

GI SPECIAL 3C40:

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



U.S. Army soldiers carry the flag-draped coffin of U.S. soldier Lt. Carlos Diaz out of the Diaz family home, at his funeral in Yauco, Puerto Rico, Aug. 31, 2005. Diaz was killed two days earlier in a bombing attack in Iraq. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

Support For Iraq Occupation Plummetts Nationwide: 40 % Say Get Out

September 1, 2005 L.A. Times & FAIR-L

WASHINGTON — When asked what they would tell President Bush about Iraq if they could talk to him for 15 minutes, four in 10 Americans said they would urge him to get out — the response given most often to a question asked by Gallup Poll.

More than 1,000 Americans were asked: "If you could talk with President Bush for 15 minutes about the situation in Iraq, what would you, personally, advise him to do?"

About three in 10 — 29% — said the United States should finish what it started, be more aggressive or send more troops.

An August 25 Harris Poll found that 61 percent of respondents favored bringing most U.S. troops "home in the next year," versus 36 percent who wished to "wait for a stable government."

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

Seven Marines From Unit Based In Buffalo Are Wounded While On Patrol: 2 From India Company Badly Hurt By Bomb

9/1/2005 By JAY REY, News Staff Reporter

Seven Marines from a Buffalo-based unit were wounded last week while serving in Iraq.

A device exploded while the Marines were on patrol Friday, injuring six members of India Company of the 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, based at the Marine Corps Reserve Center on Porter Avenue. A seventh was shot last Tuesday on patrol.

Lance Cpl. Mark Beyers, 26, of Elma, was the most seriously wounded. His right arm and leg were amputated, according to his mother and a Marine spokesman.

He was in critical, but stable condition, Wednesday in a hospital in Germany.

Beyers is in an induced coma and expected to be transported to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., this weekend, said his mother, Tricia Hess Beyers.

Beyers, who grew up in Alden, and five others from the unit were patrolling in the al-Anbar province Friday when an improvised explosive device went off, said Master Sgt. Thomas Whelan.

Beyers suffered shrapnel wounds, as did Lance Cpl. Matthew Schilling, of West Virginia. Schilling's right foot was amputated and he also is now in a hospital in Germany, Whelan said.

The others injured were:

Cpl. William Maher of Hamburg, who suffered an inner-ear injury from the explosion and may have fractured his right wrist.

Lance Cpl. Nathan Timblin of North Tonawanda, who suffered a concussion and inner-ear injury.

Pvt. Timothy Condello of Fairport, who suffered a concussion and ear injury, as well.

Lance Cpl. Justin Howard of Great Valley, who suffered a back sprain and ear injury.

All four were treated and were expected to return to duty, Whelan said.

In a separate incident last Tuesday, Lance Cpl. James E. Caflich II, 23, of Lakewood, was wounded when a bullet ricocheted off a building and hit him in the upper right leg. He is expected to make a full recovery, said his father, James E. Caflich.

Beyers, who has been in the Marines since he was 19, is among a group of high school buddies from Alden serving with the Marines over in Iraq.

Beyers was the first to sign up, followed by his friend, Bruce Luck, and then Denise Lauck, now Beyers' fiancée. Beyers and Lauck are both members of India Company, but she serves stateside as liaison to the Marines and their families, Hess Beyers said.

Soldier Wounded By Baiji IED

Sept 1 (Reuters)

BAIJI - One U.S. humvee was struck by a roadside bomb at about 8:50 a.m. (0450 GMT) west of Baiji, 180 km (112 miles) north of Baghdad. A U.S. military statement said "one U.S. soldier was wounded and has received medical treatment."

Georgia Guard Soldier Injured

09/01/05 Nathan Frick, MyWebPal.com.

An area soldier serving with the Georgia National Guard was injured in Iraq by a roadside bomb and is in stable condition, according to a family member.

Andy Gideon, rank unknown, was travelling in a vehicle when it was struck by a roadside bomb. The exact date of the explosion has not been released.

Gideon's father, Raymond Gideon, said he will be transferred to Germany for treatment and recovery.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers of the army infantry from the Stryker brigade patrol through the streets in the town of Arij, in northern Iraq, July 23, 2005. REUTERS/Andrea Comas

TROOP NEWS

**Louisiana Guard Soldiers Want To
Come Home Now;
Command Says Tough Shit, You
Stay In Iraq**

Sep. 01, 2005 SLOBODAN LEKIC and JIM KRANE, Associated Press

Brig. Gen. John P. Basilica, commander of the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Enhanced Separate Brigade, asked his division commanders in Baghdad to hasten the Louisiana-based brigade's departure, said Lt. Col. Jordan Jones, battalion commander of the New Orleans-based 141st Field Artillery Battalion, which is part of the brigade.

National Guard troops from Louisiana and other Gulf states will not be pulled out of Iraq ahead of schedule despite the devastation from Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. command said Thursday.

"They're not going to be leaving early as a result of the hurricane," Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch told The Associated Press. He said the military had set up help lines for servicemen from the Southern states hardest-hit by the hurricane trying to contact family members.

In Doha, Qatar, a spokesman for the U.S. regional command said there would be no large-scale shifting of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan to help with disaster relief.

But Lt. Col. Trey Cate said military officials were exploring ways to bring individual soldiers home to take care of their families who may have special needs after the devastating storm.

