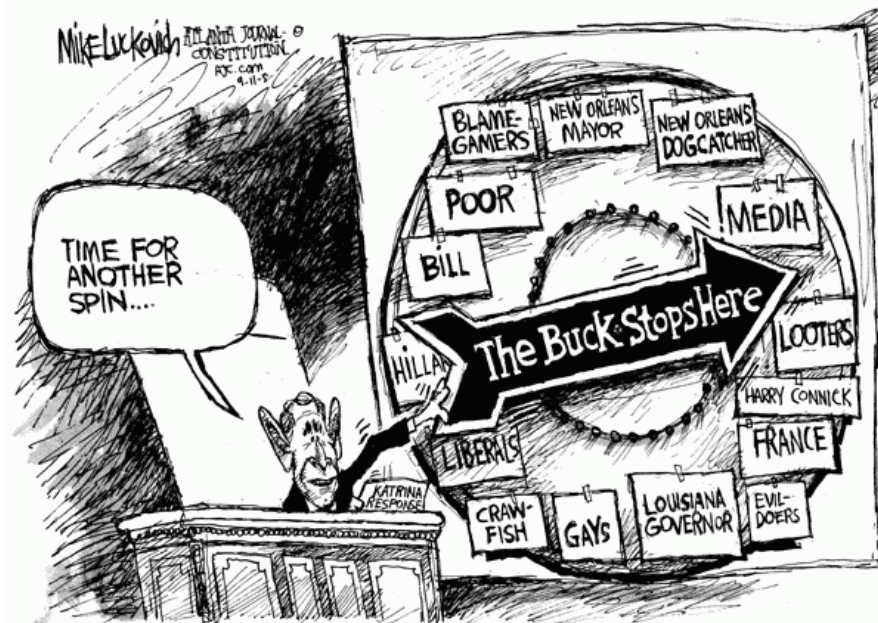


GI SPECIAL 3C52:



Returning Iraq Vets Treated Like Shit By Bragg Command

September 12, 2005
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

I returned from a visit to Fort Bragg, N.C., during the July 4 holiday weekend and was absolutely appalled at what I found there.

The soldiers returning from Iraq, where they have faced all kinds of dangers, heat, bugs and other problems that we don't even hear of — are being put up in World War II-era barracks?

These barracks are filthy; they have no air conditioning, no TV, no radio, not even a fan in the window. The laundry facility in my soldier's barracks didn't work and

hadn't for weeks. It was 90 to 97 degrees in North Carolina with humidity at 90 percent.

The soldiers were angry and upset. Most said that at least in Iraq they had air conditioning, TV or something to do. Most of them had been there for a week and would be there for one to two more.

How can the commanders at Fort Bragg justify treating our soldiers like this?

There is building going on all over Bragg. The Advanced Individual Training units are getting new barracks; the regular Army is getting new housing.

How about our incoming soldiers?

The ones who have been in Iraq and Afghanistan. Don't they deserve better?

Denise Kowalick
Waterbury, Conn.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Four U.S. Contract Workers Blown Up Near Basra

9.13.05 By TAREK EL-TABLAZY, The Associated Press

In the south, a roadside bomb killed four people near Basra — an attack that was a twin to a deadly bombing in the area last week.

Iraqi police said the dead were four American contract workers.

Palmer Sergeant Killed By Roadside Bomb



Kurtis Arcala, pictured in August 2004.

September 13, 2005 By JOSEPH DITZLER, Anchorage Daily News

WASILLA -- He dreamed of becoming a teacher and that dream took him into the military, onto a path he expected would lead to a college education.

The dream ended when Sgt. Kurtis Dean Kama-O-Apelila Arcala, 22, died Sunday in Iraq, the first casualty of the war from Palmer and the second from this state to die there in a week.

Arcala, assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division, lost his life to a roadside bomb alongside a convoy in Balad, Iraq, according to his family and friends. His mother said she was told he died in a hospital of his wounds.

Another soldier of the 3rd Infantry Division, Matthew Bohling, also 22, of Eagle River, was to be buried this week at Fort Richardson National Cemetery. Bohling died Sept. 5, also the victim of a roadside bomb in Iraq.

Arcala was a tank crew member but was in a Humvee when the convoy out of Kuwait was attacked, according to his family and friends.

Arcala was the son of Angela and John Berberich and brother to sisters Aurora, 18, and Kaitlin, 13, and brother Jason, 15. His family was notified Sunday.

"Yesterday at 8:30 a.m. two military people showed up at our door," Aurora Berberich said Monday.

Arcala was a week or so away from finishing his second tour of duty in Iraq, his friend and former high school basketball coach, Brandon Blake, said Monday.

He had just re-enlisted in the Army, his family said.

"He was just, first of all, a very giving and unselfish person," Blake said by phone from Palmer High School. "Even if he were having problems, he wouldn't show it. He was concerned with helping others first."

Arcala's mother works on the lunch line at Palmer High, said Blake, the school activities director. Arcala's father is the city wastewater plant operator for the city Public Works Department.

Angela Berberich and her son never discussed the possibility of his not coming back; she doesn't know his final wishes, she said Monday.

"I'm hoping his will is coming with his body," she said.

