

GI SPECIAL 3C50:



Army Times 9.12.05

A Soldier's Open Letter Regarding George W. Bush

September 5, 2005, Via Uruknet

If you're not pissed off, you're not paying attention.

George Bush is going to go down in history as the President Who Destroyed America.

Oh sure, there were problems before he ever took office. Every nation has problems. But in the year 2000, the USA was at a fairly high point. The economy was growing. Science was moving forward. International relations were fairly good. The future looked bright. And then, an election was rigged, and a "President" who was never properly elected took office.

We all know how all the different stories about inappropriate election practices during the 2004 election. The cheating. The manipulation of the polls. The fact that people from largely Democrat demographics were prevented from voting. If you don't know about all this stuff... then you weren't paying attention.

We also know that the 2000 elections were bullshit. But it's too late for that. We got the chimpanzee in the Oval Office, and we've got to deal with him.

Too bad the War-Monger president, who doesn't even know HOW to run a war in the first place, also doesn't know how to run a country.

The disaster on September 11th, 2001 was handled very well... not by Bush, but by Rudy, the esteemed former mayor of NYC. The only reaction from Bush to the whole fiasco: LET'S GO TO WAR! But... that's in the past. What about now?

Our country is already hurting financially because of the actions of our "president", or inactions, as the case might be. Our international relations are shot to hell - EVERYBODY hates us. The education system is hurting.

Our entire economy is likely to fall into recession, if not an actual depression to rival the crash of the 1920s. The average citizen can't even afford gasoline - but if we'd invested in cars that used non-petroleum fuel sources (a technology we've had for a couple of decades but never developed) we wouldn't have this problem in the first place! (Hmm, does anyone else detect a connection between the oil companies, the government who funds research, and the car companies?)

The progress of the scientific community is being thwarted by Chimp-Boy's religious convictions. Bush was too busy "stopping the fags from destroying our nation" to bother running the nation. I wonder how much money went into his "Protect Marriage" campaign.

How much money and resources have been spent on a war overseas, when our own infrastructure needs desperate help? DID YOU KNOW that Bush wanted to implement a universal health-care system in Iraq, funded by our own tax dollars, when we don't even have universal health care here?

I don't have health coverage, but MY MONEY is going to help give medical care to some Iraqi. THIS IS BULLSHIT!

Now, not all of these things fall solely on the shoulders of George W. Bush. It's his entire pathetic administration, but he's the man with the final say. He's the guy who was given all sorts of extra powers of authority by the Patriot Act.

He's the idiot leading the pack. I'm sorry, "leading" was the wrong word. Leadership is a quality he doesn't have.

Let's look at the situation we have right now. Our National Guard is overseas when we need them at home. Yes, they're calling them back home now, but they should have been here in the first place.

People are dying, in America, of dehydration, hunger, and disease, because we took too long to respond to an emergency.

The US Army can drop a bomb with pinpoint precision overseas within an hour of receiving the mission, and they're telling me it took our leaders THREE FUCKING DAYS to drop food and water on our own soil?

MORE BULLSHIT!

American citizens are dying, on American soil. Oh sure, the "president" went to visit the poor victims, and he hugged women and girls for the camera, and shook people's hands... what a wonderful photo opportunity it must have been. But when he climbed aboard his helicopter to fly to the disaster area, did he even bother to think of loading a couple of extra crates of water, and maybe some food, for the victims?

I'm sure there was space. And it may not have helped everybody, but to the family that would have received those supplies, it could mean the difference between life and death.

Compassionate-conservatism, my fucking ass.

This whole disaster-relief operation is a textbook example of "too little, too late."

It's a textbook example of SHITTY LEADERSHIP. All the way from the bottom up.

For the first 24 hours, the mayor of New Orleans told people he had it under control, and they didn't need help. Two days later, he's screaming and swearing at people for not coming sooner.

What? Did he think the National Guard just shows up on its own? You have to ask!

We, the soldiers of the Reserves and Guard, don't sit in our unit headquarters, watching CNN, and say, "Oh look! A disaster! Let's go!"

WE CAN'T. We have to have orders. We need authorization. And we need to be requested.

And then, what about the governor of Louisiana? Have we even heard anything from her? She should have realized that the mayor of New Orleans wasn't seeing the situation clearly, and acted. But no.

And then there's the "president." WHAT THE FUCK? There has been a failure in EVERY level of our civilian chain of command. And then there's FEMA. Don't even get me started.

They're running a logistical nightmare. Yes, communications are down, but they knew that would happen! They were supposed to have been planning for this for years! The people of that organization are paid dearly, specifically to be ready in case of an emergency.

And then, the emergency happens, and it all falls to hell. The Army can go in, and within 24 hours, we could have had food and water and medical facilities on the ground, IF we had been requested... but we weren't, until it was too late, and people were already dead and dying of preventable causes.

50,000 people were stranded in a convention center, and FEMA didn't know ANYTHING about them until four days after the storm. They would have known all about it if they'd just turned on the television, because apparently CNN has better information than the people who are supposed to handle the disaster.

This is pitiful, and inexcusable.

Opportunities have been wasted, resources have been poorly used. Every vehicle going into that region, whether traveling by land, air, or sea, should be carrying food, water, clothing, medicine, and other supplies in, and carrying people out.

