

GI SPECIAL 3B96:

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Stanley and Gaye Lapinski, parents of Army Cpl. Stanley Lapinski, during funeral for the native of Naples, Fla., at Arlington National Cemetery, June 30, 2005. Cpl. Lapinski died June 11, 2005, when a roadside bomb exploded next to his convoy in Baghdad. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Majority of Soldiers Say Iraq Morale Low

[Thanks to PB and Don B, who sent this in.]

July 20, 2005 By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON -- A majority of U.S. soldiers in Iraq say morale is low, according to an Army report that finds psychological stress is weighing particularly heavily on National Guard and Reserve troops.

The report said 54 percent of soldiers rated their units' morale as low or very low. The comparable figure in a year-earlier Army survey was 72 percent.

The thing that bothered soldiers the most, the latest assessment said, was the length of their required stay in Iraq. At the start of the war, most were deployed for six months, but now they go for 12 months.

Only 55 percent of National Guard support soldiers said they have "real confidence" in their unit's ability to perform its mission, compared with 63 percent of active-duty Army support soldiers. And only 28 percent of the Guard troops rated their level of training as high, compared with 50 percent of their active-duty counterparts.

Asked about this, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told a Pentagon news conference that the Army's 12-month requirement is linked in part to its effort to complete a fundamental reorganization of fighting units.

"I've tried to get the Army to look at the length of tours and I think at some point down the road they will," he said.

[See the slimy piece of shit. See the slimy piece of shit open his mouth. See the slimy piece of shit lie. "I've *tried* to get the Army...." he says? He can *order* the JCS to do whatever he wishes. He can *order* changes in the lengths of tours. But look how he tries to duck responsibility, with this "I've tried" bullshit. What, he gave an order and some generals told him to go shit in his hat? How real is that?

[No, he just doesn't want to tell the troops and the people the truth: he doesn't have enough forces left to invade Iceland, let alone cut the tour lengths. So, in addition to everything we already knew, chalk up another bit of information: the SecDef is a coward, who won't tell it like it really is, and tries to shift the blame. Unfit for human society, let alone command. One way or another, enough of Rumsfeld. He'll look good in flexcuffs and a nice, orange jump suit.]

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Operation Iraqi Secure The Junk



US soldiers secure the area after a car bomb attack in Baghdad. (AFP/Ali Al-Saadi)

Car Bomb Hits US Patrol In Toz-Khormatu: U.S. Troops Wounded Or Dead

July 20 (Xinhuanet)

A car bomb detonated Wednesday next to a US military patrol in Iraq's northern town of Toz-Khormatu, causing casualties, police said.

"A booby-trapped vehicle, parked on the side of a road in Toz-Khormatu, blew up early morning as a US military patrol passed by, destroying a US Hamvee, killing or wounding all on board," a police source from the US-Iraqi Joint Coordination Center, told Xinhua.

Two civilians were also wounded in the attack in the town, located some 90 km east of Tikrit, the source said. US troops immediately blocked the roads leading to the scene and cordoned off the area searching houses for suspects, said the police source.

Helicopter Down Near Taji

07/20/05 AP

A U.S. helicopter was forced to make an emergency landing in Taji, north of Baghdad, because of mechanical problems. No injuries were reported, a military spokesman said.

Explosions Reported At Ramadi Base

07/20/05 AP

Ten explosions were heard Wednesday afternoon at the American military base in Ramadi's eastern neighborhood of Al-Ziraa, 1st Let. Mohamed Al-Obeidi of the city police said. It was unclear what caused the explosions.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“Remind Me Again. What The Fuck Is It We’re Doing Here?”



U.S. Army soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, in Bagh village of Khakeran Valley, Zabul province, Afghanistan, June 26. (AP Photo/Tomas Munita)

Two Collaborator Soldiers Killed By IED

July 20, 2005 By Noor Khan, Associated Press

In the country's east a blast under an army truck killed two [local] soldiers, officials said Wednesday.

The blast under the army truck occurred on the same day insurgents laid a land mine on a road in Paktika province, said army Gen. Shahorgul, who uses only one name.

TROOP NEWS

Antiwar Activists Reach U.S. Sailors In Australia

The creativity that these antiwar activists used in reaching active-duty military personnel--and the friendly reception they received from the sailors--is inspiring. They provided a shining example of what's possible at a time when Bush's war for oil is growing increasingly unpopular--in the U.S., around the world and even within the ranks of the U.S. military.

