

GI SPECIAL 3C31:

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



A relative stands over the casket of Honduran-born U.S. Marine Sgt. Ramon Ernesto Gonzalez during a funeral service in San Pedro Sula, Honduras August 22, 2005. Gonzalez, 30, was killed on August 8 by small arms fire in Ramadi. REUTERS/Neptali Romero/LA PRENSA

“I Can’t Hide From The Soldier I Once Was”

I can’t hide from the soldier I once was much like I will never be able to bury the memories of one year in combat. Whenever I glance at war coverage on a television, or hear the ignorant hate-talk of our blood mongering president, or read the latest death tolls in the news papers my eyes fill with rage and my heart fills with sorrow.

I have been told many times not to be ashamed for my service to this country, but I can’t help a genuine intuition that this war is not designed to promote freedom and our beautiful American way of life, but instead only carried out to proliferate Western imperialism and corporate profits every time a bullet is fired.

My guilt is synonymous with the sentiment that I was indeed on the wrong side of the wire.

From: J.D. ENGELHARDT aka hEkLe: (former) Specialist, 1st Infantry Division, US Army.
To: GI Special
Sent: August 23, 2005

"I was thinking this might be my last blog entry, well, at least for our website. but I don't know. We'll see. One thing I can promise, this doesn't mean I'm done writing."

Every morning I wake up and follow at least one routine that I will carry out for the rest of my life. I look into the mirror and see an average guy with a turbulent past and an uncertain future.

I see my flowing brown hair growing longer everyday and a reddish brown beard that has now consumed my entire face.

I see dark circles under my bloodshot blue eyes and wrinkles from at least four years of undue stress. I have just turned twenty-five but I feel as though I'm forty. If experts say that smoking tobacco will add ten years to your life, I wonder what they would say about military service.

I see a new person, one that I never thought I would meet, one that I never knew could possibly exist, but there he stares at me in the mirror. Not so much a stranger, but completely different that I would have ever imagined.

Everyday I see myself in the mirror and am reminded of the new person who stares back. A new me, a refined me. A happy and optimistic me. A fresh mold, a new start.

Things will be better now, for I am free and very gratefully alive. The future seems so bright and pure now compared to where I was only a few short months ago. I am in control of my own life once again. I have embraced this new unknown with open arms, waiting to challenge any obstacle that is thrown in my face. I know this new path in life will not be easy, but I will proudly assume responsibility for all my future accomplishments and failures.

As I walk from my home and stroll through the streets, I hit the ground running. New and exciting possibilities loom around every corner. Everywhere I look I see people running to and fro, consumed by their worldly responsibilities. Running errands, heading to work, earning money, spending money.

So much to do, and yet I drift through the madness like a ghost. I know I have responsibilities of my own, but they no longer seem to anchor me down like the ball and chain that was my past.

Because I can, I walk into a tavern for an afternoon beverage. "Long island ice teas taste better in Europe," I think to myself, noticing that almost every cocktail I've had in my hometown seem to be watered down.

No matter, though. It's just that Europeans have better taste concerning the finer things in life, such as an afternoon head-change. It's not America's fault. We're simply a very young nation and have not yet learned to perfect the Art of Living like that of our ancestral neighbors across the Atlantic Ocean. But then again, they are not so big on watching televisions in their pubs, and as I stare across the gray sunlight room, I notice an enormously looming and mind numbing television perched high in the corner.

The few customers in the vicinity of this Electric Fix seem to be watching the broadcast, but I can clearly see that they are not. They have the look of a deer in the halogen headlights of an oncoming vehicle. No reaction of danger or panic, but rather no emotion at all. Completely transfixed by the meaningless visions of commercial advertisements, muted on the big box, emitting no sound at all. In the whole of the land, it's just them and the flashy images that fall upon deaf ears.

Within seconds this senseless barrage of consumerism turns to news updates on the channel that broadcasts CNN. A reporter behind a sleek studio desk is moving her mouth, but nothing is said. At first it seems unclear what is being discussed, but in no time another little TV pops up behind and to the right of this talking head, and the theme of the moment is suddenly clear.

As the program transcends from the reporter at her desk to actual media footage, it becomes starkly obvious what is going on in that flat screened box. Apparently the war is still happening in Iraq, and wouldn't you believe that it's getting worse.

The images I see perturb me.

The feeling is not so much fear as it is uncomfortable distress.

Because while most people only see car bombs and explosions and American soldiers running frantically to contain "the situation" on a muted television screen, I see it in real life. I actually hear the booms and bangs of insurgent bombs, and the crackling of machine gun fire, and the hysterical shouting of frightened Iraqi civilians.

I can hear a military radio asking for reinforcements, and I can hear the diesel engines of real humvees racing to the scene. I can hear the cocking of M-16's and orders being shouted to scan for hidden enemy targets.

There may not be any sound emitting from the television, but I can hear it, I can smell it, and I can feel it. I know what it is, because not too long ago I was there.

At times it feels as though many years have passed. Weeks go by so fast in my new civilian life that I don't even realize that it was only five months ago when I was counting days to escape the suffocating madness of Operation Iraqi Freedom II (It Looks Good On Paper).

But it doesn't mean I have forgotten about it.

On the contrary, I think about this meaningless war everyday.

I can't hide from the soldier I once was much like I will never be able to bury the memories of one year in combat. Whenever I glance at war coverage on a television, or hear the ignorant hate-talk of our blood mongering president, or read the latest death tolls in the news papers my eyes fill with rage and my heart fills with sorrow.