It doesn't matter if they can only fit a little bit on a helicopter. If a helicopter is going to pick up medical evacuees, they have room in their cargo hold to carry supplies in, before picking up the patient.

Who the fuck was running the logistics here, and did we check to make sure they'd at least graduated kindergarten before hiring them?

Things only started to work when the Army took over (thank God for General Honore), and I'm sure they're going to need much more help before it's over.

I'm a qualified officer in the Army Engineer Corps. SEND ME, DAMN IT! I'm sitting here, making LJ entries, when I should be helping to save lives! I'm going insane, wanting to do something!

To finish off, I'd like to address Mr. George W. Chimpanzee Bush, the President Who Destroyed America:

Your citizens are dying, and I personally hold you responsible for their lives.

As the president, you are a public servant, NOT a king.

Your job is to serve the people of the United States of America and to uphold the Constitution, not to preach your Biblical beliefs and to play golf.

I'm sorry the hurricane disrupted your vacation. It must be awful for you, but I assure you, it's far worse for the victims.

Today, you addressed the nation, and admitted that you made some mistakes - that everyone involved in the relief effort made some mistakes. That's not good enough. Apologies won't bring back the people who died needlessly.

As the highest authority in the land, you can't afford those sorts of mistakes. "Oops!" is not an answer.

You were supposed to do something, but you didn't until it was too late for many of them, and more are going to die.

Their blood is on your hands.

There are still people living in filth, sleeping in the streets, crowded into crumbling buildings, stranded on rooftops, dehydrated, sick, dying, and desperate for just a bottle of water and a bit of food.

These are American citizens - your highest priority... but you are incapable of understanding their suffering because you've been so sheltered all your life, you can't even comprehend the sensations of true hunger, thirst, or desperation.

You've never had to worry about your next meal, or of having a roof over your head. And when you left New Orleans, after hugging a few people while surrounded by cameras, and you flew back to Washington, DC in the comfort of your helicopter, WHAT DID YOU HAVE FOR DINNER? I'll bet it was delicious, wasn't it?

Oh, and by the way, how much money are you going to donate to the victims of the hurricane, Mr. Bush? How much money is going to come out of your personal bank account? You're independently wealthy, and could live comfortably on JUST the pension from your presidency for the rest of your life.

Children are giving their lunch money. What are you going to give? How much do you really love America?

The American people don't want your lies, excuses, and apologies anymore.

How many mistakes can you make before you stop making them? How many more people have to die for your stupidity?

Should we just wait for the next major disaster to strike, just in case you do better next time?

We don't want a "next time", Mr. Bush.

We don't want your promises of a better tomorrow.

We want your resignation.

M
2LT, US Army Reserves
Engineer Corps

(I have no fear of publicly using my name for this. Pass it on. These are my words, and I stand behind them with my name, rank, and convictions. And if it ends up on CNN, with my name, and Bush reads it, even better.)

[NOTE FROM GI SPECIAL. With all respect to the writer, GI Special has removed the name, notwithstanding the writers' courage in making it public and express wish it be made known. Perhaps this is an excess of caution, but should a shitstorm come, it will not be because GI Special ran the name. Apologies to the writer for doing this despite her explicit wishes, but contact with the writer not possible to see if those wishes are unchanged at this time. T]

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

British Soldier Killed, Three Hurt



British soldiers prepare to evacuate victims after a British convoy was hit by a roadside bomb in the southern Iraqi city of Basra September 11, 2005. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

Sep 11 AFP

A British serviceman was killed and three injured in an late-morning bomb attack in Iraq's southern Basra province, the Ministry of Defence said without giving further details.

The attack came six days after two British soldiers in an armoured four-wheel-drive vehicle were killed in a roadside bombing near Al-Zubair, southwest of Basra city.

MORE:

Our Boys

[This is from Rose Gentle about the British soldier killed in Basra. Her son was killed in Iraq. She leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now.]

From: Rose Gentle
To: GI Special
Sent: September 11, 2005
Subject: our boys

**GB, HAS JUST LOST ONE MORE BOY, ITS NOW 95,
WHEN WILL IT ALL STOP**

WHERE DO I FIND THE ANGER

**WHERE DO I FIND THE ANGER
TO DRIVE ME ON AND ON
TO LOOK POWER IN THE FACE
TO TELL POWER, YOU LIED
AS YOU KILLIED MY SON.**

**XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**

**HOW CAN I BE DRIVEN
TO STAND UP AND FIGHT
FOR RIGHT AND TRUTH
WHEN GORDON WAS DRIVEN
BY YOUR LIES TO FIGHT
AND DIE IN YOUR BLOODY WAR**

FROM WHERE IS THE STRENGTH.
THAT DRIVES ME TO STAND
IN ISOLATION
AGAINST THE MADNESS OF WAR AND KILLING,

XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

TO PUBLICLY EXPOSE MY PAIN
EVEN AS YOU SMILE AND GRIN AND GET RE-ELECTED
WHEN I FACED YOU THE GRIN FADED
LIKE A COWERD, YOU WALKED AWAY
YOU HAD TAKEN MY BRAVE SON
YOU GAVE ME ONLY YOUR BACK.
LOVE IS THE RAGE, THAT DRIVES ME ON,

XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

BENEATH THE ROSE.
I AM A THORN IN YOUR SIDE
CAN YOU GIVE ME BACK MY GORDON,

XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

TO TONY BLAIR,
BRING THE TROOPS HOME

U.S. Soldier Killed, 2 Wounded Near Samarra

Sep 11 By JACOB SILBERBERG, Associated Press Writer

The U.S. military said a Task Force Liberty Soldier was killed in a roadside bombing before dawn Sunday while on patrol near Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad. Two soldiers were wounded.