Navy Cmdr. Jeff Breslau, a U.S. 5th Fleet spokesman in Bahrain, said no U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf would be redirected to disaster relief in the Gulf of Mexico, but individual sailors with family emergencies could be granted home leave.

The Air Force also said it was considering releasing troops from the affected areas.

"U.S. Central Command Air Forces is currently reviewing our ability to send airmen affected by Hurricane Katrina home early from deployment," said Capt. David Small, spokesman for U.S. Central Command Air Forces in Qatar.

Katrina struck as about 3,700 soldiers from the 256th were in the middle of preparations to return to their base in Lafayette, La., after spending nearly a year in combat in Iraq.

Lt. Col. Steve Boylan, spokesman for the U.S. military command in Baghdad, said the 256th is expected to leave Iraq by November - if their deployment is not extended. Boylan said the Army was providing the Louisiana Guardsmen extra Internet and phone lines to contact family and friends affected by the hurricane.

The 256th includes the 141st Field Artillery Battalion, based at Camp Liberty, Saddam Hussein's palace complex near Baghdad International Airport. The 400-member unit has suffered one killed and several wounded during its tour in Iraq.

Lt. Taysha Deaton, a spokeswoman for the unit, said most of the soldiers had been glued to television sets watching scenes of their neighborhoods trying to cope with wind damage and flooding.

MORE:

Bush's War Left Louisiana Guard Crippled; Flood Control Money Went To Iraq



[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

In 2004, the Corps essentially stopped major work on the now-breached levee system that had protected New Orleans from flooding. It was the first such stoppage in 37 years, the Times-Picayune reported.

"It appears that the money has been moved in the president's budget to handle homeland security and the war in Iraq, and I suppose that's the price we pay," Jefferson Parish emergency management chief Walter Maestri told the newspaper.

9.1.05 by Molly Ivins, Chicago Tribune & By SETH BORENSTEIN, Knight Ridder Newspapers & By Mark Benjamin, Salon.com & By John Hendren and Mark Mazzetti, The Los Angeles Times

Unfortunately, the war in Iraq is directly related to the devastation left by the hurricane.

About 35 percent of Louisiana's National Guard is now serving in Iraq, where four out of every 10 soldiers are guardsmen. Recruiting for the Guard is also down significantly because people are afraid of being sent to Iraq if they join, leaving the Guard even more short-handed.

The Louisiana National Guard also notes that dozens of its high-water vehicles, Humvees, refuelers and generators have also been sent abroad. (I hate to be picky, but why do they need high-water vehicles in Iraq?)

On Aug. 1, a spokesman for the Louisiana National Guard lamented to a local reporter that the state might be stretched for security personnel in the event of a big hurricane. Dozens of high-water vehicles, generators and Humvees were employed in Iraq, along with 3,000 Louisiana National Guard troops.

"The National Guard needs that equipment back home to support the homeland security mission," the Louisiana National Guard's Lt. Col. Pete Schneider told a reporter from WGNO, the ABC affiliate in New Orleans. Schneider said that in the event of a hurricane, Louisiana would need help from neighboring states.

Amid the Gulf Coast rubble and looting, it appears Schneider may have been right. "Missing personnel is the big thing in this particular event -- we need our people," Lt. Andy Thaggard, a Mississippi National Guard spokesman told the Washington Post Wednesday. Mississippi has 4,000 National Guard troops in Iraq.

The levees of New Orleans, two of which are now broken and flooding the city, were also victims of Iraq war spending.

Walter Maestri, emergency management chief for Jefferson Parish, said on June 8, 2004, "It appears that the money has been moved in the president's budget to handle homeland security and the war in Iraq."

The federal government so far has bungled the job of quickly helping the multitudes of hungry, thirsty and desperate victims of Hurricane Katrina, former top federal, state and local disaster chiefs said Wednesday.

The experts, including a former Bush administration disaster response manager, told Knight Ridder that the government wasn't prepared, scrimped on storm spending and shifted its attention from dealing with natural disasters to fighting the global war on terrorism.

The disaster preparedness agency at the center of the relief effort is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which was enveloped by the new Department of Homeland Security with a new mission aimed at responding to the attacks of al-Qaida.

"What you're seeing is revealing weaknesses in the state, local and federal levels," said Eric Tolbert, who until February was FEMA's disaster response chief.

"All three levels have been weakened. They've been weakened by diversion into terrorism." [Translation: Bush's war for oil and Empire.]

But residents, especially in Biloxi, Miss., said they aren't seeing the promised help, and Knight Ridder reporters along the Gulf Coast said they saw little visible federal relief efforts, other than search-and-rescue teams. Some help started arriving Wednesday by the truckloads, but not everywhere.

"We're not getting any help yet," said Biloxi Fire Department Battalion Chief Joe Boney. "We need water. We need ice. I've been told it's coming, but we've got people in shelters who haven't had a drink since the storm."

Federal flood control spending for southeastern Louisiana has been chopped from \$69 million in 2001 to \$36.5 million in 2005, according to budget documents. Federal hurricane protection for the Lake Pontchartrain vicinity in the Army Corps of Engineers' budget dropped from \$14.25 million in 2002 to \$5.7 million this year. Louisiana Democratic Sen. Mary Landrieu requested \$27 million this year.