It is impossible for me to ignore what is going on in Iraq when I am constantly reminded of the death and carnage, as well as my participation in the war machine. Some people boast the war chant "never forget". Well, I never do.

There is nothing that I feel can alleviate the guilt for being directly involved with our illegal and immoral occupation of Iraq.

I ask myself from time to time, "Why was I so afraid to resist the order to go to war? Why didn't I object to the whole damned thing?"

I have been told many times not to be ashamed for my service to this country, but I can't help a genuine intuition that this war is not designed to promote freedom and our beautiful American way of life, but instead only carried out to proliferate Western imperialism and corporate profits every time a bullet is fired.

My guilt is synonymous with the sentiment that I was indeed on the wrong side of the wire.

I know that many Americans are completely unaware of what damage our military is wreaking not only in Iraq, but also on our homeland security.

An estimated 100,000+ of innocent Iraqi civilians have perished due to gross negligence at the hand of the US military. Not a single day goes by without a non-combatant man, woman or child being slain due to stray bullets, wildly aimed mortar or rocket rounds, or the use of massively destructive air deployed warheads in urban areas.

And as this unjustified war continues to rage with no end in sight, the anti-American sentiment across the world continues to escalate enormously.

While in Iraq, I never once saw a terrorist with extreme inclinations for senseless bloodshed, but only angry farmers and shop keepers who for one reason or another wish to end our empirical domination over their homeland.

What I saw was an honest insurrection fought by average citizens, a perfect guerrilla war ran by no centralized leadership and with the potential to overcome any obstacle furnished by the conventional coalition forces.

By any sensible logic, fighting terrorism with war is only counter-productive and in the long run only adds fuel to the fire.

With every insurgent we kill, five more stand in his place. One has to ask how this illegitimate attack on innocent citizens is keeping Americans both at home or abroad safe from the perils of a desperate terrorist attack.

One thing that I learned in this war was that the Iraqis are people like you or me. They want the very same things out of life as anyone else in the world. Like everyone, they wish only to raise their families and be merry with friends and enjoy life for all that its worth in a peace and harmony that everyone deserves. But the hardest aspect of this lesson rests in the knowledge that every time a child is murdered, a terrorist is born.

Upon returning to the United States I began to feel isolated and alone in many ways. I felt that what I did in Iraq was an enormous crime to the people of Iraq and a great dishonor upon myself and my family.

While I was in combat I wrote on this blog site not only to give people a different perspective on the war in Iraq, but also for my own therapeutic reasons. It was a great relief to be able to express my opinions on the matter and hopefully help to spread the awareness that what was being done in the Bush administration's interests was a great crime against humanity. I thought by writing about my experiences I could do some little bit of good from within the war machine.

However, once I returned back to a normal society I felt as though my story was done and finished. I felt that no one really wanted to hear what I had to say anymore and besides, given the jingoistic sentiments being shared all over the country, it seemed that nobody cared anyways.

However, during a conversation I held with a Vietnam veteran who was hitchhiking, I was enlightened to an opinion that this fellow expressed to me in regards to what he felt needed to be done not only in his time, but also in mine.

He told me that the most important thing to do now that I have returned home was to speak openly about the war any chance I could get. He told me to grab anyone I can get my hands on and tell that person about the war and make that person understand.

The only way to end this vicious melee is to spread the awareness to the public, and only then will we as a people begin to take the power back. All this made perfect sense to me, and at that moment I realized that the veterans of the Iraq war have a huge responsibility to convey our experiences to those who are blinded, show them the truth of this ugly debacle and collectively end this war.

Since then I have become heavily involved in what some would consider to be the "peace movement".

Not only do I share my stories with friends and family and strangers I meet in social situations, but I have also met other veterans who have returned who are not happy with the current administration's gross belligerence in dealing with our country.

I have joined forces with the Veterans For Peace and Iraqi Veterans Against War and met with them at a conference in Dallas, Texas to discuss plans on how to strengthen the antiwar movement.

We even went to Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas to help Cindy Sheehan establish a peace camp in hopes of meeting Bush, Jr. to ask him a few simple questions. The whole Texas experience was amazing and I really felt that not only

did I meet a huge amount of brilliant minds, but also had the pleasure of joining forces with good people and great allies.

I've had an extremely busy month traveling with friends and meeting new people who are dedicated to reverse the neo conservative trend happening in this country.

In fact, very seldom do I meet anyone who agrees with this madness taking place in our society.

Just last weekend I had the privilege of meeting many great individuals at the Hunter S. Thompson memorial in Woody Creek, Colorado. We all had a great time there paying our respects to the late Doctor of Journalism, talking about literature and music and media control and the war and politics all day long until the point when the Doc's ashes were shot in a great display of pyrotechnics and dispersed across his beautiful Rocky mountain homestead. Rest In Peace, Hunter!

(To all the wonderful people I met this month in Dallas and in Woody Creek, a huge debt of gratitude for your hospitality and for sharing a great sense of solidarity. You all have taught me a very inspirational lesson this month, being that in these ominous times, WE ARE EVERYWHERE!)

So I suppose things are looking brighter everyday, although the proof may not be so obvious at the moment.

I get the feeling that with every passing moment the great Pendulum of Fate is starting to swing back to the left. More and more people are becoming aware that we are being conned and fooled into believing the deranged lies of crooks and criminals in Washington, DC.

There seems to be less support in taking the lives of innocent Iraqis and having the blood of brave American soldiers calculated into the prices at the gas pumps. I still firmly believe that progressive change cannot happen until we hit rock bottom, and although it potentially can get much worse, I can't see all the good people in the world allowing it to happen.