U.S. Occupies Tal Afar, Comes Up Empty, Resistance Gone

Sep 11 By JACOB SILBERBERG, Associated Press Writer & Reuters & By Jonathan Finer, Washington Post Foreign Service

Insurgents melted into the countryside around Tal Afar, the militant stronghold near the Syrian border, and guns fell silent Sunday — the second day of an offensive by 5,000 Iraqi soldiers backed by 3,500 American troops and armor.

Fighting eased Sunday, the second day of a U.S. and Iraqi sweep through the militant stronghold of Tal Afar near the Syrian border, as insurgents melted into the countryside, many escaping through a tunnel network dug under an ancient northern city.

Five government soldiers died and three were wounded. No Americans were killed or injured in the first day of the all-out assault, the biggest military action in months.

On the first day of the push into the city Saturday, troops conducted house-to-house searches and U.S. armor battered down stone walls in the narrow, winding streets of the old city.

After stiff initial resistance, insurgents in the largely ethnic Turkmen city of 200,000 had vanished. Tal Afar is about 60 miles from the Syrian border in northwestern Iraq.

Col. H.R. McMasters, commander of the American contingent of 3,500 U.S. troops from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, said the ancient Sarai neighborhood — thought to be insurgent headquarters — was nearly deserted when the fighting died down late Saturday.

"The enemy decided to bail out," he said.

"The terrorists had seen it coming (and prepared) tunnel complexes to be used as escape routes," Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch said in Baghdad.

In forgoing a fight, insurgents repeated a tactic they have employed in the face of counterinsurgency offensives in the neighboring province of Anbar, where Marines invading a string of insurgent strongholds met little resistance from fighters who moved elsewhere or hid among the civilian population.

Keen to show off the muscle of their U.S.-trained forces, ministers said other towns were in the line of fire and state television ran repetitive footage from recent days in Tal Afar of Iraqi soldiers hunting and detaining men described as rebels.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A US soldier takes cover during fierce clashes in Tal Afar. (AFP/MNF-IRAQ/HO)

A Tip From Soldier S

From: Soldier S
To: GI Special
Sent: September 06, 2005 12:43 AM

As a "tip", you may want to write something about two of the recent KIAS in Iraq.

Anytime the Army releases a KIA "assigned" to Headquarters, US Army Special Operations Command, this means that they are Delta Force operators.

Just a heads up about 5 or 6 of these guys have been killed since July ... a marked increase. These fatalities may belie the DoD claims that the resistance is weakening. Delta is about as good as it gets in counterinsurgency warfare.

TROOP NEWS

Russian Soldiers Quit War Over Pay Fraud & Maggots In Food: “Never Seen Again, The Report Said”

9.12.05 Army Times

No pay, no food, no service

Russia's attempt to transform into an all-volunteer force is hitting a few hurdles.

Russian television networks report that some sergeants deployed to Chechnya tried [Wrong. They didn't "try." They left. Read on.] to leave their unit because they are not getting the money, food or living conditions they were promised.

The group entered southern Russia in search of a high military command that would accept their resignations.

Pay is one of the biggest complaints. The soldiers said that when they are paid, they receive only about \$70 a month, one-tenth of what they were promised.

Food also is an issue. A senior sergeant in the news report said the food was "awful. We were given biscuits ... and when you broke them in half, there were maggots in them."

Some of the soldiers returned to duty, but others went on leave and were never seen again, the report said.

400 Come To Hear Sheehan At Stone Mountain, Georgia; “Four Veterans Of Iraq Also Said They Want The War To End”

<p>Phil and Linda Waste of Hinesville have three sons and two grandchildren who have served in Iraq. "We're going on to Washington and take our country back," Phil Waste said.</p>
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09/11/05 By MAE GENTRY, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Hundreds of people packed a Stone Mountain church Saturday night to hear Cindy Sheehan, the woman who spent most of August in Crawford, Texas, trying speak to President Bush about her son's death.

Sheehan, whose son Casey was killed last year in Iraq, has been crisscrossing the country to advocate withdrawing U.S. troops from that nation.

She spoke to more than 400 anti-war activists at Victory Church in Stone Mountain at a gathering organized by the Bring Them Home Now Tour, which is holding events like this one all over the country.

"I've spoken to thousands of people this week," said Sheehan, who had just flown in from Los Angeles. "I'm so tired, and then I get someplace like this, and I'm so full of love and so full of energy."

"I had given up on my country, but we remembered what we had forgotten after almost five years of a virtual dictatorship - that we the people have the power," she said.

Before Sheehan spoke, parents of other young people killed in Iraq spoke. Among them was Patricia Roberts, whose son Jamaal Addison of Lithonia was the first Georgian to die in the war.

