperated with the young man's audacity that he finally challenged him:

"You must have thoroughly studied the history of the British occupation of Iraq."

"Yes, I did," the young American replied proudly.

"I thought so," said the Iraqi, "because you seem determined to repeat every one of their mistakes."

Throughout the occupation, there was a profound tension between the idealistic goal of building democracy and the desire on the part of the Americans to retain control, to shape a particular kind of Iraqi democracy.

The dilemma struck me almost immediately after my arrival, when one of our colleagues stormed into the office after a late-night meeting of the Iraqi Governing Council, uttering: "We have a problem. And no one wants to deal with it. The Governing Council is issuing orders and the ministers are starting to execute them."

Several of us burst out laughing. We were fostering a transition to sovereignty and democracy. We had established the Iraqi Governing Council. But God forbid it should actually seek to start governing!

It was hubris -- and worse -- that led one retired general to dismiss the disastrous April 2003 murder of Abdul Majid al-Khoei (Iraq's most outspoken democratic Shiite cleric, and a man we had just brought back from London) with the disdainful quip, "Oh, it's just them killing each other."

It was hubris that led the United States to simply dismiss the insurgents as a bunch of bad losers and "evildoers" who would be quickly consigned to the dustbin of history.

Thus President Bush defiantly invited them to "bring it on."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush Wants Answers On Whether Chavez, Castro, Clinton And Osama Bin Laden Led US Embassy Siege In Iran

July 2, 2005 A Special Report by Zbigniew Zingh. Dissident Voice

US President George W. Bush said yesterday he not only wanted answers on whether Iranian President-elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was a leader in the 1979 US Embassy siege, but also whether Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez and Cuba's Fidel Castro were involved behind the scenes, too.

Some Americans who, more than thirty years ago, watched televised footage of the Carter-era hostage crisis say that they recognized the Iranian President-elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as a ringleader among the students who took American hostages.

"Look", they exclaimed, "Ahmadinejad has that same dark hair and eyes, the same dark beard and mustache as the men in the television videotapes. What are the chances that any other guy in that part of the world looks like that? It has to be the same man!"

FBI security analysts say that these witnesses are extremely trustworthy. After all, the FBI points out, for years patriotic informants and eyewitnesses have also reported credible sightings of the Virgin Mary on roadside advertising billboards, Elvis in Vegas, space aliens who have abducted their puppies and the face of Jesus in pepperoni pizzas.

Bush said he was not sure whether Ahmadinejad was involved in the 1979 embassy takeover, but he was certain that other, equally evil personalities definitely were. At Mr. Bush's direction, American officials were analyzing photographs and other information in their archives to determine whether, as Mr. Bush believes, Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro can be seen standing behind the scenes directing the Iranian students in the 1979 anti-American uprising.

"Obviously Chavez's and Castro's involvement raises many questions, and knowing how people like that plan for decades to inflict harm on the American people... just like happened on 9-11... I'm confident that the truth will be uncovered," Bush told reporters.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also noted that he thought he detected the hand of Saddam Hussein in the 1979 photographs. "Golly, I've shaken the hand of Saddam Hussein many times," said Mr. Rumsfeld, "and I would recognize his clammy index finger just about anywhere. In fact," said Rumsfeld, "if our photographic analysis can confirm the fingerprints of Saddam Hussein at the American embassy hostage-taking, then we will finally have discovered the link between that evil dictator and world terrorism that justifies our invasion of Iraq and the liberation of their oil fields."

Mr. Rumsfeld, with his accustomed logic and aplomb, also pointed out the significance of the fact that although Saddam Hussein really had not developed nuclear weapons of mass destruction, 36 years after the 1979 embassy hostage-taking at which Saddam Hussein's presence has now been detected, the Iranian fundamentalist government could be thinking about trying to develop the same WMDs that Saddam Hussein didn't build, but might have built if he could have built them.

Vice President Dick Cheney, interviewed by telegraph from somewhere deep within his underground bunker, commented that he anticipates that CIA evidence-enhancement technology may also be able to place the arch-terrorist himself, Osama bin-Laden, lurking in the background of the 1979 embassy photographs. Cheney noted that the fact that Osama bin Laden could not be seen in the photos meant nothing. Bin-Laden's image would only be visible by reversing the photographic negative, the Vice President observed, because the Evil One ordinarily appears only as a shadow in ordinary daylight.