HIGH RISK ENVIRONMENT: DISHONORABLE MISSION: COME HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier takes cover during a military operation in Tal Afar on September 9, 2005. (US Navy/Photographer's Mate First Class Alan D. Monyelle/Handout/Reuters)

Sarai State of Affairs: Clueless Idiots In Command Boasting Again About Tal Afar "Victory" As They Help Build The Iraq Resistance: What A Surprise!

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in.]

Unfortunately, the only thing these commanders were trying to shape was public opinion back home. Instead of being destroyed, as Col. McMaster claimed, the insurgents apparently withdrew to other towns during the predictable U.S. warnings for civilians to evacuate Sarai and the aerial onslaught before the ground assault began.

September 12, 2005 By Ivan Eland, The Independent Institute

U.S. and Iraqi forces stormed into the Sarai neighborhood of Tall Afar this weekend, a northern Iraqi city believed to be a logistics center for insurgents in northern Iraq, only to find a ghost town.

U.S. commanders claimed the rebels had fled and were defeated. The former may be true, but let's hope U.S. military leaders haven't deluded themselves into believing the latter.

According to the Washington Post, Col. H.R. McMaster, commander of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, pronounced the conquest: "I think what we saw today was the effect of our counterinsurgency and security operations in Tall Afar in the previous weeks. The enemy then decided to bail out. They knew they were being destroyed."

Maj. Chris Kennedy, McMaster's executive officer, concurred with his boss's reasoning: "The shaping operations that we conducted before crossing into Sarai are the reason why we haven't seen the resistance we expected."

Capt. Noah Hanners, a platoon commander within the regiment also toed the party line: "That we had so little resistance shows the operation has been effective."

Unfortunately, the only thing these commanders were trying to shape was public opinion back home.

Instead of being destroyed, as Col. McMaster claimed, the insurgents apparently withdrew to other towns during the predictable U.S. warnings for civilians to evacuate Sarai and the aerial onslaught before the ground assault began.

If the rebels had stuck around to slug it out in a "Texas death match" with superior U.S. forces, one would have wondered about their competence.

Any capable guerrilla force knows that they will lose any toe-to-toe scrap with the most powerful military on the planet.

To reduce casualties among U.S. and Iraqi forces, the U.S. military bombarded the neighborhood by air for a week and also used heavy weapons, such as tanks, to "soften" up the area before the ground attack.

But powerful, muscle-bound militaries can often lose guerrilla wars, in which politics is as important as raw military power.

One of the objectives of insurgents is to induce the invader to use excessive force, thereby shifting the indigenous population's support from the invader to the rebels.

A second goal of the guerrillas is merely to keep an army in the field and launch hit-and-run tactics to convince the invading country's populace back home that its government is incurring unacceptable casualties and doing poorly in a faraway war. In Sarai, the rebels made progress in achieving both objectives.

Even after its Vietnam debacle, the U.S. military cannot effectively conduct counterinsurgency warfare.

In Vietnam, U.S. forces destroyed villages to save them.

The same is happening in Iraq and Tall Afar is a prime example. U.S. aerial bombardment has severely damaged the city.

The United States will provide reconstruction funds, but it will never be enough to compensate for the destruction and lives lost.

Another quote by Col. McMaster indicates that U.S. forces still don't get it: "...The No. 1 priority is being met by this operation, which is to defeat the terrorists so they can no longer prevent reconstruction from happening." In the eyes of many Iraqi citizens, however, it is the heavy U.S. bombardment of the city, not the terrorists, that has made reconstruction necessary.

Furthermore, the "terrorists" may not be defeated.

If U.S. forces restrained the use of heavy firepower, less physical damage and fewer Iraqi civilian deaths—but more U.S. casualties—would result.

Thus, a trade off exists between winning friends among the Iraqi populace—key to reducing the shelter afforded to the guerrillas—and keeping the support of the American people back home.

Yet to win the war, the United States must maintain the support of both the Iraqi and U.S. populations.

This no-win balancing act is a major argument for great powers to avoid faraway guerilla quagmires in the first place.

Astute insurgents fade away into the surrounding population when the dominant power tries to corner them—as the U.S. military was attempting in Sarai.

Only inexperienced or foolish guerrillas would have stayed to fight.

The goal of the rebels is to sustain a force that can fight another day on the insurgents' terms—picking off isolated pockets of U.S. and Iraqi forces and then melting away.

In fact, the Iraqi guerrillas have used this tactic in other cities in Sunni areas. Once the thinly stretched Iraqi and U.S. forces leave any occupied area, as they must to put out fires in other parts of the country, the rebels return to run the place.

This same phenomenon happened in Tall Afar only a year ago. According to U.S. commanders, this time Tall Afar will not fall under rebel control. We'll see.

TROOP NEWS

Veterans For Peace Cheered At New Mexico State Fair Parade

[Thanks to Debbie Clark, Veterans For Peace, Georgia, for posting.]

Some events of our lives carry a heft of spiritual connectedness that continues beyond their happening, and the action of twenty members of VFP from Albuquerque and Santa Fe in the State Fair Parade in Albuquerque was one of them.

12 Sep 2005 Kenneth E. Mayers, Veterans For Peace, Santa Fe, New Mexico

We looked them in the eyes as we passed and clapped for them when they responded; people signaled back with our two-fingered Vee, they smiled at us, they clapped back.