Phil and Linda Waste of Hinesville have three sons and two grandchildren who have served in Iraq. "We're going on to Washington and take our country back," Phil Waste said.

Linda Waste, weeping as she spoke, said, "We keep hearing about sacrificing for a noble cause. There's nothing noble about the illegal occupation of Iraq.

"It's the people that are making the sacrifice - not the House, not the Senate, not the Bush administration."

Four veterans of Iraq also said they want the war to end.

Army Betrayed Gold Star Family: Hid Soldiers' Cause Of Death For A Year

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

Sept. 10, 2005 (CBS)

The Army said Saturday it knew for more than a year after 1st Lt. Kenneth Ballard's death in Iraq in May 2004 that he was not killed in action, as it initially reported. The family was not told the truth until Friday.

Ballard's mother, Karen Meredith, of Mountain View, Calif., has become a public critic of the war. Last month she was in Crawford, Texas, at a memorial erected by Veterans for Peace as part of the protest that began Aug. 6 outside President Bush's ranch by grieving mother and peace activist Cindy Sheehan.

What is so unusual about the Ballard case is that the error was recognized early but not reported to the family for more than a year.

On Memorial Day in 2004, the day after Kenneth Ballard died, the Army informed his family that he had been killed by enemy fire while on a combat mission in the south-central Iraqi city of Najaf.

In a casualty announcement from June 1, the Pentagon said Ballard died "during a firefight with insurgents." The military did not elaborate.

The Army disclosed on Saturday that Ballard, 26, actually died of wounds from the accidental discharge of a M240 machine gun on his tank after his platoon had returned from battling insurgents in Najaf. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery last Oct. 22.

An Army spokesman, Col. Joseph Curtin, said in an interview that separate investigations by the local commander and by the Army's Criminal Investigation Division concluded days after Ballard's death that it was an accident.

The tank accidentally backed into a tree and a branch hit the mounted, unmanned machine gun, causing it to fire, Curtin said. Ballard was struck at close range and died of his wounds, he added.

For reasons that are not clear, the Army did not correct the public record and inform the family until Friday.

The 1st Armored Division, which also investigated the death, said in a written statement from its post in Wiesbaden, Germany, on Friday night that investigations had "revealed additional information of the cause" of Ballard's death.

It did not mention that the investigations were conducted more than a year ago.

**Pentagon Assholes Send Civilian
Debt Collectors After Wounded
Iraq Vets:
“How Can You Treat Someone
Like That?”**

September 12, 2005 By Karen Jowers, Army Times staff writer

Two years after retired Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Kelly lost his right leg below the knee to a roadside bomb in Iraq, he says he is still fighting a war — in Washington.

His battle is with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which overpaid him by \$1,700, demanded reimbursement and then referred his debt to a collection agency.

“If we had a credit check right now, it would be pretty painful,” Kelly said. “How can you treat someone like that?”

Kelly's situation has caught the attention of Congress, which has ordered the Government Accountability Office to look into his and other similar cases.

“Whether the debts are valid or not, we should not be reporting our war heroes to collection agencies,” said Gayle Fischer, an assistant director for forensic audits and special investigations in the GAO.

Kelly said his problems arose when he was medically retired in August 2004. He did not receive his leave pay or travel pay and, at some point, the Army put him back on active duty. He got a check he assumed was reimbursement for the leave.

During that time, he and his wife were moving from Texas to Arizona, and he did not get his documentation in a timely manner. He got one or two letters from DFAS and tried to call to straighten it out, with no success. At the beginning of the year, he got the letter about the collection action.

The 25-year-old called the GAO and the House Government Reform Committee, which asked questions that led DFAS to look into the situation and eventually suspend the collection action.

Recruiting Vultures Pick Bones Of Hurricane Survivors

9.9.05 Wall St. Journal

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: Ten U.S. Army recruiters are offering volunteer help for Katrina evacuees at Houston's Astrodome.

But the recruiters, struggling to keep enlistment up during Iraq war, are also available with options for the jobless.

“Our intent is to approach the evacuees at the right time for them,” says Army spokesman Douglas Smith.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

Sep 11 By JACOB SILBERBERG, Associated Press Writer & (Reuters)

In Baghdad, the director of police training at the Interior Ministry was killed in front of his home in a western neighborhood as he waited for a ride to work. Maj. Gen. Adnan Abdul Rihman died on the spot, said local police commander Maj. Musa Abdul Karim.

KIRKUK - A bomb blew up near a police patrol guarding a main bus station in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk wounding two policemen, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“I Was Nothing But A Fucking Hired Gun In Vietnam. Paid By The Rich, To Fight For The Rich”

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: September 08, 2005
Subject: The Things We Do To Be Free

The Bush Administration continues to commit murder in Iraq, because that's the law.

When I was a young man in Vietnam, I thought I had the right to serve my country any place in the world. Vietnam was so poor when I got there, I was sure President Nixon made a mistake.

When Vietnamese civilians looked at me, I could see the hatred in their eyes.

I could not imagine what this country had, that was so important to America. Bombing Vietnam, was like bombing the poor in Mississippi.

One day at a time, I finally figured out that the entire war was a lie.

I was nothing but a fucking hired gun in Vietnam. Paid by the rich, to fight for the rich.