July 22, 2005 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker

ANTIWAR ACTIVISTS in Sydney, Australia, turned the harbor area surrounding three U.S. Navy ships into a huge, open-air theater--and found that U.S. sailors warmly received their leaflets and the antiwar documentary they projected.

Using a projector and huge sound system, organizers used the side of a shipping container next to the Navy ships to project Sir, No Sir, a new documentary by David Zeiger about the revolt in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War.

"We estimate that at least 700 personnel saw some of the movie," wrote James Courtney, a peace activist and member of Greenpeace, in a report he sent to the Internet newsletter GI Special.

"Around 200 or so watched it for 10 to 15 minutes. The U.S. MPs and around 15 plainclothes U.S. military staff watched the whole movie (it was right in their face so they didn't have much choice). The sound system was very loud, so we expect that possibly thousands of personnel heard what was happening."

U.S. Navy officers asked local police to stop the activists, but the police replied that they had a democratic right to protest.

Activists also found other ways to reach out to the sailors. "At the main gates of the naval base through which all service personnel coming or going passed...we

laid out candles in the shape of the peace symbol,” wrote Courtney. “The response was moving and inspiring. We had naval personnel helping to light candles and taking photos. Many words of thanks from ships’ crew--some with tears welling in their eyes.

“We had nothing but positive feelings from the ships’ crew that spoke with us. “We managed to hand out around 200 copies of *Traveling Soldier*, but noticed that that this was mostly from crew going ashore, and that many were cautious about taking it...”

“This was a very moving and inspirational experience for the small group of people that made it happen. We felt moved by the plight of the young men and women that we met. There was one line that we heard from many: ‘Sometimes, I feel that we are fighting for the wrong reason.’”

The creativity that these antiwar activists used in reaching active-duty military personnel--and the friendly reception they received from the sailors--is inspiring. They provided a shining example of what’s possible at a time when Bush’s war for oil is growing increasingly unpopular--in the U.S., around the world and even within the ranks of the U.S. military.

Soldier Exposes The Great “Bonus” Fraud

July 22, 2005
Letters To The Editor
Socialist Worker

LET ME begin by saying that the information I read on your Web site was like a breath of fresh air to me.

I was one of the many unfortunate individuals that got taken in with an enlistment bonus for the Army. When I enlisted I went into the delayed entry program on November 2, 2000, for a bonus in the amount of \$9,000. “Wow,” I said, “that will be a great start when I get out of Advanced Individual Training.”

Of course, we all know that we have to pay taxes, but how much? How about paying as much as 69 percent from each disbursement?

From my first disbursement of \$7000, there was \$4,830 taken in taxes, and for each disbursement following in the amount of \$500, \$345 was taken.

Two years of being both in the military had begun to take its toll on both me and my husband, so I chaptered out.

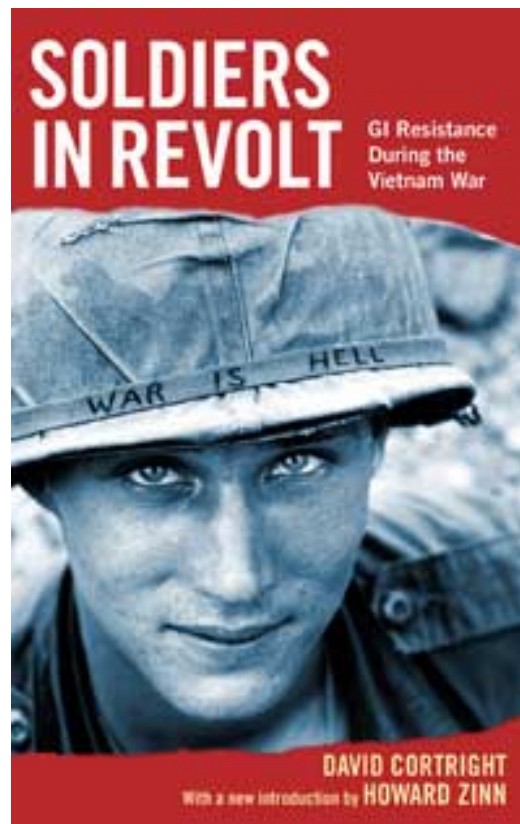
Little did I know I would not be receiving any pay for the month of January, and that they would take the money back for selling almost 40 days of leave time. I am currently paying the remainder of the bonus back today.