As incredibly bad as the army can be at times, it did teach me some very valuable lessons. One is that just because someone with authority is "in charge", that doesn't necessarily mean that person is Right, or even a Good person.

Not every order handed down is based off of good moral pretexts, and many times the outcome of immoral orders makes the situation as a whole much worse.

Eventually common sense, self respect, and real honor for first-rate decency must prevail. Whether you are subjected to the draconian structure of the military or that of our pernicious government, honest dissidence should always remain constant. In the words of the wise Timothy Leary, "Think for yourself; question authority."

I would like to say that this will be my last entry on Fight To Survive, but somehow I don't think it will.

My involvement in the Iraq war is over and done, but my experience there is something that I will live with and work through for the rest of my life.

I will carry the shame and degradation of probably every soldier who is forced to fight against his common man and against his will, but I shall not let these burdens drag me down.

My goal from now on is to overcome the adversity of violence and decadence that is so prevalent in our society. The weapons I choose to fight this battle are communication, peaceful resolution, and complete understanding.

The war is now on all fronts, and for me the real war is ending the one in Iraq. I feel I owe it to the victims of this horrible conflict, both the freedom fighters and innocent families on both sides of the spectrum.

I simply cannot sit down and allow greed mongers and war hawks to run our countries and govern our lives any longer. I have decided to do my share, collectively with others, to bring this tyrannical administration to its knees through words and acts of civil disobedience.

If we allow the bastards to take a little more, soon enough they will have it all. The time has come to stop the madness.

To the many readers of our blogsite I give you my total and sincere appreciation. When I started writing from Iraq I never thought that anyone would care enough to hear from just another soldier.

I was soon proven wrong.

Your positive insight and support were a huge inspiration for our writing, even after the command ordered us to stand down.

We have always felt that the supportive readers of this site were more than friends but trusted allies as well, and we thank you very much.

Until Freedom Forever!

J.D. ENGELHARDT, aka hEkLe
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www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

One U.S. Soldier Killed, Nine Wounded In Massive Attack On Diyala Center; Three More Iraqi Collaborator Troops Killed “In Error” By Arriving U.S. Forces

Aug 23, 2005 (AP) & BBC

A U.S. soldier, an American contractor and 8 Iraqis were killed Tuesday when a bomber detonated an explosive device at the Diyala Provincial Joint Coordination Center in Baquba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, at 12:50 p.m.

The explosion occurred in a dining area.

The explosion also killed four Iraqi employees of the center and one Iraqi police officer.

Nine U.S. soldiers were wounded, along with one U.S. civilian contractor, six Iraqi civilians and four police officers.

All the wounded were evacuated to a military hospital for treatment, the statement said.

Three members of an Iraqi special forces unit in the area were killed in error by US troops, Iraqi police added.

According to the police, US soldiers responding to the blast apparently mistook the special forces soldiers for insurgents and opened fire.

Coordinated Resistance Strikes Hit U.S. Convoy & Facility In Ramadi: Casualties Not Yet Reported

8.23.05 (Reuters) & KUNA

Three car bombs exploded in quick succession near U.S. forces in Ramadi, west of Baghdad, on Tuesday in an apparently coordinated strike by insurgents, police and witnesses said.

In the first blast, a car blew up as a U.S. convoy was passing through the centre of the Sunni Arab city, police said. One U.S. army vehicle was damaged in the explosion and three Iraqi bystanders were wounded, the police said.

It was not clear if any U.S. troops were wounded or killed in the attack

Minutes later, a suicide lorry bomber rammed his explosives -laden vehicle into a building frequently occupied by U.S. troops in an industrial zone on the edge of Ramadi, witnesses said. They said part of the building then collapsed.

They had no information about any casualties.

As U.S. troops were arriving to help those hit in the second blast, a third bomb, concealed in a car parked near a mosque, went off, a reporter for Reuters near the scene said.

He said smoke was rising from the site of the blasts and said the building hit in the second bombing was badly damaged.

Centreville Native Killed In Truck Accident

August 23, 2005 By Terry Katz, Staff writer, Sturgis Journal & (AP)

MOSUL, Iraq. — A Centreville High School graduate has become the first area soldier to die in Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Brian Lee Morris, 38, was killed in a truck accident Sunday at 11:15 p.m. Michigan time.

Morris was hauling jet fuel on a two-day mission when the truck hit a pothole 8 by 12 feet wide and four inches deep. The truck veered into a ditch and pinned Morris inside.

News of his death reached Constantine Monday morning.

Lori Morris was exercising on a treadmill, when daughter Emilee, 5, heard a knock at the door. There was a group of uniformed people standing outside and she called for her mom.

Lori and her daughter had been staying with her parents, Tim and Lois Nelson, in Constantine since her husband was deployed to Iraq last December.

The 18-year career soldier started his second tour of duty in Iraq in December and had just been home for a two-week visit in July. He was assigned to the 360th Transportation Company based at Fort Carson, Colo.

Lori had talked to her husband Saturday. He had mentioned a couple of recent close calls and said he was looking forward to some day retiring from the Army and moving back to Colorado.

He planned to retire from the Army in less than two years.

"He was so close," Leslie Morris said. "I think he had already filled out his first batch of retirement papers."

Morris was a 1985 graduate of Centreville High School. He was an 18 1/2 year career soldier. His previous duty stations included Germany, Fort Drum, N.Y., and Korea in addition to Fort Carson. Nelson said he and his wife were at work when their daughter called with the news.

Monday afternoon, Emilee sat at the kitchen table looking through pictures taken on her dad's last trip home. There was one picture in particular that made her proud. It was taken July 27 at the Kalamazoo Airport as the family shared their last moments together.