In interviews with US television networks, GOP operative Karl Rove said that he was personally convinced that Senators Ted Kennedy and Hillary Clinton were also visible in the photographs of the Iranian captors.

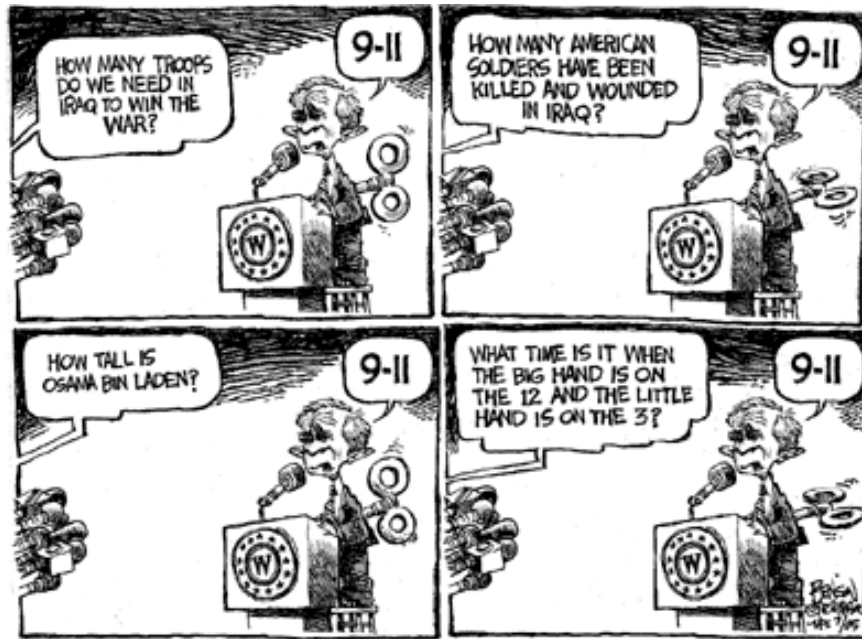
“They weren't very nice people at the time. Kennedy and Clinton,” said Rove, “were just like the people who flew the planes into the World Trade Center on 9-11, who gassed their own people in Iraq, and who hate Freedom and Democracy. “ They're all very hard-line, they're folks that we cannot get along with,” Rove told a Fox Television interviewer.

The charismatic John Bolton, President Bush's nominee to be the US ambassador to the United Nations, yelled at reporters while chasing them down the hall with a horse whip, that he was certain he also saw North Korea's Kim Il Song and United Nations Secretary Kofi Annan lurking in the background of the 1979 embassy hostage photographs.

One US official who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Ahmadinejad, Chavez, Castro, Kim, Annan, Osama, Kennedy and Clinton all seemed to have moved “through the same circle” as the 1979 Iranian hostage takers, but added, “Were they all hostage takers? That's the open question.”

In the expectation that the facts will be duly fixed around the policy, Mr. Bush has ordered the Pentagon to prepare for the immediate invasions of Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea and New England. The wars are expected to be successfully concluded by next weekend.

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6-30-05-C

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

Ethics Test

[Thanks to Liz B, who posted this 7.5.05]

This test only has one question, but it's a very important one. By giving an honest answer, you will discover where you stand morally. The test features an unlikely, completely fictional situation in which you will have to make a decision. Remember that your answer needs to be honest, yet spontaneous. Please scroll down slowly and give due consideration to each line.

You are in Florida, Miami to be specific. There is chaos all around you caused by a hurricane with severe flooding. This is a flood of biblical proportions.

You are a photojournalist working for a major newspaper, and you're caught in the middle of this epic disaster. The situation is nearly hopeless.

You're trying to shoot career-making photos. There are houses and people swirling around you, some disappearing under the water. Nature is unleashing all of its destructive fury.

Suddenly you see a man floundering in the water. He is fighting for his life, trying not to be taken down with the debris. You move closer . .

Somehow the man looks familiar. You suddenly realize who it is.

It's George W. Bush!

At the same time you notice that the raging waters are about to take him under... forever. You have two options: you can save the life of G.W. Bush or you can shoot a dramatic Pulitzer Prize winning photo, documenting the death of one of the world's most powerful men.

So here's the question, and please give an honest answer:

Would you select high contrast color film, or would you go with the classic simplicity of black and white?

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