It's a long ongoing story. I had problems getting unemployment; DFAS reported the extra income to the IRS in 2002, but didn't notify me of another existing W-2 until this year, so I owe money there as well.

I could go on and on, but it wouldn't change anything. I would just like to say keep getting the truth out, and maybe things will change.

Dante Collins,
from the Internet

***Soldiers in Revolt,* By David Cortright**



Haymarket Books Announcement: Haymarket Books, ISBN 1-931859-27-2 paper, 364 pp, Sept 2005, \$16, from www.haymarketbooks.org

This book—on the historic resistance of GIs and veterans against the Vietnam War—is vital for understanding the overstretched U.S. military and opposition to the invasion and occupation of Iraq among soldiers and their families today.

"This fine study, combining scrupulous scholarship with the sharp insights of a highly informed participant-observer, was the first to explore in depth the processes of disaffection, organized opposition, and resistance that undermined U.S. military forces attacking Indochina, and their far-reaching consequences. **It remains today the most penetrating and revealing investigation and analysis of these remarkable developments, with current implications that are all too evident.**"

--Noam Chomsky, author, *Hegemony or Survival*

"An invaluable account of a uniquely American movement that helped to bring the Vietnam War to an end. This book restores an important chapter to our living history."

--Tod Ensign, author, *America's Military Today: The Challenge of Militarism* and director of *Citizen Soldier*

"[A]n exhaustive account of rebellion in all the armed forces, not only in Vietnam but throughout the world...Perhaps Cortright's most important conclusion is that most of the GI resistance came not from draftees "but from volunteers from working class backgrounds." --New York Review of Books

DAVID CORTRIGHT was enlisted in the U.S. Army from 1968–1971. He is president of the Fourth Freedom Forum and a research fellow at Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, and is the author or editor of twelve books, including *A Peaceful Superpower: The Movement Against War in Iraq*.

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.

Veterans To Assist Marine Who Lost Leg

July 19, 2005 Hattiesburg American

A group of South Mississippi veterans wounded in past wars wants to ease the struggle of a Marine who lost his leg in Iraq.

Proceeds from Saturday sales of "Combat Wounded – Our Story" will go to LCpl. Aaron Rice, who is continuing rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

The 224-page book, which recounts the experiences of Pine Belt area veterans, will be sold near Garfield's at Turtle Creek Mall.

“The man is a lance corporal and the pay isn’t all that great,” said Robert Ledford, commander of the Hub City Memorial chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. “He was going to college and got called up. He had only been married 30 days prior to going to Iraq.”

Rice, 21, was a Stennis Scholar studying political science at Mississippi State University when his Marine Reserves battalion was called to active duty. He lost his left leg after the Humvee he was in hit a land mine March 18 in al Anbar province.

“He’s been fitted for a prosthesis, but he can’t use it a lot yet because there’s a little place that hasn’t healed up,” said his mother, Debbie Rice of Hattiesburg.

GI Resister Kevin Benderman Faces New Court-Martial: Put On Trial For Opposing Their War

July 22, 2005 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker

THE U.S. Army will again try to court-martial Sgt. Kevin Benderman for refusing to participate in the illegal occupation of Iraq.

After serving one tour of duty in Iraq, Benderman--a 10-year veteran of the Third Infantry Division--refused to deploy for a second tour and filed for conscientious objector (CO) status in late 2004.

During his first tour, Benderman was sickened by the illegal and immoral nature of the war--and the orders he received to shoot Iraqi children and ignore Iraqi civilians pleading for medical assistance. But the Army denied Benderman’s CO application and instead charged him with desertion and missing movement.

The first court-martial proceeding was suspended when the military judge ruled that the investigating officer had been biased against Benderman, who faces up to seven years of confinement if convicted.

Benderman was not the only one in his unit who objected to redeployment. Seventeen other soldiers in the same unit went absent without leave, two tried to kill themselves, and one had a relative shoot him in the leg to avoid going back to Iraq.

However, Benderman not only applied for CO status, but he also exercised his First Amendment right to free speech and spoke publicly against the war. For this, the Army is retaliating.