Both the New Orleans Times-Picayune newspaper and a local business magazine reported that the effects of the budget cuts at the Army Corps of Engineers were severe.

In 2004, the Corps essentially stopped major work on the now-breached levee system that had protected New Orleans from flooding. It was the first such stoppage in 37 years, the Times-Picayune reported.

"It appears that the money has been moved in the president's budget to handle homeland security and the war in Iraq, and I suppose that's the price we pay," Jefferson Parish emergency management chief Walter Maestri told the newspaper.

"We're lost," said Steve Loper of Pascagoula, Miss. "We have no direction, no leadership. People are in bad trouble."

"This is what happens when you take Guardsmen and put them on the conveyor belt into Iraq and Afghanistan," said Thomas Donnelly of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

"Surprise, surprise: Engineers and logistics people that are essential to support missions in Iraq are important in disaster relief," he said. Nearly 8,000 Guardsmen from Mississippi and Louisiana are serving in Iraq, many in combat support units.

Two of the units, Louisiana's 256th Infantry Brigade and Mississippi's 155th Armored Brigade, contain engineering and support battalions that would specialize in tasks regularly used for disaster relief.

"The reserve component is nearly half of the deployment in Iraq, and at the same time they are taking on this critical mission," said retired Army Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey. "It's an enormous strain on this dedicated military force."

MORE:

“You Can Go Overseas With The Military, But You Can't Get Them Down Here”

01 September 2005 By Allen G. Breed, The Associated Press

An old man in a chaise lounge lay dead in a grassy median as hungry babies wailed around him. Around the corner, an elderly woman lay dead in her wheelchair, covered up by a blanket, and another body lay beside her wrapped in a sheet.

"I don't treat my dog like that," 47-year-old Daniel Edwards said as he pointed at the woman in the wheelchair.

"You can do everything for other countries, but you can't do nothing for your own people," he added. "You can go overseas with the military, but you can't get them down here."

Every so often, an armored state police vehicle cruised in front of the convention center with four or five officers in riot gear with automatic weapons.

But there was no sign of help from the National Guard.

MORE:

“We Need Our People” Lt. Says The National Guard Belongs in New Orleans and Biloxi. Not Baghdad: *Bring Them Home...NOW!*

31 August 2005 NORMAN SOLOMON, Truthout Perspective [Excerpt]

The Washington Post reported on Wednesday: "With thousands of their citizen-soldiers away fighting in Iraq, states hit hard by Hurricane Katrina scrambled to muster forces for rescue and security missions yesterday -- calling up Army bands and water-purification teams, among other units, and requesting help from distant states and the active-duty military."

The back-page Post story added: "National Guard officials in the states acknowledged that the scale of the destruction is stretching the limits of available manpower while placing another extraordinary demand on their troops -- most of whom have already served tours in Iraq or Afghanistan or in homeland defense missions since 2001."

Speaking for the Mississippi National Guard, Lt. Andy Thaggard said: "Missing the personnel is the big thing in this particular event. We need our people." According to the Washington Post, the Mississippi National Guard "has a brigade of more than 4,000 troops in central Iraq" while "Louisiana also has about 3,000 Guard troops in Baghdad."

The men and women of the National Guard shouldn't be killing in Iraq. They should be helping in New Orleans and Biloxi.

MORE:

**From: D, Soldier's Mom
To: GI Special
Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2005 12:09 AM
Subject: New Orleans**

We sure could have used the soldiers here in the US and not in Iraq - We need them home to help our people now due to the damages I see on TV; not enough help and they are over in Iraq; go figure. D

No Thanks From An Ungrateful President: Troops Have To Pay For Increased Death Benefit Themselves

August 31, 2005 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

Service members will have to start paying tomorrow for increased life insurance coverage approved by Congress in May.

Premiums for full coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Program will be \$26 a month, up from the \$16.25 previously charged.

The higher premium pays for new maximum coverage of \$400,000, up from the previous \$250,000 limit.

In a statement, Pentagon officials said everyone on active-duty automatically will be enrolled for maximum coverage and have the premium deducted from their military pay.

Soldier Says “In Iraq, It Is All About Money”

1 Aug 2005 By Colm Kelpie, Republished from greatreporter.com

A US soldier holidaying in Ireland speaks candidly about the war in Iraq and says bases his country are building there are permanent...

Patrick Lackatt, 20, sits on the bar stool, a glass of whisky in his hand, his foot tapping to the beat of the band.

He is not what you would expect of an average soldier. He is thinly built, small, even sickly-looking.

Wearing a worn black leather jacket, polo shirt and khakis, he looks more like a struggling student than a United States Army Reserve Medic.

He and his brother, Chris, 20, from St Louis, Missouri, are on holiday here in Galway.

“I don’t agree with Iraq,” Patrick admits.

“I agreed with Afghanistan. We were fighting Al Qaeda there, but not in Iraq.”

Patrick’s opinions are an example of the new mentality among many members of the US military towards the conflict in Iraq.

More and more soldiers, some once ardent supporters of the invasion, duped by the false claims by the US Administration about weapons of mass destruction and the links between Saddam’s regime and Al Qaeda, are now growing increasingly sceptical of American military presence in the Gulf state.

“America is never going to leave Iraq,” he claims. “We’re building permanent bases out there now.”