Four or five times we heard applause rolling with us along the parade route.

We were twenty members of Veterans For Peace with float and flags in the New Mexico State Fair Parade in Albuquerque on September 10th, 2005.

We were not the last applicants for the parade, but we were the last float, while the crowd -even after seeing and hearing ahead of us the 206 floats and high school marching bands and high school military, and a red, white and blue-flagged truck that proclaimed "We Will Do Anything For America," and even in the midst of the continuous whistles and hoots from two fire engines behind us- the crowd focused on Veterans For Peace as we passed.

Perhaps a third of the crowd returned our signals, some with one Vee close to their chests, others with a Vee in each hand stretched high and wide apart.

Great differences in response registered different personal feelings.

The crowd may have been tuned for us by a beautiful Pax Christi float directly ahead. Yes, an occasional Bronx cheer was heard, but that stuff was subdued compared to Peace Marches of the 1960's.

On being seen, we saw some faces of surprise, others of confusion. Some expressionless faces drew a second VFP glance, asking "Why aren't you with us?"

An hour and a half of that left us high for lunch together.

Some events of our lives carry a heft of spiritual connectedness that continues beyond their happening, and the action of twenty members of VFP from Albuquerque and Santa Fe in the State Fair Parade in Albuquerque was one of them.

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.

The Blogs Of War: "Our Lives Are In A Constant State Of Suck"

Their collective voice competes with and occasionally undermines the DOD's elaborate message machine and the much-loathed mainstream media, usually dismissed as MSM.

By John Hockenberry, Wired.com, Via Lisa Boucher, August 08, 2005, Vietnam Veterans Against The War

On the 21st-century battlefield, the campfire glow comes from a laptop. It's a real-time window on life behind the lines - and suddenly the Pentagon is on the defensive.

The snapshots of Iraqi prisoners being abused at Abu Ghraib were taken by soldiers and shared in the digital military netherworld of Iraq. Their release to the world in May last year detonated a media explosion that rocked a presidential campaign, cratered America's moral high ground, and demonstrated how even a superpower could be blitzkrieged by some homemade downloadable porn.

In the middle of it all, a lone reservist sergeant stationed on the Iraqi border posed a simple question:

I cannot help but wonder upon reflection of the circumstances, how much longer we will be able to carry with us our digital cameras, or take photographs and document the experiences we have had.

The writer was 24-year-old Chris Missick, a soldier with the Army's 319th Signal Battalion and author of the blog A Line in the Sand. While balloon-faced cable pundits shrieked about the scandal, Missick was posting late at night in his Army-issue "blacks," with a mug of coffee and a small French press beside him, his laptop blasting Elliot Smith's "Cupid's Trick" into his headphones.

He quickly seized on perhaps the most profound and crucial implication of Abu Ghraib:

Never before has a war been so immediately documented, never before have sentiments from the front scurried their way to the home front with such ease and precision.

Here I sit, in the desert, staring daily at the electric fence, the deep trenches and the concertina wire that separates the border of Iraq and Kuwait, and write home and upload my daily reflections and opinions on the war and my circumstances here, as well as some of the pictures I have taken along the way.

It is amazing, and empowering, and yet the question remains, should I as a lower enlisted soldier have such power to express my opinion and broadcast to the world a singular soldier's point of view?

To those outside the uniform who have never lived the military life, the question may seem absurd, and yet, as an example of what exists even in the small following of readers I have here, the implications of thought expressed by soldiers daily could be explosive.

Missick is just one voice - and a very pro-Pentagon one at that - in an oddball online Greek chorus narrating the conflict in Iraq. It includes a core group of about 100 regulars and hundreds more loosely organized activists, angry contrarians, jolly testosterone fuckups, self-appointed pundits, and would-be poets who call themselves milbloggers, as in military bloggers.

Whether posting from inside Iraq on active duty, from noncombat bases around the world, or even from their neighborhoods back home after being discharged - where they can still follow events closely and deliver their often blunt opinions - milbloggers offer an unprecedented real-time real-life window on war and the people who wage it.

Their collective voice competes with and occasionally undermines the DOD's elaborate message machine and the much-loathed mainstream media, usually dismissed as MSM.

Milbloggers constitute a rich subculture with a refreshing candor about the war, expressing views ranging from far right to far left. They also offer helpful tips about tearing down an M16, recipes for beef stew (hint: lots of red wine), reviews of the latest

episode of 24, extremely technical discussions of Humvee armor configurations, and exceptionally raw accounts of field hospital chaos, gore, and heroism.

For now, the Pentagon officially tolerates this free-form online journalism and in-house peanut gallery, even as the brass takes cautious steps to control it.

A new policy instituted this spring requires all military bloggers inside Iraq to register with their units. It directs commanders to conduct quarterly reviews to make sure bloggers aren't giving out casualty information or violating operational security or privacy rules.

Commanding officers shut down a blog that reported on the medical response to a suicide bombing late last year in Mosul. The Army has also created the Army Web Risk Assessment Cell to monitor compliance. And Wired has learned that a Pentagon review is under way to better understand the overall implications of blogging and other Internet communications in combat zones.