Several of Benderman’s supporters--including historian Staughton Lynd and the organizations Veterans for Peace and Voices in the Wilderness--filed a friend-of-the-

court brief asking the judge to deny the Army's motion to keep Benderman from presenting evidence regarding the illegal nature of the war and the war crimes he was ordered to commit.

Since the Army alleges that one of Benderman's "crimes" is writing articles and speaking about these illegal orders, the brief points out that the Army itself has opened the door to the question of what Benderman's orders actually were. Once evidence of those orders is introduced, it should be clear that Benderman had not only the right but also the duty to refuse them under the Nuremburg Principles--which do not allow a soldier to escape responsibility for his actions even if following the orders of his superiors.

For information about what you can do to support Kevin Benderman, go to bendermandefense.org.

Army Recruiters & Cops Take On Chicago Veterans For Peace Counter- Recruiters; Cops, Recruiters Lose

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

7 Jul 2005 By Eric, Chicago Veterans For Peace

A great recap of last weekend's military counter-recruitment efforts at the Taste of Chicago (a huge annual food & music festival put on by the city)

Friends,

Many thanks to the more than 40 people who joined in the counter-recruiting and antiwar efforts at the Taste of Chicago this past weekend.

Groups such as the Committee Against the Militarization of Youth, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Code Pink, Peace Pledge, Chicagoland Anarchist Network, Students for Social Justice, DePaul Students Against the War, Students Against the Militarization of Youth, Education Not Empire, Chicago Media Action, Andersonville Neighbors for Peace and others were represented as well as individuals with no organizational affiliation.

People started showing up as early as 10am, most had left by 4pm, and a handful of people stayed as late as 6pm.

There were only 1-2 recruiters on site as most of the people working the display were employed by an unnamed subsidiary of Sports Relay, a sports marketing company from St. Louis that contracts with Chicago-based Leo Burnett who contracts directly with the

U.S. Army. They were just kids, mostly Latino and African American, just like their intended target audience.

The Army of One display included a tank simulator, basketball hoop (free Army T-shirt with 3 baskets in a row), decked out humvee, and registration tent where they were making personalized dog-tags and handing out free copies of the official Army video game.

The Army claims that these displays are not for recruiting purposes but if that's true then why are people under the age of 16, which is also the minimum age for participation in the Delayed Entry Program, not allowed to participate? Why do the marketing reps walk around outside of the tent area with clipboards selectively asking people if they're at least 16 and would like to shoot some hoops?

It's interesting to note that for the first time in 4 years the Army has responded to our criticism of this deceptive practice and now says that people will only receive general information about the Army and other unidentified "promotions" and will not be contacted by recruiters unless they request it.

No longer than 5 minutes after we had set up and unfurled a banner stating, "Recruiters Lie, People Die", we were approached by recruiters, then Chicago police, and then private security. People also had some great signs, tons of leaflets, wore vibrant T-shirts (thanks Code Pink/Peace Pledge) and were situated in 4-5 key areas around the Army of One display so as to maximize our visibility.

One of the recruiters made the claim that he was able to refute most of the facts in our materials. Naturally his only refutation was to claim that this had not happened to him, that the incidents of recruiters lying to people were the result of a "few bad apples", and that he was "honest" with his recruits. Sorry pal but the numbers together with your obvious lack of sincerity indicate otherwise.

When it became clear to him that we knew our rights, were well organized, significant in number, and there to stay he called the police to come and remove the "protesters".

The police came and set up two orange cones in an arbitrary location a few feet from the Army display. Then they approached us and said that we had to be 20 feet from those cones, which was BS of course, and even though the banner was already 19 feet away by choice they continued to harrass us until such time as we took one more step back.

Then they said that all of the "protesters" had to stand in this one area and would not be allowed to walk around distributing leaflets, holding signs and talking with people.

We replied that this was unacceptable and began to tell them what the Army's space reservation and relevant city ordinances actually say. We went back and forth for a good 20 minutes and in the end their position had changed from a very aggressive "If we have to come back here we're going to arrest people." to a very passive "Well, we're just asking you to compromise and move a little bit."

Naturally our reply was that we had already compromised as much as were going to.

They left in disgust but later sent some goons to keep an eye on us from a distance.

Unsatisfied with the arrangement we had 'worked out' with the police (ie. that we were going to keep our rights) and seeing all of the attention that we were getting the recruiter called security.

They showed up and tried to do the same thing as the cops had. We went through the same routine with them and told them that the cops had already been there and conceded the point.