"Look!" said Emilee. "I'm wearing my dad's hat. He always lets me wear his hat."

Sweetwater, Tenn. Guard Soldier Killed



Spc. Joseph 'Joey' Hunt of Sweetwater, Tenn., a Tennessee National Guard soldier was killed Aug. 22, 2005, in Iraq, his family said Tuesday. Hunt, 27, was a member of the 278th Regimental Combat Team. He was killed when his patrol was hit by an improvised explosive device, relatives told WATE-TV and WVLT-TV. Hunt had two sons (AP Photo/Hunt Family)

MARINE KILLED BY AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE NEAR AL KARMAH

August 23, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-08-36C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team-8, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action Aug. 21st by an improvised explosive device.

The incident took place during combat operations near Al Karmah, Iraq.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Iraqi soldiers and U.S. Marines conduct in the town of Hit August 6, 2005.
(handout/Reuters)

MARINE KILLED BY AN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE NEAR FALLUJAH

August 23, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-08-35C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team-8, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action Aug. 22 when the vehicle he was in was struck by an improvised explosive device.

The incident took place during combat operations near Fallujah, Iraq.

TASK FORCE BAGHDAD SOLDIER KILLED IN ATTACK

August 23, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-08-34C

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A Task Force Baghdad Soldier died during a rocket attack by anti-Iraqi forces in south Baghdad at around 6:20 p.m. Aug 22.

Isle Soldier Dies: “He Didn't Completely Agree With What Was Going On”

August 23, 2005 By William Cole and Curtis Lum, Honolulu Advertiser Staff Writers

The Department of Defense announced a 28-year-old soldier who grew up on the Big Island was one of four who died Thursday in Samarra, Iraq, when a roadside bomb exploded near their Humvee while they were on a mission assessing mines.

The soldier, Spc. Ray Fuhrmann II, was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga. He graduated from Waiakea High School.

Fuhrmann was born in Honolulu and moved to Volcano on the Big Island when he was about 5 years old, said his grandfather, Ray Fuhrmann I. The younger Fuhrmann moved to the Mainland soon after graduating from Waiakea High School and enlisted in the Army four years ago.

Fuhrmann returned to Iraq in December for his second tour of duty, and his family last saw him in February when he returned to attend his grandmother's funeral.

Ray Fuhrmann I said his grandson was a medic and that put him at the front line.

"He participated in most of the early part of the war, and came back (home) and went back a second time, when he knew what was going on," said his father, Michael Fuhrmann, who also lives in Volcano. "He still went back to be in the front lines again."

Ray Fuhrmann I said: "He liked what he was doing. He liked the people he was working with. He didn't completely agree with what was going on, but he was a good soldier and he did what he was told to do."

Fuhrmann said his grandson planned to pursue a medical career after getting out of the Army.

"He was a wonderful person. He was an asset to the community and to the country, and they are the ones who will be losers, really," he said. "We loved him. We certainly didn't expect it to happen. We certainly didn't want it to happen, and we were hopeful that he was going to get out of there."

Ray Fuhrmann II also is survived by his wife, Tylea.

Elk Grove Soldier Killed



8.23.05 KCRA

ELK GROVE, Calif. -- Friends and family are mourning an Army soldier from Elk Grove who was killed while serving in Iraq.

Family members said they were notified Sunday that 22-year-old Joe Nurre had been killed.

Nurre attended Elk Grove High School and then California State University, Sacramento, before joining the military and being sent to Iraq.

Elk Grove city officials said Nurre is the first member of the military from that city to be killed while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Mount Wolf Man Wounded: "I'm Very Relieved. I Don't Have To Worry About Him"

August 22, 2005 By JOHN BUGBEE The York Dispatch

Relieved.

That's how Timothy Breen describes his and his family's reaction to news that his son is recuperating at a U.S. military medical facility in Germany.

"I'm very relieved," he said. "I don't have to worry about him."

The son of Timothy and stepson of Brenda Breen, Sgt. Timothy Breen, 25, of Mount Wolf was wounded when his Pennsylvania National Guard convoy was attacked Aug. 9 in Iraq. Also wounded in the same attack was Sgt. Daniel South, 23, of Hellam Township.

South's family was not available for comment last night; however, last week his family reported he had a broken jaw, crushed teeth and shrapnel wounds in his face arms and chest.

By Aug. 11, Breen was evacuated to an out-patient medical barracks in Landstuhl, Germany, his father said.

"His back is a little messed up," Timothy Breen said. He has broken vertebrae and a pinched nerve, according to his father.

Breen said he's not sure how long his son will be recuperating. He's due for a two-week leave next month and has only three months left in Iraq.

Breen said it's unclear at this point whether his son will be able to go on leave or will remain in Germany. Nor, he said, is it known whether he'll be sent home early or return to complete his tour in Iraq.

"I don't know what the deal is," the elder Breen said.

Seeing their son's photograph e-mailed from Germany eased a lot of his parents' fears about his condition, said his father.

"Yes, I was very concerned, but seeing his picture made me very relieved," Breen said.

Assigned to the Philadelphia-based Company A, 1-111th Infantry, Breen and South were in a convoy patrolling the city of Baiji, 155 miles northwest of Baghdad, when a roadside explosive detonated.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Brig. General Injured In Bomb Attack On Army Humvees

August 23, 2005 WFTV, FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla.

An Okaloosa County judge serving with the U.S. Army Reserves in Afghanistan was injured in a roadside bomb attack that killed four soldiers, his wife said.