Patrick joined the military when he was 17, straight out of high school. Instead of joining up voluntarily like many of his peers, his father – a long-serving commanding officer in the US Army – volunteered him.

Both out of a sense of patriotism, and of duty to his family where there is a long tradition of military service, he decided to oblige, although he really had little choice.

And so began a five-year service with the United States Army Reserve.

Patrick never expected to see war.

He has currently served a total of 13 months in Iraq, where he was based 30 miles north of Baghdad. With two years left of his five year required duty obligation, he expects to have to return.

“In Iraq, it is all about money,” he says.

“But I don’t question it, because it’s out of my hands. There’s no point. It’s my job to fight and serve, and that’s what I’ll do.”

Patrick appears uncomfortable, understandably perhaps, when speaking about his experiences in the Middle East.

“When a guy gets his head blown off, it’s his best friends’ job to carry him away,” he says. “You see things out there a lot of people can’t handle,” he adds, although he seems reluctant to elaborate.

It's just over two years now since the invasion of Iraq. So, are the inhabitants, once oppressed under the despotic regime of Saddam Hussein, actually any better off?

Patrick seems unsure.

“The Iraqis don’t want us there. They see us killing their brothers, sons and children, and that makes them resent us,” he says.

“Even though we brought them freedom from the Iraqi regime, they still hate us.”

Prostitution, he tells me, once illegal before the American occupation, is now rife in Iraq, and hundreds of girls throughout the country are being sold into the seedy world of brothels and sex slavery.

“For one dollar you can get a prostitute in Iraq for one hour,” Patrick says. “For \$10 you can get a room, wash her up and do the business,” he adds.

He grins and shrugs his shoulders when asked whether this constitutes freedom, adding he has little time for the man who claims that from time to time as the reason Americans are still being sent there.

“I don’t like Bush. He has three things on his mind – oil, money and daddy’s war,” he says. Patrick is equally damning about John Kerry.

“Kerry is a bad man. He was all for Iraq before it went sour. I voted for him, but only because he wasn’t George Bush. He was the best of a bad lot.”

In one instance, he believes America shouldn’t be in Iraq, that the information conjured up about Al Qaeda and terrorists were all lies.

But, he still believes it is America’s role to free suffering people from tyranny, and this, he feels, for better or worse, is what they did in the Middle East.

“I don’t like Middle Eastern people,” he adds curtly, “but I believe in their right to freedom.”

Oops

08/07/05 infoshop.org

Here’s an interesting and instructive case.

On an unofficial military website [blackfive.net], this photo, along with others, was trumpeted as part of an “Iraqi march against terrorism” in Qayarah on July 5th.

Fair enough – but did they even bother to read the English banners? “al-Juboor’s tribe with other tribes ask the Coalition Forces to release my (illegible) Mutlab Salih al-Jupoori who is now in prison with the Coalition Forces”



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

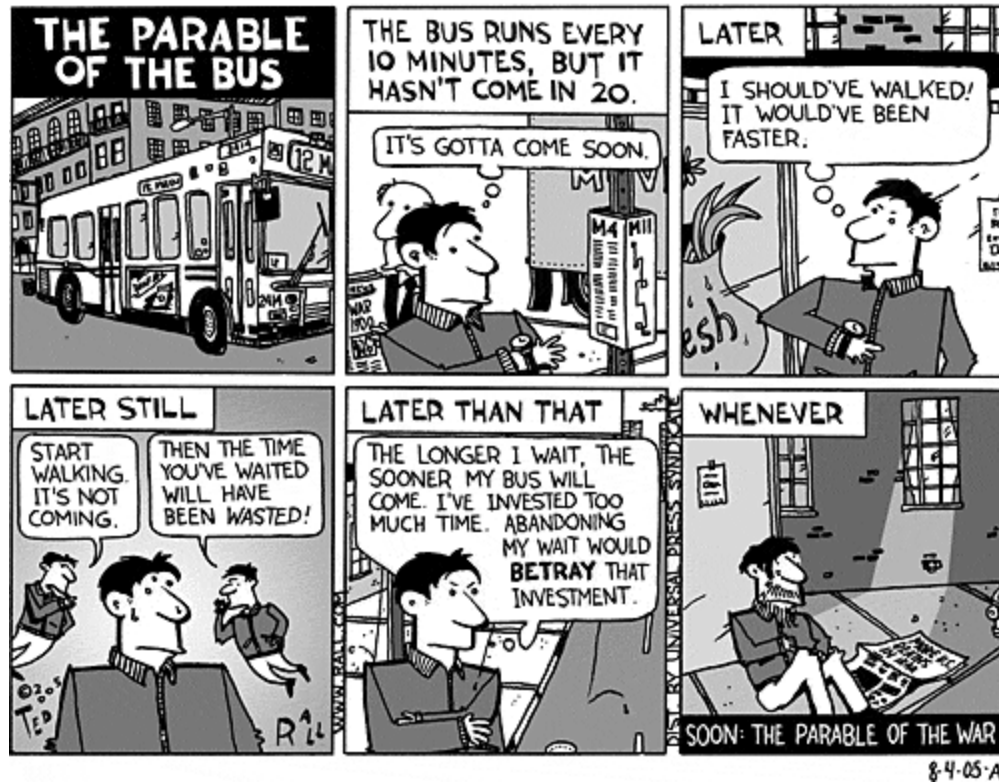
Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our 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)

60% Of Public Say Media & Military Aren't Leveling With Them

August 24, 2005 Washington Post

The U.S. public's confidence that the military and the media keep them informed about national security issues has eroded significantly over the past six years, according to a new poll that shows 60 percent of Americans believe they do not get enough information about military matters to make educated decisions.