I no more belonged in Vietnam, than the Vietnamese belonged in our own Civil War.

My God, the bullshit that young soldiers believe.

I was owned and operated by the Green Machine. I did exactly what the officer gang members told me to do. I was a member of group think.

If I had an opinion of my own, I kept my mouth shut.

It is amazing the power Authority has. It was an extension of the authority my parents had in my early life.

The military contaminated my belief system, until I no longer defined my reality.

If I had known in Vietnam, what I know today, I would have walked into the orderly room, and told my Commanding Officer, that my tour of duty in Vietnam was over.

I had a vet friend do that in 1970, and he is one of the biggest heroes of my life. He is freer today, than he has ever been in his life.

My God, the things we do to be free.

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
September 8, 2005**

“What If You Don't Have A Boat?”

September 9, 2005 Eugene Robinson, columnist, Washington Post [Excerpt]

To be poor in America was to be invisible, but not after this week, not after those images of the bedraggled masses at the Superdome, convention center and airport.

No one can claim that the post-Reagan orthodoxy of low taxes and small government, which does wonders for the extremely rich, also inevitably does wonders for the extremely poor.

What was that about a rising tide lifting all boats? What if you don't have a boat?"

“The Federal Government Is In The Hands Of A Clique Of Wealthy People”

[Thanks to Richard P, who sent this in.]

September 7, 2005, Editorial, Rutland Herald [Excerpt]

In another sense, Katrina has shown that the United States is becoming more like a Third World nation and less like a democracy.

The federal government is in the hands of a clique of wealthy people mainly concerned with perpetuating their privileges while neglecting the needs of the people.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

***Recruiting For The Resistance:* U.S. Command Faking Arrests Of “Insurgents”**

Nearly every day, the U.S. military in Iraq announces the capture of "suspected terrorists" snatched during house raids, in markets and after firefights. Yet most of those arrested get released, and the insurgency persists.

September 11, 2005 Larry Kaplow, Cox International Correspondent, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Baghdad, Iraq --- The U.S.-led dragnet for insurgents catches the harmless much more often than the dangerous, according to military figures, helping breed resentment among Iraqis who often languish in prison for months before the system sets them free.

Nearly 75 percent of all detainees arrested are freed because there is not enough evidence that they pose a threat, the Army says. Many --- about half --- are freed within days of their arrests by the units or divisions that captured them.

But thousands of others are sent to prisons, like the notorious Abu Ghraib facility near Baghdad, where they wait an average of six months before their release, according to 1st Lt. Kristy Miller, spokeswoman for the military's detention system in Iraq.

From the launch of the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003 through early last month, 42,228 Iraqi detainees had been sent into the system, and most had been released. As of Friday, there were 12,184 in detention.

U.S. officials assert that Iraq is the main front in the fight against terrorism. But the wide sweep for suspects in Iraq --- carried out with what critics say is faulty intelligence and ignorance about local culture --- helps produce anti-American rage and political controversy.

Last month, in an effort to encourage Sunni Muslims to support the draft Iraqi constitution, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani asked for a mass release of detainees. The U.S. military set free 1,000 prisoners.

Those releases were approved by a committee of U.S. military lawyers and employees of the Iraqi ministries of justice, interior and human rights, which plows through hundreds of files and recommends which detainees should be freed.

Two Iraqis on the committee described common U.S. mistakes that result in Iraqis being wrongly incarcerated. The committee members, both lawyers, were made available for interviews on the condition that they not be identified because of the risk they would face if it became public knowledge that they participate in decisions to detain Iraqis.

Among the cases they described, U.S. troops arrested an Iraqi because he had a poster, with Arabic lettering, showing a beheaded man. The soldiers thought it was the propaganda of terrorists and hauled him away to Abu Ghraib. Months later, the Iraqis reviewing the case quickly recognized that the poster was a benign tribute to Imam Hussein, beheaded in the 7th century and deeply revered by all Shiites.

The committee ordered the man's release. Many more Iraqis are wrongly detained based on the lies of manipulative informants, false positives in explosives tests or because they were simply passers-by swept up for being in the vicinity of an attack on U.S. troops, the lawyers said.

Nearly every day, the U.S. military in Iraq announces the capture of "suspected terrorists" snatched during house raids, in markets and after firefights. Yet most of those arrested get released, and the insurgency persists.

"Insurgency after insurgency has shown that if you mismanage detentions you create more insurgents than you get rid of," said Anthony Cordesman of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Racist Hysteria; Racist Lies

September 6, 2005 Gary Younge in Baton Rouge, The Guardian

There were two babies who had their throats slit. The seven-year-old girl who was raped and murdered in the Superdome. And the corpses laid out amid the excrement in the convention centre.

In a week filled with dreadful scenes of desperation and anger from New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina some stories stood out.

But as time goes on many remain unsubstantiated and may yet prove to be apocryphal.

New Orleans police have been unable to confirm the tale of the raped child, or indeed any of the reports of rapes, in the Superdome and convention centre.

New Orleans police chief Eddie Compass said last night: "We don't have any substantiated rapes. We will investigate if the individuals come forward."

And while many claim they happened, no witnesses, survivors or survivors' relatives have come forward.