Strong opinions throughout the military ranks in and out of wartime are nothing new. But online technology in the combat zone has suddenly given those opinions a mass audience and an instantaneous forum for the first time in the history of warfare. On the 21st-century battlefield, the campfire glow comes from a laptop computer, and it's visible around the world.

"In World War II, letters basically didn't arrive for months," says Michael Bautista, an Idaho National Guard corporal based in Kirkuk whose grandfather served in World War II and who blogs as Ma Deuce Gunner (named for the trusty M2 machine gun he calls Mama). "What I'm doing and what my fellow bloggers are doing is groundbreaking."

Since World War I, the military has opened the letters soldiers sent back home from the battlefield and sometimes censored the dispatches of war correspondents. Now mail leaves the battlefield already open to the world.

Anyone can publicly post a dispatch, and if the Pentagon reads these accounts at all, it's at the same time as the rest of us.

The new policy requiring milbloggers to register their sites does not apply to soldiers outside Iraq, but nearly all of the bloggers contacted for this article say that the current system of few restrictions can't possibly last.

Army reservist Jason Hartley's popular and notoriously irreverent blog, Just Another Soldier, also provoked the higher-ups; last summer, his commanding officer ordered him to shut it down. Hartley wrote with a fuck-you swagger that may partly explain why he's not blogging anymore:

Being a soldier is to live in a world of shit. From the pogues who cook my food and do my laundry to the Apache pilots and the Green Berets who do all the Hollywood stuff, our lives are in a constant state of suck.

Hartley got a lot of mileage out of a post about a soldier who was assembling a rifle blindfolded. Another soldier in his unit, as a joke, handed the assembler a certain piece of his anatomy instead of the tool he asked for.

"I told the story and asked the question, Who is more gay, the guy who touches a dick, or someone who allows a soldier to touch his dick?" This pressing infantry-level controversy hit a chord with über-blogger and noted pundit-of-all-things-queer Andrew Sullivan. "Sullivan was kind and wrote that he liked my site," Hartley recalls.

The Pentagon won't say why, but it ordered Hartley to shut down his blog. He did for a while.

Then he resumed blogging a few months later, without asking permission, and was busted for defying a direct order and demoted from sergeant to specialist.

He chose not to file an appeal and has returned to civilian life, though he's still in the reserves. His memoir about his time in Iraq will be published next month by HarperCollins.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

September 13 IOL & By SLOBODAN LEKIC, The Associated Press & Reuters

Five mortar rounds also exploded around Baghdad, an interior ministry official said.

Two landed in the heavily-protected "green zone" which is home to the government and to the US and British embassies, but it was not immediately known if there were casualties

Two truck drivers delivering concrete blast walls from a factory in Iraqi Kurdistan were ambushed and killed in Baghdad. The blast walls are used throughout Baghdad to secure government buildings, hotels, embassies and other potential targets from suicide bombers.

One other man was injured in the incident in the southern Dora district of Baghdad.

One Iraqi soldier was killed and five wounded by a roadside bomb in Tal Afar on Tuesday.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

The Destruction Of The US Army

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”
--Proverbs, 16: 18-19

TD: At the bottom, you have angry military families, lowering morale, and the difficulties of signing people on to the all-volunteer army; at the top, generals who didn't want to be in Iraq in the first place and don't want to be there now.

Carroll: Well, they've been forced to preside over the destruction of the United States Army, including the civilian system of support for the Army - the National Guard and the active Reserves. This is the most important outcome of the war and, as with Vietnam, we'll be paying the price for it for a generation.

11 September 2005 TomDispatch.com, Interview With James Carroll [Excerpt]

TD: In March 2004, on the first anniversary of the invasion - and this was the piece with which you ended your book, Crusade - you wrote again, "Whatever happens from this week forward in Iraq, the main outcome of the war for the United States is clear, we have defeated ourselves."

Carroll: I was already instructed by the history of the twentieth century, summarized so well by Jonathan Schell in his book *The Unconquerable World*.

He cites numerous instances in which broad-based, national resistance movements couldn't be defeated even by massively superior military power.

It was his insight that the last century was rife with examples - the most obvious for Americans being Vietnam - where a huge superiority in firepower was irrelevant against even a minority resistance movement based in an indigenous population; and it's clear that this so-called insurgency in Iraq is a minority resistance movement, largely Sunni, and that it doesn't matter if it's a minority. There's an indigenous population within which it resides and which fuels it.

And all of that was quickly evident. In fact, I think it was evident to George H.W. Bush in 1991. It wasn't Vietnam we needed to learn from first in this case; it really was the first Gulf War and Bush's realpolitik decision to stop it based on the sure knowledge that there was no way of defeating an indigenous popular religious movement prepared to fight to the death.

TD: So where are we now as you see it?

Carroll: It's already become clear to people that we can't win this. Who knows what being defeated means?

I said we had lost because there's no imposing our will on the people of Iraq. That's what this constitutional imbroglio demonstrates. A month ago, Donald Rumsfeld was insisting that there had to be a three-party agreement. In August, it became clear that there would be none. So now there's a two-party agreement and the Sunnis are out of it.

Basically, this political development has endorsed the Sunni resistance movement, because they've been cut out of the future of Iraq. They have no share of the oil. They have no access to real political power in Baghdad. They have nothing to lose and that's a formula for endless fighting.