Pentagon Caught Lying Again; This Time About Guard, Reserve Mistreatment

“This report whitewashes the problem by failing to acknowledge the new face of the American military force abroad.”

August 31, 2005 By Bill Theobald, Gannett News Service

The Department of Defense acknowledged in a report released Tuesday that some National Guard and Reserve soldiers believe they have been treated poorly compared to their active duty counterparts during deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But the Pentagon’s Inspector General concluded there was no “systemic” unequal treatment of guard and reserve soldiers, beyond the military’s usual practice of giving priority to the active units being deployed first.

Rep. Darlene Hooley, D-Ore., whose 2003 letter initiated the defense department’s investigation, was having none of the report’s equivocating language.

“Today, we learned from the Inspector General what is common knowledge among those on the frontlines: Guardsman and Reservists often times are treated as second-class soldiers,” Hooley said in a statement.

Indeed, the report notes there are “inherent disparity factors” between the active and reserve soldiers.

“Consequently, the reserve components, which were expected to have more time to get ready, have received less funding, less training, and less modern equipment than their active component counterparts,” the report states.

It points out that while reserves make up 40 percent of the Army, they receive only 11 percent of the Army’s budget.

Hooley was joined by 27 other members of Congress, including Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Springfield, when she wrote Inspector General Joseph Schmitz.

She said she had heard complaints from Oregon guard and reserve members regarding the quality of water, availability of uniforms, poor food and medical care and an inability to communicate with families back home.

Reserve and guard soldiers consistently had more complaints than active-duty soldiers when it came to the quality of water, food, health care, and other issues, the report states, but investigators discounted any pattern of second-class treatment.

For example, four of the 15 reserve units deployed in 2003 complained about rationing of bottled water, while none of the 35 active units did.

“There has been a fundamental shift in the role of the National Guard since 9/11 and it’s time that the Pentagon and Congress implement policies that reflect this new role,” Hooley said.

“This report whitewashes the problem by failing to acknowledge the new face of the American military force abroad.”

Hooley has introduced a bill that would require active duty military commanders to serve one year with a guard or reserve unit and another bill that would guarantee the same treatment for reserve members that active-duty soldiers receive.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Sunni-Shiite Solidarity

September 1, 2005 By Mazen Ghazi, IOL Correspondent

A crisis always poses a threat and an opportunity. The tragic stampede that took the lives of almost a 1,000 Shiites Wednesday, August 1, has proved to be a crisis that was translated into a chance to highlight communal harmony in the occupied country.

While the huge loss of life made the dark side of the crisis, Sunnis rushed to help and leaders of both sects were quick to accept the fateful accident while blaming US-led occupation for the rise of sectarian divisions, making the bright side of the human tragedy.

Tens of Al-Aazamiya residents, Sunnis and Shiites, did not hesitate in jumping into the Tigris river to save hundreds of women and children, who fell off Al-Aaimmah (Imams) Bridge into the river following the stampede, eyewitnesses told IslamOnline.net Thursday, September 1.

Residents of the predominantly-Sunni Aazamiya, which oversees the Tigris river, also used their boats to pick up hundreds of Shiite pilgrims from the river as they were fighting death roaming overhead.

Urging each others to help the affected Shiites, Al-Aazamiya residents also sped with their private cars to take the injured to Al-Noaman hospital for treatment.

"Residents also used their carriages, used to carry vegetables and grocery, to move the injured to the main streets where the ambulances can move them to hospitals," Rahim, a vegetables salesman, told IOL.

Many Sunni and Shiite observers and officials put the blame largely with the occupation forces and Iraqi government for not doing enough to organize and secure such huge gatherings of people.

Abbas Al-Rabbi of the Martyr Sadr Office said the US occupation forces were unable to maintain order in the Shiite religious occasions due to their ignorance of the traditions of the Iraqi people.

Sheikh Harith Al-Dari, chairman of the Association of Muslim Scholars, the highest Sunni body in Iraq, said the positive side of the tragedy is that it showed the strong bonds among Iraqis of all religious sects and dealt a heavy blow to inciters and hate-mongers.

To alleviate the burden on hospitals, people of Al-Aazamiya opened doors of their homes for the wounded, especially women and children, to offer immediate help.

Sunni mosques, such as the mosques of Abu Hanifa Al-Noaman and Beshr Al-Hafi, also opened doors to offer help to the injured and move them to hospitals.

"People of Al-Aazamiya helped tens of thousands of Shiite pilgrims who were passing by on their way to commemorate the death of imam Musa Al-Kadhim," said Mohamed Mahrous, a leading public figure in Aazamiya.

He denied the Shiite pilgrims had faced any harassment while passing in the area.

"On the contrary, the people of Al-Aazamiya used to show warming welcome to the Shiite pilgrims and offer them with food and water. That was the case Wednesday."