Nor has the source for the story of the murdered babies, or indeed their bodies, been found. And while the floor of the convention centre toilets were indeed covered in excrement, the Guardian found no corpses.

During a week when communications were difficult, rumours have acquired a particular currency. They acquired through repetition the status of established facts.

"There is nothing to correct wild reports that armed gangs have taken over the convention centre," wrote Associated Press writer, Allen Breed.

"You can report them but you at least have to say they are unsubstantiated and not pass them off as fact," said one Baltimore-based journalist.

"But nobody is doing that."

Reports of the complete degradation and violent criminals running rampant in the Superdome suggested a crisis that both hastened the relief effort and demonised those who were stranded.

By the end of last week the media in Baton Rouge reported that evacuees from New Orleans were carjacking and that guns and knives were being seized in local shelters where riots were erupting.

The local mayor responded accordingly.

"We do not want to inherit the looting and all the other foolishness that went on in New Orleans," Kip Holden was told the Baton Rouge Advocate.

"We do not want to inherit that breed that seeks to prey on other people."

The trouble, wrote Howard Witt of the Chicago Tribune is that "scarcely any of it was true - the police confiscated a single knife from a refugee in one Baton Rouge shelter."

"There were no riots in Baton Rouge. There were no armed hordes."

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)

25 Mind-Numbingly Stupid Quotes About Hurricane Katrina And Its Aftermath

[Thanks to Mike Hastie, Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in. He writes: I thought you might be interested in this. I just read an article on global warming, on the net, that was about Greenland melting. It's happening . Satellite pictures don't lie, the baby in the crib is crying. I want to be around, when the news hits the masses in denial. I want to smell the shit in their pants. Must go, I can feel an edge coming on. See you in the trenches in D.C. It's still great to be alive, the truth always clears my stuffy nose.]

From Daniel Kurtzman, Your Guide to Political Humor.

"I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees."

President Bush, on "Good Morning America," Sept. 1, 2005, six days after repeated warnings from experts about the scope of damage expected from Hurricane Katrina

"We've got a lot of rebuilding to do ... The good news is - and it's hard for some to see it now - that out of this chaos is going to come a fantastic Gulf Coast, like it was before. Out of the rubbles of Trent Lott's house - he's lost his entire house - there's going to be a fantastic house. And I'm looking forward to sitting on the porch." (Laughter)

President Bush, touring hurricane damage, Mobile, Ala., Sept. 2, 2005

"Considering the dire circumstances that we have in New Orleans, virtually a city that has been destroyed, things are going relatively well."

FEMA Director Michael Brown, Sept. 1, 2005 (Source)

"I have not heard a report of thousands of people in the convention center who don't have food and water."

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, on NPR's "All Things Considered," Sept. 1, 2005

"Well, I think if you look at what actually happened, I remember on Tuesday morning picking up newspapers and I saw headlines, 'New Orleans Dodged the Bullet.' Because if you recall, the storm moved to the east and then continued on and appeared to pass with considerable damage but nothing worse."

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, blaming media coverage for his failings, "Meet the Press," Sept. 4, 2005

"I mean, you have people who don't heed those warnings and then put people at risk as a result of not heeding those warnings. There may be a need to look at tougher penalties on those who decide to ride it out and understand that there are consequences to not leaving."

Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA), Sept. 6, 2005

"You simply get chills every time you see these poor individuals...many of these people, almost all of them that we see are so poor and they are so black, and this is going to raise lots of questions for people who are watching this story unfold."

CNN's Wolf Blitzer, on New Orleans' hurricane evacuees, Sept. 1, 2005

"What didn't go right?"

President Bush, as quoted by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), after she urged him to fire FEMA Director Michael Brown "because of all that went wrong, of all that didn't go right" in the Hurricane Katrina relief effort.

"Now tell me the truth boys, is this kind of fun?"

House Majority Leader Tom Delay (R-TX), to three young hurricane evacuees from New Orleans at the Astrodome in Houston

"We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God did."

Rep. Richard Baker (R-LA) to lobbyists, as quoted in the Wall Street Journal

"Louisiana is a city that is largely under water."

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, news conference, Sept. 3, 2005

"I also want to encourage anybody who was affected by Hurricane Corina to make sure their children are in school."

First Lady Laura Bush, twice referring to a "Hurricane Corina" while speaking to children and parents in South Haven, Mississippi, Sept. 8, 2005

"It's totally wiped out. ... It's devastating, it's got to be doubly devastating on the ground."

President Bush, turning to his aides while surveying Hurricane Katrina flood damage from Air Force One, Aug. 31, 2005

"Last night, we showed you the full force of a superpower government going to the rescue." MSNBC's Chris Matthews, Sept. 1, 2005

"You know I talked to Haley Barbour, the governor of Mississippi yesterday because some people were saying, 'Well, if you hadn't sent your National Guard to Iraq, we here in Mississippi would be better off.' He told me 'I've been out in the field every single day, hour, for four days and no one, not one single mention of the word Iraq.' Now where does that come from? Where does that story come from if the governor is not picking up one word about it? I don't know. I can use my imagination." Former President George Bush, who can give his imagination a rest, interview with CNN's Larry King, Sept. 5, 2005

"We just learned of the convention center - we being the federal government - today."