TD: I was struck by recent statements by top American generals in Iraq about draw-downs and withdrawals, all of them clearly unauthorized by Washington. At the bottom, you have angry military families, lowering morale, and the difficulties of signing people on to the all-volunteer army; at the top, generals who didn't want to be in Iraq in the first place and don't want to be there now.

Carroll: Well, they've been forced to preside over the destruction of the United States Army, including the civilian system of support for the Army - the National Guard and the active Reserves. This is the most important outcome of the war and, as with Vietnam, we'll be paying the price for it for a generation.

You know, in this way, we're now like the Soviet Union once it collapsed into Russia. When it could no longer pay the salaries of its soldiers, Russia fell back on its nuclear arsenal as its only source of power. In a way the Soviet Union never was, Russia is now a radically nuclear-dependent military power.

The Red Army doesn't really count for much any more. And we've done that to ourselves in Iraq. This is what it means to have lost the war already. We didn't need an enemy to do it for us. We've done it to ourselves.

TD: In the first column you wrote after September 11, 2001, you said, "How we respond to this catastrophe will define our patriotism, shape the century, and memorialize our beloved dead." Four years later, how do you assess our response to each?

Carroll: Patriotism has become a hollow, partisan notion in our country.

It's been in the name of patriotism that we've turned our young soldiers into scapegoats and fodder.

The betrayal of the young in the name of patriotism is a staggering fact of our post-9/11 response. The old men have carried the young men up the mountain and put them on the altar. It's Abraham and Isaac all over again.

It's the oldest story, a kind of human sacrifice, and that's what's made those cries of parents so poignant this August. But those cries also have to include an element of self-accusation, because parents have done it to their children. We've done it to our children.

That's what it means to destroy the United States Army. Night after night, we see that the actual casualties of that destruction are young men, and occasionally women, between the ages of 18 and 30. And this in the name of patriotism.

What Kind Of Extremist Will You Be?

I will be the kind of extremist who believes that our country can be taken back from the corporatocracy and unethical war profiteers that have control of it now.

September 8, 2005 by Cindy Sheehan, CommonDreams

*Early morning, April 04, a shot rings out in the Memphis sky,
Free at last, they asked for your life, But they could not take your pride.
In the name of love, one more in the name of love.
-U2: Pride (In the name of love)*

Most everyone who is reading this knows what happened to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 04, 1968. Some of you may even know what happened to my son, Spc. Casey Austin Sheehan on April 04, 2004.

If you don't know, Dr King and Casey were murdered by the same malevolent entities: People and ideologies that say that we have to be mortally afraid of the "ism" du jour and we, as Americans who have the "moral high-ground" in the world can send our innocent children to invade innocent countries and kill innocent people to fight the "ists" that go with the "isms."

In Vietnam we were fighting the evil Communists and in Iraq we are fighting the evil terrorists. Our war against Communism out-stayed its welcome in the 1980's and the military industrial war complex was running out of excuses to build bombs, tanks, bullets, ships, submarines, and soldiers; so in 2001, our leaders who serve the war machine had to switch our enemy of the state to terrorism.

Dr. King had the temerity to challenge the war machine and war racketeers on April 04, 1967 in his famous speech on Vietnam...and he paid for that bit of inspired, courageous, honesty with his life exactly one year later. Casey had the naïve gall to join the US Army

thinking he would be making the world a better, safer place... and he paid for that kind of immature (but honest) patriotic mistake with his wonderful life.

Casey was a brave and honorable man who we were told volunteered to go on the mission that killed him to save the lives of his buddies. He was shot in the back of the head and died a little while later in a medic's station while a medic was trying to hold his brains in while the doctors tried to keep him breathing. We have heard many wildly disparate stories of Casey's last few minutes on earth, I don't know if we will ever know the truth. One thing I do know, however, is that like Dr. King, Casey's murder will be to advance the cause for peace and in the name of love.

I am wholly and completely convinced that this aggression on Iraq is illegal, immoral and appalling unnecessary. I am also convinced that one drop of blood was one drop of blood too much to be shed for this abomination in Iraq.

Now oceans of blood—both Iraqi and American—have been spilled for ruinous and disturbing policies of very bad people in our government who have based their reasons for invasion and occupation on their twisted imaginations and their seemingly bottomless lust for power, profits, chaos and confusion.

Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote this from the Birmingham Jail in 1963 and it is so relevant today: We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.

I must regretfully admit that before my son was killed, I didn't publicly speak out against the invasion/occupation of Iraq. I didn't shout out and say: "Stop! Stop this insane rush to an invasion that has no basis in reality—don't invade a country based on cherry-picked, prefabricated intelligence and contemptible scare tactics!"

I didn't stand up and scream: "Congress, don't you dare abrogate your constitutional rights and responsibilities! Do not, under ANY circumstances give the keys to our country to power-drunk, irresponsible and reckless maniacs!"

When George threateningly stated in his disordered and defiant headlong rush to disaster: "If you're not for us, you're against us," I will regret forever not calling him on the phone and screaming: "I am SO against you and your repulsive policies, you self-important man. I am against killing innocent people and I am against you telling me it's unpatriotic to be against you and your murderous philosophy!"