Political analysts and observers saw the great show of Shiite-Sunni solidarity Wednesday as a strong message the electoral battle to endorse a draft constitution, that highlights federalism, would be a heated one, arguing Sunnis and strong currents of the Shiite sect would be joining hands to give the chart the thumbs down.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"I thought our country was going down, down, down. I thought nobody cared about our children killed in the war, but millions care, and millions care about our country and want to make it better," she said. "The love and support I've received give me hope that my life can someday be normal." Cindy Sheehan, quoted 31 August 2005 by The Associated Press.

Are “We” All Oppressors?

[This comment was written as a reply to an argument proposing that “We are the oppressors in this conflict” in Iraq, because buying gasoline is paying taxes that finance the war, and thus collaborating with evil and being an oppressor.]

July 30, 2005 By John Spritzler, Anti-Allawi-group [Excerpts]

Dear Friends,

These replies reflect a kind of hopelessness among many of us which cripples our ability to defeat our enemies and make a better world.

It is the hopelessness of feeling alone, of feeling that we are surrounded by fellow citizens who are against us and for our enemies.

To the extent that we have this perception of hopelessness, the emails and articles we write condemning and analyzing the atrocities going on around us are written more as a kind of self-therapy than with any expectation that it will stop the atrocities.

It's a way of keeping our self-respect and connecting with like-minded souls to reaffirm that it is not we who are crazy, but the world we live in.

But self-therapy is not what we need. We need a determination to reach out to billions of people and build a movement that can win.

Our enemies work hard to make us feel hopeless. They tell us we live in a democracy, and therefore since Bush and Blair got re-elected it means only one thing -- "YOU ARE ALL ALONE -- ABANDON ALL HOPE, YE WHO ARE FOR JUSTICE!"

That's what this "we are the oppressors" and "we must look in the mirror first" stuff is really all about.

It is a veiled way of saying what is really believed but which is too terrifying to say out loud -- that one has abandoned all hope in the possibility of building a popular movement of our fellow citizens to overthrow our ruling classes and make a more equal and just world.

Saying "we are the oppressors" is just another way of saying, "I give up."

Come on folks. There is no reason why we need to give up.

Our fellow citizens share our values of equality, genuine democracy and people helping each other instead of killing each other.

They may be lied to and frightened and manipulated, but they are not the oppressors. This means we can forge a winning movement. It is a cop-out to give up the fight with the silly excuse that "we are the oppressors."

"But," you say, "they all voted against us and for Bush/Blair."

Nonsense!

In the U.S. a lot of people eligible to vote do not register.

Of the registered voters, about half vote.

Of the half who vote, about half vote for tweedledee and the other half for tweedledum.

(I jokingly asked people at work just before the 2004 U.S. election if they had made up their mind who to vote for and to my surprise one young black woman said no, she hadn't. I asked her what was making her choice difficult. She said it was the stem cell research issue. I don't know who she voted for. **If she picked Bush, does that prove she supports the Iraq war, for which Kerry wanted to send 40,000 more troops?**)

No, a majority did NOT vote for Bush the second time around.

Of the people eligible to vote, not even a majority voted at all, nevermind for Bush.

Stop believing the lies our newspapers tell us about "the people" electing "our leaders" in a "democracy."

This nonsense about "we are the oppressors" would never be taken seriously by anybody who was trying to build a popular movement against the ruling elites.

Think about it. If you go up to your friend or neighbor or fellow worker or if you go door to door talking to people or in any way reach out to your fellow citizens (and people who aren't citizens but who live and work in your neck of the woods), how do you address them?

Do you say, "Hi Mrs. Smith, I think you and your friends are all the oppressor and I was wondering if you'd join me in fighting oppression?" Then you really would be crazy!

Come on folks. Let's get serious about this.

We are in the middle of a class war.

Our friends and neighbors and fellow workers are on the working class side of this war and we need to help them understand what's going on and gain the confidence and clarity to overthrow the ruling plutocracy.

We need to appreciate this fact. We need to reject the elite's poisonous propaganda designed to paralyze us with hopelessness based on the perception that our friends and neighbors and fellow workers "are the oppressors."

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.

SACRIFICE? COUNT ME OUT: If You Supported the War, Pay For It

[Thanks to John Gingerich, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

If you voted for Bush, here's your chance to plant your butt where your ridiculous car magnet is, smack dab in the middle of the Sunni Triangle. Good luck.

8/16/05 ByTed Rall [Excerpts]

NEW YORK--"If America is truly on a war footing," Thom Shanker asks in the /New York Times/, "why is so little sacrifice asked of the nation at large?" Military recruiters are coming up short of volunteers, yet neither party is pushing for a draft. No one is proposing a tax increase to cover the \$60 billion annual cost of the Iraq and Afghan wars.

Back here in the fatherland, only "support our troops" car ribbons indicate that we're at war--and they aren't even bumper stickers, they're magnetic. Apparently Americans aren't even willing to sacrifice the finish on their automobiles to promote the cause.

Northwestern University professor Charles Moskos says: "The political leaders are afraid to ask the public for any real sacrifice, which doesn't speak too highly of the citizenry."

To which I say: Screw that. It's not my duty to suffer for this pointless war. I've been against it all along, and you can stick your victory garden where the desert sun can't penetrate.

I was among hundreds of thousands of Americans who marched against invading Iraq in early 2003. Tens of millions cheered us on. The largest mass protest movement in history (so designated by the /Guinness Book of World Records/) brought together pacifists, humanists and people like me.