FEMA Director Michael Brown, to ABC's Ted Koppel, Sept. 1, 2005, to which Koppel responded " Don't you guys watch television? Don't you guys listen to the radio? Our reporters have been reporting on it for more than just today."

"I don't want to alarm everybody that, you know, New Orleans is filling up like a bowl. That's just not happening."

Bill Lokey, FEMA's New Orleans coordinator, in a press briefing from Baton Rouge, Aug. 30, 2005

"FEMA is not going to hesitate at all in this storm. We are not going to sit back and make this a bureaucratic process. We are going to move fast, we are going to move quick, and we are going to do whatever it takes to help disaster victims."

FEMA Director Michael Brown, Aug. 28, 2005

"I understand there are 10,000 people dead. It's terrible. It's tragic. But in a democracy of 300 million people, over years and years and years, these things happen."

GOP strategist Jack Burkman, on MSNBC's "Connected," Sept. 7, 2005

"Thank President Clinton and former President Bush for their strong statements of support and comfort today. I thank all the leaders that are coming to Louisiana, and Mississippi and Alabama to our help and rescue. We are grateful for the military assets that are being brought to bear. I want to thank Senator Frist and Senator Reid for their extraordinary efforts. Anderson, tonight, I don't know if you've heard - maybe you all have announced it -- but Congress is going to an unprecedented session to pass a \$10 billion supplemental bill tonight to keep FEMA and the Red Cross up and operating."

Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), to CNN's Anderson Cooper, Aug. 31, 2005, to which Cooper responded:

"I haven't heard that, because, for the last four days, I've been seeing dead bodies in the streets here in Mississippi.

"And to listen to politicians thanking each other and complimenting each other, you know, I got to tell you, there are a lot of people here who are very upset, and very angry, and very frustrated. And when they hear politicians slap - you know, thanking one another, it just, you know, it kind of cuts them the wrong way right now, because literally there was a body on the streets of this town yesterday being eaten by rats because this woman had been laying in the street for 48 hours. And there's not enough facilities to take her up. Do you get the anger that is out here?"



If You Can't Be A War Profiteer, Be A Disaster Profiteer

Sep 10 Reuters Limited [Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Companies with ties to the Bush White House and the former head of FEMA are clinching some of the administration's first disaster relief and reconstruction contracts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

At least two major corporate clients of lobbyist Joe Allbaugh, President George W. Bush's former campaign manager and a former head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, have already been tapped to start recovery work along the battered Gulf Coast. One is Shaw Group Inc. and the other is Halliburton Co. subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root. Vice President Dick Cheney is a former head of Halliburton.

Bechtel National Inc., a unit of San Francisco-based Bechtel Corp., has also been selected by FEMA to provide short-term housing for people displaced by the hurricane. Bush named Bechtel's CEO to his Export Council and put the former CEO of Bechtel Energy in charge of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

But the web of Bush administration connections is attracting renewed attention from watchdog groups in the post-Katrina reconstruction rush. Congress has already appropriated more than \$60 billion in emergency funding as a down payment on recovery efforts projected to cost well over \$100 billion.

"The government has got to stop stacking senior positions with people who are repeatedly cashing in on the public trust in order to further private commercial interests," said Danielle Brian, executive director of the Project on Government Oversight.

Allbaugh formally registered as a lobbyist for Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root in February.

In lobbying disclosure forms filed with the Senate, Allbaugh said his goal was to "educate the congressional and executive branch on defense, disaster relief and homeland security issues affecting Kellogg Brown and Root."

Allbaugh is also a friend of Michael Brown, director of FEMA who was removed as head of Katrina disaster relief and sent back to Washington amid allegations he had padded his resume.

On Friday, Kellogg Brown & Root received \$29.8 million in Pentagon contracts to begin rebuilding Navy bases in Louisiana and Mississippi. Norcross said the work was covered under a contract that the company negotiated before Allbaugh was hired.

Allbaugh's other major client, Baton Rouge-based Shaw Group, has updated its Web site to say: "Hurricane Recovery Projects -- Apply Here!"

Shaw said on Thursday it has received a \$100 million emergency FEMA contract for housing management and construction. Shaw also clinched a \$100 million order on Friday from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Shaw Group spokesman Chris Sammons said Allbaugh was providing the company with "general consulting on business matters," and would not say whether he played a direct role in any of the Katrina deals. "We don't comment on specific consulting activities," he said.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Bush Uses Hurricane Emergency As Excuse To Cut Construction Workers Wages

9.9.05 By Yochi J. Dreazen, Wall St. Journal

Later in the day, the White House said it was suspending in the disaster area so-called Davis-Bacon rules requiring prevailing wages be paid to workers on federal contracts.

Republicans praised the executive order temporarily waiving the rules, which they said would fuel job growth in the hurricane region, but Democrats and their organized-labor allies accused the White House of exploiting the tragedy to accomplish a conservative goal.

The enormous amounts of federal money beginning to pour into hard-hit areas across the Southeastern U.S. are beginning to set off a gold rush reminiscent of corporate America's efforts to profit from the reconstruction of Iraq, and many companies winning Katrina-related contracts also have multibillion-dollar contracts there.

The White House wage order, meanwhile, added fuel to the partisan tensions already raging since the storm hit.