Why, oh why, was I silent when the cowardly and capricious arm-chair warriors of the Pentagon sent my son and over a million other brave young Americans to an atrocious excuse (that never should have been fought in the first place) for a war without the proper equipment, armor, training, supplies, or planning?

I should have boldly strode up the Pentagon and said: "Look here, Donald, not only do you not go to war with the Army you "have", you make sure our precious life blood is well protected if you do send them off to fight and how about not sending our kids to die in the sand or soil of another country UNLESS it is absolutely necessary to defend our own sand and soil?"

If I had broken the bonds of my slavery to silence sooner, would Casey (and scores of others) still be alive? I don't know. There were and still are so many good people working for peace and justice and they have been for so many years.

One thing I do know, however, is that no matter how much I scream and cry and rail against God, country, and humanity, I cannot bring Casey back.

But, I have not shut up since Casey was killed, nor will I be silent until every last one of our nation's sons and daughters are brought back from this morally repugnant and ill-fated war!!

Nor, will I give up when this occupation is finished. I will continue fighting for the children of the world and make sure a tragedy of historic proportions like this never happens again. If I can save even one mother here or there from the pain and agony I'm going through, then it will have been so immensely worth it.

I encourage and challenge every citizen of the world to do one small thing for peace each day. Even if it is to nag your elected officials to demand the keys of our country back from the all but convicted felons, liars and self-proclaimed pro-life hypocrites who have them now.

Casey and Dr. King were both violently killed on April 04 in different years and during different wars...two wars that are really just two different sides of the same coin. I want their deaths to mean something. I want them to count for peace and justice, not violence and hatred.

I can feel my son's presence urging me on to save his buddies. I can hear him whispering in my ear and in my dreams: "Mom, finish my mission. Bring my buddies home alive" I can hear Dr. King's words similarly challenging me to action: "The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists will we be?"

Well, Casey, my son, my hero. Well, Dr. King, the hero of millions, I pledge to be the kind of extremist who works for peace with justice and who will never take "No" for an answer.

I will strive to hold the bad people in our government accountable for all of the heartache and emptiness they have caused our world by their deliberate lies and deceptions and by their misuse of power and their abuse of our nation's precious human resources.

I will be the kind of extremist who believes that our country can be taken back from the corporatocracy and unethical war profiteers that have control of it now.

I will be the kind of extremist who believes that the people of Iraq can rebuild their own country without the dangerous "help" of the American military presence and I will be the kind of extremist who strives to bring our kids home from the Middle East immediately.

If there ever was a time in our nation's history that required the passion and compassion of extremists, it is now: This very minute.

What kind of extremist will you be?

"An American withdrawal from Iraq and an Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories to the 1967 lines would do more to fight terrorism than any military action ever could." New America Foundation fellow Nir Rosen, reported Sep 11, 2005 by Jim Lobe, Asia Times

Who Are The "Terrorists"? **Where Is The War?**

September 10, 2005 By Yamin Zakaria [Excerpt]

When the armies of the tyrants pulverize humans and houses, with their missiles and bombs, it is called hunting 'terrorists' with an undeclared level of collateral damage, another word for dead women and children.

When the oppressed retaliate with martyrdom operations, it is called terrorism.

Exactly who is terrorising whom?

Who lives in fear and terror - the inhabitants in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan or those in the US, UK, Italy and Australia?

Who is delivering more terror, those dropping daisy cutters, cluster bombs and Napalm, or those shooting with outdated RPGs?

Not only do the tyrants attempt to portray themselves as Prophets, full of virtue but the most powerful ones go even further, as they expect the world to see them as innocent victims, while in reality they kill hundreds of thousands, rape and plunder distant lands and litter the world with their military bases, and they are the innocent ones?

Then, the invading tyrants have the audacity to question the morality and the courage of the martyrs (cowardly, weak etc), who died defending their homes and families.

How is it that invading soldiers, protected in their tanks and high-altitude planes, are absurdly portrayed as upright and courageous heroes? How is that courageous label reconciled when they are killing women and children, from inside armoured vehicles or 2 miles up in the cockpit of a \$40 million jet fighter?

The oppressors, from a safe distance, are using far more powerful (500lb, 1000lb etc) bombs, that are just as indiscriminate, as the little bombs (10lb, 30lb) used by the 'suicide' bombers?

It is the masses in the West that are being brainwashed to believe it is morally acceptable to kill women and children with cluster bombs from F16's, calling it collateral damage, yet it's outrageous and immoral when death visits in a 'suicide' bombing?

Most certainly, there is an intense drive to project 'suicide' bombings as anything but retaliation; otherwise the West is in danger of confessing their crimes.

Hence, they have resorted to a two pronged strategy; the first of which is to hire Muslim moderates who will issue some kind of dubious legal opinions with one track condemnation of martyrdom operations, secondly, they attribute martyrdom operations as entirely an internal phenomenon, totally unconnected to resisting foreign occupiers.

What impact images from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine have on individuals, no one can accurately predict, every individual has their own tolerance threshold; once crossed, this can drive people to retaliate.