We knew Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. We didn't believe that the same White House that propped up dictatorships in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia--that had, when it suited them, supported Saddam--could possibly be interested in liberating the people of Iraq. We absolutely didn't trust Dick "cakewalk" Cheney's breezy predictions.

Bush and Cheney ignored our concerns. Instead of building a solid case and bipartisan political consensus, they bullied and lied to Congress and the UN to scam us into this unwinnable war.

Who can blame them? They work for ExxonMobil and Halliburton, not the American people. But they, not us, broke Iraq.

It can't be fixed, it's not our fault and it's not our problem. There's no reason to relinquish our creature comforts to back their grubby little oil grab.

I'm no genius, but even I could see that this war was doomed eight months before the invasion:

David Hendrickson, a scholar at Colorado College, tells the Times: "Bush understands that the support of the public for war--especially the war in Iraq--is conditioned on demanding little of the public."

Of course, Bush himself hasn't given up a second of vacation or a single donated dollar, much less one of his hard-partying daughters, to the "war effort." Sacrifice is a hard sell down here among the citizenry when we don't see it starting where it should start, among our leaders.

I'm already sacrificing too much for a war I always believed was stupid and wrong.

I'm paying three dollars a gallon for buck-fifty gas and walking through gauntlets of over-armed National Guardboys at airports and bus stations.

I'm in greater danger than ever before of getting blown up by a pissed-off fanatic.

And I dread the giant tax hike we'll eventually need to pay off Bush's deficit.

But these aren't enough sacrifices for Bush and his vainglorious generals, who are planning "a Civilian Reserve, a sort of Peace Corps for professionals.--

http://professionals.--a program to seek commitments from bankers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, electricians, plumbers and solid-waste disposal experts to deploy to conflict zones for months at a time on reconstruction assignments, to relieve pressure on the military."

If you voted for Bush, here's your chance to plant your butt where your ridiculous car magnet is, smack dab in the middle of the Sunni Triangle. Good luck.

“Iraqis Have Only One Option Left: Resistance By Any Means”

Iraqis have only one option left: Resistance by any means. "International law grants a people fighting an illegal occupation the right to use 'all necessary means at their disposal' to end their occupation and the occupied "are entitled to seek and receive support" in order to resist the occupiers.

August 1, 2005 Ghali Hassan, GlobalResearch.ca [Excerpt]

The occupation is a collective punishment to all Iraqis; therefore the Iraqi Resistance is heterogeneous Resistance movement of all Iraqis, regardless of religious or political affiliations.

It draws out a variety of tactics; from armed Resistance to peaceful Resistance determined by the resources and opportunities available to it. The sole aim is the full withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.

The creation of the "Al-Zarqawi" phantom, the walking WMD, is carefully crafted to confuse retail terrorism with legitimate Resistance.

The purpose is not only to delegitimise dissent and intimidate those who dare to support the Iraqi Resistance, but also to distort the image of the Iraqi Resistance. Yet despite the media hype and distortion, there exists no substantial evidence to support the allegations against the Resistance, or the existence of the phantom to that effect.

All Iraqis, including the Resistance leaders have rejected the attacks against civilians and has blamed U.S. forces and their allies for orchestrating the violence.

Iraqis have always differentiated between the crime perpetuated by the occupation forces, and the legitimate Iraqi Resistance against US forces and their collaborators.

When asked about, "How should the world distinguish between those who espouse violence and those who belong to the Iraqi National Resistance? Dr. Mohammad Al-Obaidi, a member of the People's Struggle Movement (PSM) said: "By actions. It is known to all Iraqis that any operation carried out by the resistance targets the occupation and the security forces.

“It must be kept in mind that at this point in time, with the absence of any true sovereignty in Iraq, the security forces are merely an extension of the occupation itself.

“Those operations that do otherwise and target civilians can be said for certain to not belong to the National Resistance.

“For example, hundreds upon hundreds of university professors, military pilots, scientists and doctors have been killed in Iraq.

“What possible benefit would the resistance have in attacking our country's most talented and educated people?

“It is clear to all Iraqis that there are foreign fingers pulling the triggers to commit these crimes and murder the human resources of Iraq, all the while attempting to steal the country's natural resources”.

Iraqis everywhere have blamed the presence of US forces for the deterioration of security and increase in crimes. The aim was predictable, after the destruction of the Iraqi state, the destruction of the Iraqi society follow.

After more than two years of US occupation, the destruction of Iraq and the Iraqi society have not stopped. There is no "freedom" in Iraq, and there is no independent government, there is only US occupation.

Iraqis have only one option left: Resistance by any means. "International law grants a people fighting an illegal occupation the right to use 'all necessary means at their disposal' to end their occupation and the occupied "are entitled to seek and receive support" in order to resist the occupiers.

The attacks on civilians by forces allied with the occupation serve to prolong the occupation, divide the Iraqi people and create sectarian strife. The most worrying trend to come out of the war on Iraq is the disappearance of 'dissenting voices' and the moral bankruptcy in Western intellectuals.

The position of Western "progressives" on the occupation is imperialist at best.

As Stephen Gowans rightly wrote: "Since occupation and resistance are mutually opposed, being equally against both is like being equally against bacterial infection and antibiotics and equally against central plumbing and open sewers in the street".