Brig. Gen. T. Patt Maney, a county judge in the 1st Judicial Circuit in Florida's Panhandle, sustained head, neck and back injuries but was expected to return to duty Tuesday, said his wife, Caroline.

The explosion rocked Maney's Humvee as it was returning to Kabul and damaged its engine compartment, Caroline Maney said Monday.

"They hit the trigger too soon. They hit the front of the car instead of the middle. It's a miracle that he's alive," she said.

She said all of the four other people inside her husband's vehicle -- an Afghan agriculture minister, a bodyguard, two U.S. Embassy workers -- survived with minor injuries.

Patt Maney is the political sector coordinator for the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group, based at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

Caroline Maney said her husband is scheduled to return home to Fort Walton Beach in October after the Afghan legislative elections next month.

"He's looking forward to getting back on the bench," she said.

TROOP NEWS

“Amid Rising Insurgent Attacks” Two Extra US Battalions Being Sent To Iraq: Rumsfeld Still Delusional

August 24, 2005 Agence France-Presse

THE Pentagon plans to deploy two additional battalions to Iraq amid rising insurgent attacks ahead of an anticipated referendum on a constitution, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said today.

"I think it'll have the support of the American people, and it will be sustained, and we will be successful," he said. [Wrong x 3, as usual.]

Asked how many troops could be involved, he said between 1000 and 2000 soldiers.

Admiral Edmund Giambastiana, the new vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said it would be two battalions.

Senior military officials said the battalions would amount to extra troops, brought in on top of the scheduled rotation of forces in Iraq.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

23/08/2005 AFP & BBC & KUNA & REUTERS & (Xinhuanet)

Eleven policemen were killed and 15 others were wounded, when the police station in Baquba was hit by mortar bombs, a police officer said. The attack was one of the deadliest in recent weeks against the country's security forces, a favourite target of rebels.

A police statement in Najaf, south of Baghdad, said two policemen were killed earlier today while undergoing a search operation in Haydariya north of the city.

According to the statement, the policemen came under gunfire, in which four members of the Iraqi patrol were wounded. The policemen arrested a man on their list of wanted terrorists.

Five Iraqi policemen, including two officers, were reported killed on Tuesday and a booby-trapped car blew up in western Iraqi city of Ramadi.

A police statement said bodies of two officers captured Monday were discovered in al Wihda town in Mosul in North Iraq.

A third policeman was killed today and three others were wounded when a road-side bomb went off near an Iraqi police patrol north of Mosul.

A group of armed fighters attacked the convoy of the under secretary of the Ministry of Justice in al-Quzat district in western Baghdad at about 4:00 p.m. (1200 GMT), wounding three of his bodyguards and a civilian.

The source said the senior official was not in the convoy at the time.

BAQUBA – One policeman was killed when armed fighters burst into his house in the Yarmouk district of Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) northeast of Baghdad, a relative of the policeman said.

In al-Taremeyah area north of Baghdad, 8 members of the police forces were killed in an ambush implanted by insurgents against a bus in that area.

Four members in the Iraqi police and other three were injured in a booby trapped car explosion in al-Doura area, south of Baghdad.

In Karkouk, one officer was killed working as an official in the unemployment fighting branch office together with his wife by the bullets of unidentified fighters. Also four police members were injured in a bomb explosion.



Police car damaged by a roadside bomb in Kirkuk August 22, 2005. According to police, three policemen were injured in a bomb attack in Kirkuk on Monday morning. (Salahaldeen Rasheed/Reuters)

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

Pipeline Blown Up For 4,326th Time

August 23, 2005 REUTERS

TIKRIT – An energy pipeline from Baiji refinery to Baghdad was blown up at dawn in Isshaaqi town, 30 km (20 miles) north of Balad, a source at the Baiji refinery said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“It Doesn’t Take A Rocket Scientist”

8.22.05 Kurt Nimmo, Another Day in the Empire

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure this one out: people will resist occupation by all means available, even if it takes “terrorism,” that is to say blowing stuff up and killing people.

It would seem Congress is rife with people who are unable to understand the most rudimentary concepts of human nature.

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.

“Persuasion Doesn’t Bring Down The Beast” “Bleeding Does”

Let me say now with no equivocation, I endorse polarization. Deep, wide, disruptive, knock-down-drag-out polarization. That’s what social upheaval looks like, and upheaval is exactly what we need.

August 20, 2005 Stan Goff, Feral Scholar, stangoff.com

I normally don’t post ad hoc to the blog, but I feel compelled to between babysitting a grandchild, meeting deadlines, coordinating antiwar Iraq veteran activities, and going to all-day planning meetings. There are three things that occur to me as being related, and I make no promise to describe that relation in any depth... only to suggest some connections and solicit more collective wisdom.

- (1) The UFPJ/ANSWER decision to conduct a joint action on September 24th.
- (2) The role of Moveon.org in Cindy Sheehan’s action in Crawford, TX.
- (3) Tom Hayden’s proposed “exit strategy” from Iraq.

At every public event I have attended for the last two years – all of them being related to opposing the war – I have invariably run into someone speaking with a thoughtful, sensitive, reasonable inflection about the need to “reach out to the other side” and help stop the polarization that is creeping into American society.

And I have had to practice my best diplomacy to respond... because if I said what I want to say how I want to say it every time I hear this bullshit, I would look like a bully.

People who adopt these “reasonable” tones are often skilled passive-aggressives who could easily make anyone who opposes them look like a bully. I suspect they also often have agendas.

Let me say now with no equivocation, I endorse polarization. Deep, wide, disruptive, knock-down-drag-out polarization. That’s what social upheaval looks like, and upheaval is exactly what we need.