They called their supervisor who came and basically said what we already knew, that unless we were obstructing traffic or harassing people that we were within our rights to be there.

In response to a comment about free speech and assembly one of the security guards gave us the old "I fought so that you could have the freedom to do this" line. When asked to explain the logic of that statement he simply confirmed his status as a hypocrite and went on to say that if it were up to him we wouldn't have those rights.

For the remainder of the day our interaction with the recruiters, cops and security guards was limited and virtually non-existent.

Throughout the entire day people were stopping to thank us for being there and take pictures of our banner and signs, many people even asked to have pictures taken of themselves standing next to the banner or in some cases holding it. Those who didn't stop still managed to smile or give us the thumbs up.

One woman who lost her husband in the Gulf War, a brother in Afghanistan, and now has a son in Iraq told us to keep up the good work.

We came across the family members of several active-duty GI's who were having second thoughts about the war so we gave them information for the GI Rights Hotline and the Military Counseling Service of VVAW. One vendor came up and gave us free bottles of water, people offered us their festival tickets so that we could replenish ourselves, and in several instances passersby stopped and asked if they could join us for a little while thus enabling us to connect with them on a deeper level.

The vast majority of people including veterans, parents, young people and tourists from other countries were receptive to our leaflets and to talking with us about what was going on with the war, recruiting and so on. In at least a dozen cases it was clear that we had made a profound difference in people's perceptions about the war, military recruiting and even their own future, and in many other cases it was clear that we had planted a seed of doubt that will hopefully inspire them to remove their blinders and begin to question things.

Many of the people playing basketball or getting dog-tags actually came up to tell us that they were just "having fun", were against the war, and were not interested in joining the Army.

Negative reactions were few and far between and were definitely just 'reactions' with no logical or factual basis whatsoever. Others who stopped to shout at and insult us only brought more attention and support for what we were doing from the passersby.

The Protest Warrior's came out but were marginalized, ineffective and very few in number. They did manage to videotape us so don't be surprised if some of you end up in one of their "operation" videos.

All of the positive and negative attention that we've been getting of late should be seen as an indication that we're doing the right thing and making slow but steady progress. All in all it was a very good day.

Unfortunately many activists fail to realize just how important these kinds of efforts are. It doesn't take 10,000, 500 or even 40 people either, the efforts of a small handful of people can make a difference one person at a time. Thanks again to all who participated on the day of the event or who helped to create and make materials in the preceding days and weeks. And please join us at the North Avenue Beach for the Chicago Air and Water Show on August 20-21.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



Assorted Resistance Action

July 20, 2005 American Forces Press Service & Aljazeera 7.19.05 & CBC & Reuters

A bomber killed himself and ten others today during an attack outside an airfield in Iraq, military officials in Baghdad reported.

The attack, which wounded 25 others, happened near the Muthana Airfield around 9:30 a.m. Those injured in today's blast were Iraqi army recruits and one Iraqi soldier. Another Iraqi soldier was among those killed. The airfield houses a recruiting center that provides additional security forces for Baghdad, officials said.

The bomber was out chatting with recruits before setting off his explosives, say reports.

Resistance fighters blew up a newly built police station in the Lutafiyah district of south Baghdad just after midnight July 20. No one was injured in the explosion, officials said, because the police had not yet moved into the station, but the building was destroyed.

"We will have to reassess the whole building to determine the next step in reconstruction (!); however, I know the Iraqi police want a station in Lutafiyah, and they are determined to have one," said U.S. Army Capt. Joe Lynch, a civil affairs project manager for the 48th Brigade Combat Team. "We will do all we can to assist them."

A top leader in Basra province was killed when guerrillas opened fire early this morning while leaving his home. Hussein Hamid is head of the Basra municipal councils, the number 2 leader in Basra's provincial government.

An attack in Mosul targeted Sayyed Zanoun al-Naimi, a local official in the central neighbourhood of Jazaer, who was killed by armed men in front of his house, police Brigadier General Saeed Ahmed al-Jbouri said.

A second attack targeted a police vehicle that was transferring a prisoner from Mosul to the prison of Badoah, 20km to the northwest, a police official, Wathiq Mohammed, said.

Three officers, including a colonel and a major, as well as two police and the prisoner were killed in the shooting, he said.

Mohammed added that police forces sent to the area were fired at by an attacker, who wounded one of them before being killed.