Hence, it is meaningless to oppose both; the occupation and the Iraqi Resistance.

The Occupation is the cause of the violence and chaos and therefore must be resisted and removed.

Outsiders, wherever they are, have no right to engage in lecturing Iraqis on how to resist and defend themselves and their country against a brutal imperialist occupation. The recent petition of one million Iraqi signatures demanding the

immediate withdrawal of the occupation forces from Iraq is evidence of 'the rejection by Iraqis of foreigners in Iraq'.

What is certain is that without effective and true dissent; people every where will become complicit in the criminal actions of an imperialist power on the loose.

The cliché purported by "humanitarian" organisations, and Western "progressives" that; "we are against the violence, whether expressed through occupation or the Resistance", is naïve and contradictory.

As mentioned earlier, the occupation is the cause of the violence.

Those same people who oppose the tactics used by the Resistance against the forces of the occupation grant the imperialist forces the exclusive right to use brutal violence against defenceless people.

The struggle for freedom and liberty for all humans is a universal cause. The continuing brutal violence and destruction of Iraq wrought by the US occupation exposed the true nature and complicity of AI and Western "dissent".

It is important to recognise that the US invasion and occupation of Iraq can only be compared to the invasion and occupation of Poland by the forces of the Third Reich. The destruction of Iraqi cities and towns, the mass killings of innocent Iraqis, and the arrest and imprisonment of Iraqi men, women and children in US-run prison camps are reminiscent to the great injustice and brutal system of repression created by Hitler's forces in Poland.

It is criminal to oppose the Iraqi people resisting against an illegal and criminal occupation of their country.

Remember, Iraq was supposed to be the launching pad in US imperial agenda of dominating the world by force.

Had it not been for the Iraqi Resistance against US Occupation, other nations, Syria in particular would have been attacked by now. There is no pretext for US forces to remain in Iraq, and it is the Iraqi people legitimate right to force them out of Iraq.

Far from bringing "liberation" and "democracy" to the Iraqi people, the US war and occupation have destroyed Iraq and inflicted great harm on the Iraqi society. The cost of the US war to Iraq is unmatched. It is immoral to think of other way than the way of immediate and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq. It is imperative to return Iraq to full sovereignty.

Real dissent has no fear and offers no short cuts.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

OCCUPATION REPORT

Winning More Friends: For The Armed Resistance That Is



A man picks up clothing from the floor after a raid by U.S. troops in Baghdad August 12, 2005. Residents of a house on Baghdad's Palestine Street said that U.S. soldiers searched their home at 0300 local time Friday morning (2300 GMT), breaking open the front door, ransacking the interior, and torching their car. REUTERS/Thaier Al-Sudani

There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force and violence to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?

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

OCCUPATION HAITI

**WELCOME TO LIBERATED HAITI:
HAVE A NICE DAY**



A Brazilian occupation soldier stands next to a military vehicle as a Haitian man is detained for questioning during a military operation in the neighborhood of Bel Air, August 30, 2005. REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

It's Official: Bush Gives New Reason For Iraq War: O-I-L!

31 August 2005 By Jennifer Loven, The Associated Press

CORONADO, Calif. -- **President Bush answered growing antiwar protests yesterday with a fresh reason for US troops to continue fighting in Iraq: protection of the country's vast oil fields**, which he said would otherwise fall under the control of terrorist extremists.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Super-Rich Grabbing It All

[Thanks to Katherine G, who sent this in.]

September 1, 2005 Editorial, The New York Times Company [Excerpt]

When President Bush talks about the economy, he invariably boasts about good economic growth.

But he doesn't acknowledge what is apparent from the census figures: as the very rich get even richer, their gains can mask the stagnation and deterioration at less lofty income levels.

This week's census report showed that income inequality was near all-time highs in 2004, with 50.1 percent of income going to the top 20 percent of households.

And additional census data obtained by the Economic Policy Institute show that only the top 5 percent of households experienced real income gains in 2004. Incomes for the other 95 percent of households were flat or falling.

Income inequality is an economic and social ill, but the administration and the Congressional majority don't seem to recognize that.

When Congress returns from its monthlong summer vacation next week, two of the leadership's top priorities include renewing the push to repeal the estate tax, which affects only the wealthiest of families, and extending the tax cuts for investment income, which flow largely to the richest Americans.

At the other end of the spectrum, lawmakers have stubbornly refused to raise the minimum wage: \$5.15 an hour since 1997. They will also be taking up proposals for deep budget cuts in programs that ameliorate income inequality, like Medicaid, food stamps and federal student loans.

They should be ashamed of themselves.

Capitalism At Work:

Attorney General Accuses Drug Companies Of Fraud

26 August 2005 Bloomberg News

California accused GlaxoSmithKline, Abbott Laboratories and 37 other pharmaceutical companies of defrauding the state's \$34-billion Medi-Cal health program for the poor by inflating prescription drug prices.

In a lawsuit filed Thursday in federal court in Boston, California Atty. Gen. Bill Lockyer said the companies supplied inflated prices to industry publications used by Medi-Cal to reimburse healthcare providers for drug costs.

"We're dragging these drug companies into the court of law because they're gouging the public on basic life necessities," Lockyer said in a statement. "The days of prescription pricing fraud are over."

Web Copies:

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The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>,

www.williambowles.info/qispecial,

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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