But not the kind that was creating an idiotically divided antiwar demonstration for September 24th. That kind of polarization, where the left organizes a firing squad by forming a circle, is destructive of only one pole.

I’m not going to go into any depth here about the respective faults of the two groups – one very broad and administratively unwieldy, with certain leaders that will cling to the pantlegs of the Democratic Party until they die, and one agile as only a top-down rule-or-ruin sect-led outfit can be, with leaders who seem unable to resist proposing maximalist programs in every venue in order to woo social sector “franchises.” There... I talked shit about both of them, as they both deserve. Enough. Broad is good. Agile is good. Opportunism, in any guise, is bad.

What is being organized on September 24th is immensely important, far more important than either of the “leading” groups, and their decision to bury the hatchet is an indication that the clamoring of many dedicated leftists who put the needs of the movement before those of some fetishized organization has had an effect.

We need a united left, and we do not need any formation out there claiming to be the only true prophets any more than we need social-democratic majoritarians. Otherwise the polarization will be a massively organized, well-funded (and need I point out, well-armed) right-wing, and a fragmented fratricidal left.

Not good.

The steady degeneration of the Energy War, the growing public disillusion with the serial pronouncements of “progress,” and the catalyst of the Cindy Sheehan drama in Crawford, have thrown a monkey wrench into the propaganda machine, but more importantly, the “radical” position on the war, unilateral and immediate withdrawal, has been legitimized.

And it wasn’t accomplished with a policy fight, with lobbying, or even with a “peaceful, legal” demonstration. It was accomplished with civil disobedience.

Cindy’s protest was civil disobedience! She was told not to. She did. She was told to leave. She didn’t. She is also going to refuse to pay her taxes.

When this kind of action captures the public imagination, there is always the threat that people will be awakened to politics as a struggle for social power that can be taken out of the electoral-legislative corral.

Aside from plain opportunism and the whiff of funding opportunities, Moveon, a thinly-veiled front for the Democratic Party first conceived in defense of the murderous Bill Clinton, whipped into Crawford with money and media experts to “support Cindy” because there is no entity that has more to fear from her out-of-the-box message than the bourgeois charlatans of the Democratic Leadership Council.

To her great credit, Cindy has finessed this very well, using the resources without accepting anyone’s strings to dance around the core message – Bring Them Home Now.

Those of us who know her know that Cindy is no “average middle-aged mom.” She is an extremely intelligent woman with the heart of a pro boxer.

The Democrats are already grooming a few 2008 candidates, including the execrable Hillary Rodham Clinton who has already stated her intention to beef up the war against Southwest Asia.

Let’s not forget that her husband presided over an Iraqi holocaust that George W. Bush is still trying to match.

The Republicans are secure for now with their white nationalist popular base. An active and increasingly militant left is a more immediate threat to the Democrats – who have prospered from Republican reaction for decades now by capturing social bases that feel they have nowhere else to go.

That dilemma is real, but it is also predicated on the notion that to “go there” we need to contain ourselves in electoralism and pluralist policy fights that are engineered by corporations and NGOs.

That’s why Sheehan and others who propose the radical option of simply leaving Iraq are now being surrounded by the friendly faces of “progressives” who will try and redirect this newfound mobilization along acceptable paths.

Enter Tom Hayden with his “proposal” for disengagement in Iraq. The logic is – antiwar Congresspeople cannot advance their agenda without an alternative to the fake “exit strategies” of the right. Of course, this is just another Moveon proposal. Nothing unilateral about it, and no demand for immediate withdrawal.

Moreover, it depends on actions taken by Iraqis that the US will ultimately have no control over unless it is coercive. This plan is no less racist in its implications than the Republican myth of democracy-implants. It still calls for outsiders (including possibly the CIA!) to broker the withdrawal and oversee the “reconciliation” of those troublesome brown people.

Sorry, Tom. This is bullshit. Just because you ask for guarantees of no permanent US bases and no preferential US contracts does not erase the fact that you have

taken self-determination off the board and are attempting to redirect the demand (yet unmet!) for a political decision to leave into a policy debate.

Let me just say something about how to withdraw. This is my plan, and it requires nothing of the Iraqis.

The National Command Authority orders all US forces redeployed out of Iraq within one month and out of the theater in two months. Any commander that fails to meet the deadline will be summarily relieved, and replaced with a commander that will thereby be placed on a shorter timeline. I can promise anyone who has no experience of the military that this is perfectly feasible, and that with that kind of command emphasis, the mission can and will be accomplished.

But the movement that will hopefully put hundreds of thousands in the streets of DC in September has not yet achieved the goal of forcing this political decision to be made.

Politics as an exercise of popular power will be sidelined if it takes up the issue of HOW to leave Iraq. It's a bullshit issue designed to stand us down, and put us back in the box.

At the same time, we have to pay attention to how the right-wing is attacking Cindy Sheehan. Something we have to be very clear about is that these attacks are only commensurate with the threat they perceive her to be. When it is necessary, the reactionaries will be unleashed by the entire dominant class to whatever is necessary to preserve their power. They will slander us; they will jail us; and they will kill us, if that's what they believe is necessary.

I don't know why so many people so stubbornly ignore this historically demonstrable fact. The only way to prepare for that is to build a powerful and militant multi-tendency REVOLUTIONARY left that transcends the NGO politics of the "progressives" on the right and the sectarian (and tactically stupid) maximalism of the ultra-left.