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

Pipeline And Storage Depot Blown Up

07/20/05 Bassem Mrioue, AP

An early morning blast hit a pipeline 10 miles south of Samarra, linking the Beiji and Dora refineries, said Capt. Ahmed Salih. A Tuesday explosion occurred at a crude oil storage depot 25 miles south of Baghdad, said another policeman.

The pipelines feed domestic power plants, and such attacks often mean more electricity shortages for Baghdad's 6.5 million people.

Even before the pipelines were hit, Azzam newspaper quoted the electricity ministry as saying power cuts would be extended in Baghdad.

Electricity will be provided for two hours, followed by a 10-hour cut instead of the previous four-hour cut.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Death As The Ultimate Solution.

20 July 2005 By Norman Solomon, Truthout Perspective

Imperial wars of occupation routinely try to kill enough "enemy forces" to snuff out resistance.

Behind all the rhetoric coming out of Washington, that approach is central to the US war in Iraq. Like Westmoreland, today's war-makers see death as the ultimate solution.

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

Sunni Arabs Withdraw From Constitution Committee

20 July, 2005 IANS & By Luke Baker, (Reuters) & CBC

Baghdad : Sunni Arabs in Iraq's constitution committee suspended their membership Wednesday following the killing of three colleagues, reports Xinhua.

Announcing this to reporters, Adnan al-Janabi, a Sunni Arab and deputy head of the committee, blamed the Iraqi government, the National Assembly and the UN responsible for the deaths of the three Sunni committee members.

"Despite these parties announcing that they would back the process of writing the constitution, they did not provide security for the Sunni members," Janabi said, adding "that's why we decided to withdraw from the committee."

"The environment in Iraq isn't right for anyone to get work done," said Salih al-Mutlaq, a spokesman for the Iraqi National Dialogue, a Sunni Arab organization, in explaining why the group's representatives had suspended their membership. **[Except for the resistance, which is doing very well indeed.]**

Just Another Day Of Making Friends In Liberated Iraq



A U.S. Marine runs through the front gate of a house as the dust settles from explosives used to blow the lock open in Karabilah, 200 miles west of Baghdad June 19, 2005. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

Iraq A Worse Police State Under The U.S. Than Under Saddam; “Violent Behaviour Goes All The Way Up To The U.S. Embassy”

[Thanks to David McReynolds for posting this.]

20 July 2000 by Greg Rollins, CPTnet

Most Iraqis dislike the police and Iraqi National Guard (ING), whom they regard as thugs with guns. The police and ING drive up and down the streets (or sidewalks) shooting into the air and blasting their sirens and horns so that people will move out of their way.

The other day I watched a police convoy pass. I could hear the shooting from several blocks away. All the cars pulled over and waited for the convoy to pass. The first truck

ped by with a gunman hanging out the window holding his Kalashnikov in one hand while he yelled. The following six trucks and vans looked the same. The shooting came from the last vehicle in the convoy. The policeman hanging out the back kept shooting into the air despite the fact that all the cars were out of the way.

While the police and ING are not the only convoys that drive this way, the people are more disturbed by them than by the U.S. convoys. Iraqis have come to expect this kind of behaviour from their occupiers, but not from their new government.

In Fallujah, people told CPT that the police and ING are worse than the U.S. army.

"I would rather be arrested by the U.S. than the Iraqis," one man said. "At least they would treat us better." Fallujans told CPT that whenever a car bomb goes off, the police and ING shoot first and ask questions later.

Even though the Fallujah curfew starts at 10 pm, people are usually home shortly after 8 because the police and ING will harass them if they are not. A traffic cop said the police and ING even verbally and physically assault him when he directs traffic.

Recently fear of the Iraqi Special Forces (ISF) has arisen. They are U.S.-trained and work closely with the U.S. military, carrying out house raids, sweeps and major operations. People say they are brutal and that one their brigades is made up of anti-Saddam Iraqis from a militia called the Badr Brigade.

An official from the Interior Ministry told CPT that approval for the ISF's violent behaviour goes all the way up to the U.S. Embassy.

One family told CPT their three brothers were arrested by the ISF's Wolf Brigade one night and the next evening they saw the brothers on TV looking beaten and confessing to crimes they did not commit.

CPT has also heard stories about people being arrested by one of these brigades and found dead at the side of the road a few days later.