In denial, the politicians and journalists are trying to build another 'missing-link,' to mythical radical Imam as the instigators of martyrdom operations, just like the missing-link found in Blair's 'dodgy dossier,' the 45 minute threat and the Niger link, confirming Iraq's mythical WMD's prior to the war! As if Hanif from the UK, who carried out the martyrdom mission in occupied Palestine, was not involved with any radical group and had no radical Imam lecturing him.

The real solution lies in addressing the primary cause, which is State Terrorism of the colonial west.

It is euphemistically hidden behind terms like 'foreign policy'.

These states unashamedly use their position and media spin, to label the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of innocents, as just - "foreign policy"!

Unfortunately many of the headless Muslim moderates, have also adopted such terms like 'foreign policy' blindly, to describe the slaughtering of Muslims, while they resort to terms like murder for the 52 killed in the London bombings; Is murder in a uniform not murder?

Are all human beings not equal?

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.

Religion Is Always And Everywhere A Question Of Class

[Given the tendency for endless silly blather about religion in Iraq, it may be useful to remember that it's a smokescreen hiding very real layers of Iraqi society, with their own very material class interests. The smokescreen is just that. The contest is for control of the oil money.]

2.16.05 By Abbie Bakan, Socialist Worker (Canada)

Karl Marx has been criticized for having a crude understanding of religion. But actually Marx developed a method of analysis that saw religion as an expression of the contradictory reality of human existence. As social relations changed, in Marx's view, so did religious beliefs and ideas.

Many of the ideas that Marx developed, in collaboration with his life-long comrade Frederick Engels, about religion and society are now widely accepted.

Christopher Hill, the late British historian and an expert on the rise of Puritanism — regarding the links between certain strands of Christianity and the rise of the industrial bourgeoisie — stated:

“All these ideas, of course, are familiar enough to historians today, thanks to the writings of Weber, Tawney and others. They have become almost commonplace. But they originally go back to Marx and Engels, and to no one else.”

German Philosophy

It was in his criticism of German idealist philosophy that Marx began to develop his own original method, including his understanding of the development of ideology and religious beliefs.

Marx drew from the idealist philosopher Hegel a focus on transformation and change.

He agreed with Hegel that conflict is the core of all development. But Hegel understood development, or dialectics, as a process that found resolution of contradictory patterns in the ideal — or the Absolute -- meaning God.

Marx said that Hegel had the dialectic upside down, “standing on its head”. Instead, Marx emphasized material experience as the central element in human existence and beliefs, not the idea of God.

Socialist theorist Alex Callinicos calls Marx's method the “secularization” of Hegel's dialectic.

Marx's method became known as “dialectical materialism.” As a young student, one of the first things Marx sought to understand was the contradictory nature of religious ideas.

Mechanical?

He rejected the mechanical materialism of contemporary philosophers like Fourier, for whom all activity was about the transformation of the material world into other material objects. Marx challenged the view that religion was simply an expression of ignorance or stupidity among those who were not educated in science.

Instead, Marx and Engels understood religious ideas as contradictory. According to Paul Siegel, author of *The Meek and the Militant: Religion and Power Across the World*, for Marx and Engels:

“Although the primary function of religion was to sanctify repressive institutions, because it dominated people’s thinking about the world and society around them, rebellious moods and movement among the oppressed in pre-bourgeois times — and even after — tended spontaneously to acquire a religious coloration and heretical cast. The aims and aspirations of social agitators were expressed through traditional religious ideas adapted to the needs and demands of the insurgent masses.”

Marx’s famous quote that “religion is the opiate of the people” is often taken out of context, suggesting that he approached religion simply as an addictive drug.

The full context of this quote is important. It was part of Marx’s Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, written in 1844, where Marx challenged the religious overtones of the Hegelian dialectic.

Opium was used as a pain killer, and Marx saw religion as both an expression of, and a way to relieve, the pain of the alienation inherent in capitalist society.

“Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.”

Marx also challenged his fellow socialists about the tactics to adopt regarding religion and the state.

A specific debate developed regarding the legal freedom of Jews in Germany.

In 1843, Marx wrote a short essay titled, “On The Jewish Question”. Here he argued against his compatriot Otto Bauer. Bauer held the view that Jewish emancipation was reactionary because it would legalize the expression of religion, and give voice to beliefs that were conservative and unscientific.

Instead Marx insisted that there was a difference between the right to religious freedom of expression — separate from the control of the state — and human emancipation from ideologies and conditions that were oppressive.

He insisted on the separation of religion from the state.

This was a promise of the bourgeois revolutions against the autocratic feudal ruling classes. But the promise was broken repeatedly when religious ideas could be used to serve the interests of the market.

For Marx, democratic freedom of religious expression was a precondition for emancipation, but it was only a reform within the system of class society. Real, human emancipation went much further.

Marx defended the democratic rights of Jews to freedom of religious expression without persecution. But he also argued that all people, Jewish and Gentile, would only really be free when the material conditions of poverty and alienation were eliminated.

Marx saw religion not as a specific body of spiritual beliefs, but as a general ideology.

The basic premise of all religion for Marx was that human liberation was to be achieved in a non-material after-life, rather than in the here and now.

The question Marx asked was why such an ideology of escape from this life, from the lived material reality of existence, was so appealing.