The most important task over the next month – at least from where I am standing – is to use the momentum created by the Cindy Sheehan breakthrough at Crawford to ramp up the largest possible demonstration against the war for September 24th in Washington DC.

Psuedo-leftist "exit strategies," blaming Republicans for the war (instead of the entire dominant class), or trying to turn this into a recruiting opportunity for small leftist sects, are obstacles to this process.

Turning this war into a political liability will do more for every form of resistance to imperialism in every location around the world, as well as the internal colonies of the US, than all the policy fights or all of the pristinely perfect left-maximalist programs in the world.

Persuasion doesn't bring down the beast.

Bleeding does.

The US withdrawal from Iraq will be one of the biggest victories for genuine people's movements, here and abroad, since the US was forced out of Vietnam.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Welcome To Liberated Iraq



Baghdad August 22, 2005. REUTERS/Ali Jasim

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

NASSER AL QIDWA MEETS IM IBRAHIM:

**“I May Be Illiterate But I Know What's
Going On Around Here”**



Mother of a Palestinian prisoner sits in silent vigil outside the Palestinian media center set up for the 'Israeli disengagement'- Gaza City, 18 August 2005. The sign reads "freedom to those who gave their freedom as the price for the liberation of their land" (Photo: Toufic Haddad)

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

All your kids go to the best schools, and each one of them has a company registered in their name. But our sons who have sacrificed their lives for this land and this people - their concerns are not worth enough for you to listen to them?

22 August 2005 Toufic Haddad, The Electronic Intifada

PA Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser Al Qidwa walked into a side room before his 11 am press conference dressed in a dapper navy suit and smelling of aftershave.

His sophisticated comportment refined by many years of service as PLO representative to the UN in New York, integrated well with the setting of the Palestinian press center hosting the event.

Newly established to service the small army of international reporters covering Gaza for the coming months, the press center was tastefully decorated with a bouquet of flowers, and draped with a UNDP-funded poster series themed "Gaza: Reclaiming Our Gem". The posters showed an assortment of images including a smiling Gazan child on a fishing boat, a Byzantine mosaic, and an Ottoman-era archeological site, ripe for a UNESCO rehabilitation project.

Surrounded by a coterie of assistants and advisers, Qidwa waited before making his much anticipated entrance onto the press room floor as cameramen finalized

setting up their microphones and adjusted their white balance meters. As one of the Palestinians' most internationally recognized talking heads, Qidwa no doubt had prepared a succinct list of talking points sufficient to provide the necessary sound bites to represent "the Palestinian perspective" for the evening news stories across the world.

Too bad he never got a chance to say them though.

A group of 15 middle aged women marched into the room just in front of the podium holding large images of young men and chanting slogans — the commotion clearly startling the press center staff and Qidwa's yes-men. The journalists in the room (both Arab and Western) were somewhat befuddled with the scene: some deciding to film it, while others ignored it, even seeming annoyed at the fact that their press conference was delayed. Some simply sat around with expressions on their faces waiting for it to be over.

After much commotion and indeed persistence by the chanting women, an old fellaha ("peasant woman") emerged to speak for the women, and was offered the podium by one of the suits in Qidwa's entourage. The woman took her position at the microphone in an atmosphere of paternalistic 'tolerance', as though waiting for her diatribe to be over. Some reporters even laughed, or began walking in front of the podium as she began speaking.

"My name is Im Ibrahim (the mother of Ibrahim Baroud) and my son has been sentenced to 27 years in prison, of which he has served 20 years. I have been prevented from seeing him for ten full years.

"Everyone here is talking about the disengagement and are trying to have celebrations, but we are not happy. People from Fateh tried to get us to board a bus to go to disengagement celebration but we refused to board it. We are the wives and mothers of prisoners - the ones who have sacrificed their lives for this struggle and who have brought honor for our people. But the prisoners and their needs continue to be ignored.

"Everyone treats the issue of the prisoners as though it is a ladder - something to climb up on, but which is soon enough ignored once they've achieved their goals. I may be illiterate but I know what's going on around here.

"Nasser al Qidwa - shame on you. You, who were our ambassador in the US - you enter the building through the back door so you don't have to see us holding our silent vigil on the steps of this press center?

All your kids go to the best schools, and each one of them has a company registered in their name. But our sons who have sacrificed their lives for this land and this people - their concerns are not worth enough for you to listen to them?

"Abu Mazen... I'm sorry I gave you my vote. because you have forgotten the struggle of our sons. When the people demonstrate in the street we burn the American flag but when Clinton came to town, you draped the largest buildings in Gaza with it.



Im Ibrahim at the Podium: the mother of Ibrahim Baroud stands at the podium about to start speaking. (Photo: Toufic Haddad)

"We're sick of it. I've had my picture taken with Arafat, Abu Mazen, Kofi Annan, and even Clinton himself. But it's made a dime's worth of difference. I told Kofi last time he came through here that it's time he shut down his charitable society (jam'iyeh). The whole world enjoys human rights except the Palestinian people.

"In America they even fight for the rights of animals. But here we are less than animals.

"And you reporters - when we hold a vigil, or decide to go on hunger strike, you ignore us and only show up when the big shots come by to have their picture taken with us. Even when you do interviews with us you never broadcast what we say.

"Wake up Palestinians. We don't want you to have the same fate as the people in the Arab world. The Palestinian people deserve better than a leadership that is drunk, or high or sleeping. Don't let them fool you..."

Climbing down from the podium Im Ibrahim fixed her head scarf and open her arms revealing her red embroidered peasant dress: "Did I say anything that wasn't true people? Really now?"

Qidwa and his entourage had already left the building and were nowhere to be seen.