Iraq is now a worse police state under the U.S. than it was under Saddam.

Sure, Iraq has a government, but the U.S. controls it.

While many people in the U.S. believe that Iraq is on the road to an American-style of democracy, many Iraqis are convinced that there is no road and there will be no democracy.

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

Iraq's 'Ghost Army'

An official said: "The Americans don't trust our soldiers or policemen. They say the arms might fall into the hands of insurgents. But I tell them the insurgents already have these kind of weapons so why should they want some more?"

15 July 2005 By Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad, Independent News & Media (UK) Ltd

A tidal wave of corruption may ensure the Iraqi army and police will be too few and too poorly armed to replace American and British forces fighting anti-government insurgents. That could frustrate plans in Washington and London to reduce their forces in Iraq.

The Iraqi armed forces are full of "ghost battalions" in which officers pocket the pay of soldiers who never existed or have gone home. "I know of at least one unit which was meant to be 2,200 but the real figure was only 300 men," said a veteran Iraqi politician and member of parliament, Mahmoud Othman.

"The US talks about 150,000 Iraqis in the security forces but I doubt if there are more than 40,000."

The army and police are poorly armed despite heavy expenditure. "The interim government spent \$5.2bn on the ministry of defence and ministry of the interior during six months but there is little to show for it," said a senior Iraqi official who did not want his name published.

He cited the case of more than \$300m spent on buying 24 military helicopters and other equipment from Poland. When Iraqi experts examined the helicopters they found them to be 28 years old - and their manufacturer recommended that they be scrapped after 25 years. Iraq is now trying to get its money back.

The corruption started under the US-run Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003 when Iraqis, often with little experience, were appointed to senior positions in ministries.

The Iraqis did not act alone. "The Americans were the partners of the Iraqis in all this corruption," says Dr Othman. The results of the failure to buy effective arms are visible at every Iraqi police or army checkpoint. The weapons on display are often ageing Kalashnikovs. The supposedly elite police commandos drive about in elderly pick-ups with no armour. The ministry of the interior was recently unable to provide a presidential guard with 50 pistols.

As a result of the lack of weapons, the Iraqi police and army are often less well-armed than the insurgents.

Iraqi soldiers have often turned out to be pathetically vulnerable to guerrilla attacks.

"During the past two years, people could make money in Iraq on a scale that would astonish a Colombian drug lord," said an Iraqi politician who, like many, wanted to remain anonymous. "To protect the amounts of money they made, these people will kill very easily."

Meanwhile, the new Defence Minister, Saadoun al-Dulaimi, complains he inherited so little infrastructure that he has to bring in tea bags to his office so he can offer tea to visitors.

The Iraqi government hoped it would be able to obtain weapons free from the US but that has turned out to be a frustrating process.

An official said: "The Americans don't trust our soldiers or policemen. They say the arms might fall into the hands of insurgents. But I tell them the insurgents already have these kind of weapons so why should they want some more?"

MORE:

Tough Times For 5th Brigade Of Iraq's Army: Many Soldiers Have Quit.

July 12, 2005 By Ashraf Khalil, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

The rank smell of sweat, stale cigarettes and garbage engulfs the cavernous aircraft hangar where hundreds of Iraqi men in khaki fatigues lounge on black metal bunk beds with bare mattresses. A door in the corner leads to the bathroom — a dozen or so metal cubicles reeking of human filth.

For many of the more than 2,000 men who make up the Iraqi army's fledgling 5th Brigade, this dank metal shed with sporadic electricity and no running water has been their home for the last six months as they prepare to take their place on the front lines against the country's insurgency.

Uncomfortable, unsanitary living conditions on this abandoned Baghdad airfield have eroded brigade morale, Iraqi officers say. Many soldiers have quit, and more say they plan to.

"We come home from training or patrols soaking in sweat and can't even wash," says one soldier who didn't want to be identified for fear of being punished. "Is this the way we should live?"

Says one soldier: "We don't need electricity. We don't need more money. We just need water."

The 5th Brigade is scheduled to graduate this month, when it will assume partial responsibility for guarding the Green Zone, the heavily fortified swath of central Baghdad that houses most of the Iraqi government and the U.S. and British embassies.

Despite the mutual respect and camaraderie on display, Sgt. Worrill acknowledges that there's no way of knowing just how reliable the 5th Brigade will be until the soldiers get out in the field.