At issue are prevailing-wage requirements put into law as part of the Davis-Bacon Act of 1931, one of organized labor's biggest legislative victories.

Republicans have long hated the bill, which they say impedes the free flow of labor and adds unnecessary expense to federal projects. Shortly before leaving office in

1992, President Bush's father issued an executive order exempting hurricane-damaged parts of Florida, Louisiana and Hawaii from the Davis-Bacon regulations, a move rescinded by President Clinton.

President Bush's move yesterday marked the first time his administration has suspended the rules, and was hailed by many Republican lawmakers. In a statement, Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (R., Cob.) said it would save 'vital time and money in reconstruction efforts.'

Democrats and union leaders attacked the move, with AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney saying it was "unbelievable and outrageous that the White House would lift the time-tested standard for ensuring quality work and decent living standards for taxpayer-financed reconstruction."

Received:

Theory

From: XXX
To: GI Special
Sent: September 09, 2005
Subject: Theory

I was reading in the paper today, that Katrina has not only killed scores of people but, has wiped out hundreds of thousands of jobs. I was also thinking about some of the convoluted "strategies" that were developed by various levels of our fine government, to "handle" the disaster - only after it had taken place.

I was thinking about how the government thought it would be better to save people, by not rescuing them; thus making the "stronger" among them leave, while the less capable people at the moment were just sort of left alone to suffer and die.

That's pretty much been the admitted strategy now, and has pretty much been fully adhered to; as evacuators have exaggerated the risks of going into save people, and all the aid agencies have been pretty much been hamstrung in their efforts.

So, my theory is - that maybe all this ill preparation and diversion of resources, was a little more planned than most people are willing to admit.

I'm thinking that maybe it's not just callous selfishness on the part of the white folk that caused the whole situation to become what it was but, maybe there is something even more sinister behind the immediate selfishness.

What I'm thinking is, that it seems to be a little coincidental that hundreds of thousands of poor people are left without jobs, right when the military is not meeting its recruitment goals.

Isn't it the right-wingers who are always saying that the military cannot recruit because, "the economy is too good"?

How shit do they want the economy to become???

Maybe the economy is too good, until there are enough poor people in uniform to pillage for resources?

What do you think?

REPLY:

Your question opens the door to taking up the whole area of the actions of the government, and the degree to which effects do or do not flow from deliberately chosen courses of action.

What some people have a hard time accepting is that the U.S. ruling class can have a government acting on their behalf that is totally incompetent. It's more comforting to think everything is part of an evil grand plan, since that is less frightening to many, who at the same time hate the government, for the right reasons, but are terrified of trying to reorganize society without it.

A parallel is the common delusion among severely neglected and or/abused children that the parent(s) are doing "it" on purpose, for some reason only they know, but which is about the child. That, at least, means the parent(s) are not utterly unconcerned with the child except as an occasional object for abusive gratification: an ice cold indifference which the child finds too terrifying and disintegrating to admit. So, it's must be all part of some plan or other for some secret reason or other: "they must have their reasons."

What the shrinks call paranoia, and which finds expression among some adults as elaborate political conspiracy theories, is not an expression of fear, as commonly misunderstood, but an expression of hope. If they plot against me, at least they care enough to plot against me, I am the center of their attention, and at least they are competent enough to carry out grand conspiracies. At least it's not just ever-escalating chaos: there is order, design, planning; some form of stability.

The alternative is to accept that those who rule society are not only hostile, malevolent, greedy, selfish, and utterly without compassion, and really don't give a shit whether we live or die as long as they get theirs, which has always been true, but in addition have decayed into an incompetent, hopelessly useless pack of predators incapable of holding society together, even on their terms. "Mere chaos is loosed upon the world."

Reformers find that too terrible to contemplate.

Revolutionaries do not.

If you scratch a conspiracy theorist, you find a reformist hiding underneath, busy sewing hopelessness and despair among us by their propaganda that the rulers are all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-powerful, busy organizing the most elaborate conspiracies, one after another. The silly idiocy about how it was really the Bush government attacked the World Trade Center 9/11 is a classic example.

The truth is those who rule us are a pack of incompetent fools who have long ago outlived their usefulness, unable to shape the course of events except in ways that lead to further disasters and failures without end. They have the Midas touch in reserve: everything they touch turns to shit.

They have forfeited “the mandate of heaven,” as it was traditionally expressed in China in ancient days, when the people rose in mass revolution against some worthless, useless, incompetent, greedy Emperor and the fools in his government.

Far more civilized than much of our left, they did not delude themselves by elaborating tedious, endless theories about non-existent conspiracies. They acted.

Solidarity

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MORE:

09 September 2005 By Bill Fletcher Jr., TomPaine.com

Did the builders of the Titanic design it in such a way that they aimed to kill the occupants of steerage? Not at all. They did, however, design it so that if anyone was going to die, it would be those in steerage. Their deaths were acceptable for the builders of the Titanic. After all, those in steerage were considered a less-relevant population than the rich on the upper decks.

So, it did not have to be a conspiracy, because, in fact, the game of U.S. capitalism has been rigged from the beginning. We just happened to see the results in bloated bodies, crying and ill children, the devastation of a beautiful coastline, and the possibly permanent displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

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