Half the press had also left while others were heard arguing about 'why were we brought here and had our time wasted?'

Now that Qidwa had left, something else would have to be found to fill up the air time. Producers would be pissed, and PA ministers are busy these days and difficult to pin

down for interviews. A handful of Arab reporters promised the women to write up a story and get it broadcast on the evening news.



"Women sit in protest on the steps of the Palestinian press center for coordinating contacts with journalists, Gaza City. The poster in the foreground reads 'Those who paid the price for freedom of the land - where is their right to their own freedom and the happiness of victory?!' (Photo: Toufic Haddad)



Nasser Al Qidwa during his time as the Permanent Observer for Palestine at the UN. (Photo: UN)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Good News: **Revolt Against Corporate Greed & Thieving Shakes Ecuador**

Aug 20 Agence France Presse

Ecuador's defense minister quit amid a mounting crisis over protests that in oil provinces that have cut output in the key South American supplier to a trickle.

President Alfredo Palacio accepted Defense Minister Solon Espinosa's resignation and appointed retired general Oswaldo Jarrin to replace him, a presidential spokesman said.

Palacio on Thursday announced that Petroecuador had suspended all crude oil exports because of the protests in Sucumbios and Orellana provinces, which are supported by the local governments.

Private companies produce another 340,000 barrels a day. But their output has been cut to about 150,000 barrels because of the dispute, said Rene Ortiz, a spokesman for the private oil firms.

He said Canadian companies Encana Corp and Alberta Energy Co. had been worst hit by protests, while Occidental Petroleum of the United States, Repsol-YPF of Spain and Agip of Italy had been largely spared.

A state of emergency was ordered in the two provinces on Wednesday but protesters have defied a dusk-to-dawn curfew.

Clashes between demonstrators and security forces have left at least 60 injured, said Sucumbios governor Guillermo Munoz.

Protestors have also occupied airports in the major cities of Lago Agrio and El Coca and blockaded major roads. Soldiers later retook control of the airports and reopened them.

The protestors, who include government officials and lawmakers, want foreign oil companies to build 200 kilometers (125 miles) of roads in their region and to give more jobs to locals.

They also want the government to renegotiate all contracts with foreign oil companies to demand a 50 percent share of the profits they make in Ecuador.

The protestors are demanding Occidental abandon Ecuador altogether after it bought some of Encana's operating rights without approval from the authorities.

Sucumbios governor Munoz told AFP "the strike is going to get tougher," after protest leaders met late Thursday.

MORE:

Ecuador Rebellion Against Foreign Oil Corporations Gains Ground

August 23, 2005 By REUTERS

QUITO, Ecuador (Reuters) - Protesters whose attacks have choked off Ecuador's oil exports held out hopes on Tuesday for reaching a deal under which energy companies would invest more in the poor Amazon communities where they drill.

But sticking points remained in the talks among protesters, the government and oil firms -- such as the amount of tax revenue that would go toward development projects in communities surrounding Ecuador's oil fields.

"We are cautiously optimistic that the dialogue will advance, allowing us to arrive at an agreement," Maximo Abad, mayor of the eastern oil town of Lago Agrio and one of the organizers of the attacks, said.

Last week, protesters crippled the country's oil industry and helped jack up global petroleum prices by dynamiting pipelines and vandalizing pumping equipment at installations of state oil firm Petroecuador in the eastern part of the country.

Petroecuador output has since climbed back to 105,198 barrels per day, a bit more than half its average normal production. Production from private companies in Ecuador was 311,827 bpd on Tuesday, compared to 329,000 bpd before the crisis.

Abad and about 60 other protest leaders in Quito for talks want companies like Occidental Petroleum Corp., Petrobras and EnCana Corp. to help build roads, provide more jobs and clean up environmental damage.

The activists want 25 percent of income taxes paid by the companies to be funneled toward local development.

"That is our nonnegotiable position," Guillermo Munoz, prefect of the Amazon province of Sucumbios, told reporters.

The activists accused President Alfredo Palacio, appointed in April after Congress fired President Lucio Gutierrez for meddling with the Supreme Court, of not backing them in their negotiations with the oil companies.

"The government is not defending the people in the provinces," Guadalupe Llori, the elected prefect of Orellana, told local television. "Neither this government nor previous ones have helped us negotiate with the companies."

Three Ecuadorean presidents have been toppled amid popular unrest since 1997, but Palacio is expected to ride out the current crisis.

"This government is going to survive," said Carlos Larreategui, political analyst and pollster at the University of the Americas in Quito. "But it will be weak."

Received:

"Man These Stories Break My Heart"

From: JL
To: GI Special
Sent: August 23, 2005
Subject: GI SPECIAL 3C29B: Soldiers' Stories:

Dear GI Special,

Man these stories break my heart.

You must know that you are the only place that prints stories like this.

I hope it helps the families of John Kulick and Ryan Montgomery Campbell to know that a lot of Americans like myself have read their stories and at least know their names and have had a glimpse of their lives, especially Ryan Montgomery Campbell's through his correspondence, and more nearly understand now just what it is like to be on the fighting and dying end of this lunatic war.

And it's good to hear Bill's story as well and I'm glad he wasn't killed in Iraq.

I don't know what John Kulick's and Ryan Montgomery Campbell's families feel about the war. I know that I agree with Cindy Sheehan's assessment of it.

Thanks for giving these brave Americans space. I hope this coverage finds its way into the hands of lots of Americans. What Bill said still rings in my ears:

"There is sometimes days that go by now that I'm home that I won't hear anything about Iraq, and I can promise you something happens every day."

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)

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