He also knows that many of the Iraqis under his care are not necessarily friends of the U.S. presence in Iraq. "Not all these guys like us. Some of them are in the army because they want us to leave Iraq," he says. "I respect that. I think it's awesome."

The soldiers are overwhelmingly Shiite, and the barracks is filled with portraits of Imam Ali, the original Shiite martyr, and Sadr, the anti-American cleric.

When asked about Sadr, soldiers eagerly begin pulling pictures of the portly, black-bearded cleric out of their wallets. Several speak with admiration of his long-standing opposition to the U.S. occupation.

Iraqi and U.S. officers acknowledge that the living conditions on the base have bred a palpable sense of discontent. Many troopers interpret the conditions as a sign of disrespect.

Soldiers complain bitterly that they are provided with 1 1/2 liters of bottled water per day to wash with and drink. Many trudge about half a mile to bathe and wash their uniforms at a broken water main on the base.

No one understands how a military as powerful and capable as America's could be unable to run a water pipe less than 1,000 yards over safe ground.

Perhaps the only thing that has kept the soldiers' resentment from bursting into open revolt is the knowledge that their own leaders are suffering too.

"I'm an officer and I haven't been able to shower for three days," Ibrahim said. "It definitely affects the morale of the soldiers."

MORE:

Iraq Arms Scandal: Millions For Shoddy War Goods, Kickbacks To Baghdad Collaborator Officials

July 15, 2005 Philadelphia Inquirer

The Iraqi Defense Ministry has squandered more than \$300 million buying faulty and outdated military equipment in what appears to be a huge corruption network that flourished for a year or longer.

An investigation is under way into vendors vastly overcharging for substandard equipment, including helicopters, machine guns and armored vehicles, and kicking back money to Iraqi Defense Ministry buyers.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Iraqi President Demands Swift Trial Of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld & Kerry



"War Criminal," Iraqi President Says
(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Jul. 20, 2005 SAMEER N. YACOUB, Associated Press

"We are for a swift trial of those criminals. They are war criminals who committed terrible crimes against the Iraqi people," President Jalal Talabani said.

"Hurrying in their trial will help in reducing terrorism," he added.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

PNG Threatens To Seek Other Allies

[Thanks to artisan, who sent this in. He writes: Another sovereign nation refusing to subordinate its interests to those of its master?]

19 July 2005 Sydney Morning Herald

Papua New Guinea wants to break its "umbilical cord" to Australia and look to other nations, its Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare, has said, as he accused Canberra of threatening his nation's sovereignty.

The Port Moresby leader's missive follows the collapse of Australia's \$800 million rescue package in May and the expulsion of more than 100 federal police sent to PNG under the historic Enhanced Co-operation Program.

"We would like to remove the umbilical cord of depending (on) Australia and diversify our relations with the region and the world," he said in a statement issued to the Herald. "In this regard, we are watching developments in Canberra."

Australia is insisting that PNG amend its constitution so the police can return with legal immunity but Sir Michael said his Government could not accept the change.

"(The) constitutional arrangement as proposed by Australia questions the sovereignty of PNG," Sir Michael said. "It questions the democratic and legal constitutions and authorities of the PNG state and its people.

"Given the current impasse, the (co-operation program) in its current form will not work or may not be implemented."

While PNG faces serious and deep-seated economic and social problems, it is resource-rich, and Chinese investors, in particular, are showing much greater interest in the country.

Formerly administered by Australia, PNG has long been considered part of Australia's sphere of influence, with the US Government re-emphasising that point in a submission to a parliamentary inquiry last year.

But Sir Michael said he was prepared to "go it alone and diversify our aid relations with other countries" if Australia did not recant its demand for constitutional change.

A PNG Supreme Court ruling that the federal police could not work under special rules that gave them legal immunity scuttled the co-operation program, which was launched in December 2003 and represented a fundamental shift in strategic approach to PNG.

Fearing that PNG - suffering a crime epidemic, poverty and an accelerating rate of HIV infection - could become a failed state, **the Government had negotiated for 230 Australian police and about 70 government officials to live and work there.**

At a cost of \$805 million over four years, it was a major investment, on top of the \$300 million a year Australia already gives to PNG in development assistance.

Sir Michael said he wanted the Australian police to return to take up supervisory and training positions in PNG. They would be protected from vexatious claims and could work under Australian command but would have to operate under PNG law.

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