Emancipation for Marx meant the achievement of conditions in which there would be no desire to look for answers in an after-life, or in a projected spiritual authority that was greater than the collective abilities of human beings.

He believed the key to liberation rested with human action, where people would control their lives and produce for the purposes of human satisfaction.

Marx looked to a future when all human society could be “freed” from religion itself, because the conditions that generated the pain of alienation and human suffering would be eliminated.

OCCUPATION REPORT

So Much For That “Sovereignty Bullshit” Occupation Forces Arrest 2,300 In August

Sept 13 (KUNA)

Multi-national forces [that's a laugh] in Iraq arrested 2,300 "terrorists" during August and released 1,085 suspects following interrogation. [In an independent nation, foreign armies do not arrest thousands of people. But the idea that Iraq has any independence is another silly, stupid Bush lie. And check out how the Kuwait newspaper puts quotes around the word "terrorists." Even a Bush-loving newspaper can't report that Iraqis fighting for their freedom from a foreign occupation army are really terrorists. Duh.]

A statement issued by the forces said that the suspects had been detained for executing operations against coalition and Iraqi forces, adding that around 50 percent of them were released after interrogation for lack of substantial evidence.

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

Famous International Terrorist Chief Says Resistance Led By Iraqis, Not Foreign Fighters

September 13, 2005 USA TODAY

WASHINGTON - U.S. intelligence is struggling to expose elements of the insurgency in Iraq made up of former members of Saddam Hussein's regime, John Negroponte, the nation's intelligence chief, said in an interview Monday.

Though foreign fighters, mainly Sunni Muslim Arabs from Syria and Saudi Arabia, have grabbed headlines with suicide bombings that have killed hundreds of Iraqis, Negroponte said Iraqis dominate the insurgency.

Terrorist Pipeline Sets Itself On Fire: Resistance Not Involved This Time

2005/9/13 (AP)

A pipeline carrying crude oil from the rich fields near Kirkuk in northern Iraq to a refinery to the southwest sprang a leak and caught fire during a pumping test, a North Oil Co. official said Tuesday.

An Iraqi army official who does security work along the line, which has been regularly attack by insurgents, said company officials repeatedly were warned about technical problems along the line near the village of Qaryqat Safra, about 55 kilometers southwest of Kirkuk. Little had been done to maintain the pipe, according to

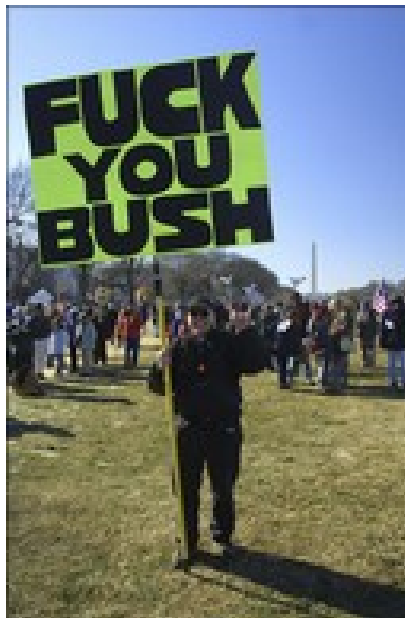
the official, who declined to give his name because he was not authorized to speak to reporters.

The fire was just the latest interruption to the flow of oil, a key to rebuilding Iraq's shattered economy, since insurgents began hitting the infrastructure after the U.S.-led invasion more than two years ago.

Crude oil flows through the line, which also links to pipelines feeding the export market in Turkey, were stopped about two weeks ago after an insurgent attack. The fire apparently was the result of pressure tests before reopening the line.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Loser



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro]

August 29, 2005 By William Raspberry, The Washington Post Company

"Come on, George. Let's leave this casino and go to bed. It's obviously not your night."

"Not now, honey. I think my strategy is starting to work. I haven't nailed the big one yet, but I've hit a few cherries, and that says to me the machine is starting to understand that I'm not going anywhere. You just wait -- my system is going to pay off."

"George, tell me you're not still listening to those friends of yours who sold you on this silly system. Most of them have never even been near a casino, let alone won any money in one. How can you fall for their crazy ideas?"

"Crazy? What's crazy about ending the tyranny of these evil slot machines? Do you have any idea what these machines have been doing to Americans and their families? Can you imagine what havoc and financial ruin they'll spread if we just let them go on spinning their seductive dreams? We've got to stop them, and I say now is the time and I'm the man to do it."

"But George, you've already lost 1,800 and more in this casino alone, not to mention the 223 you dropped down at the Taliban. We'll never recoup those losses. Why don't we just go to bed?"

"And dishonor the dollars we lost so far? I think we owe them something -- to finish the task that took their lives. Surely you're not asking me to cut and run now and abandon all those who put their faith in me. Don't you see I've got to stay the course? Not just for me but for the world."

"You're starting to sound like those neocon pals of yours. All we had to do, they said, was make a killing here at the Baghdad Bullion -- 'shock and awe,' they put it -- and the casino would cave. And not only that but the other casinos, seeing our power, would cave, too. They even claimed to have figured out a way that we wouldn't have to use our own money to do it. Well, George, it didn't work. The casino seems more dangerous than it ever was, and it is now attracting a bunch of really bad guys from all over the world."

"I'm glad you mentioned the world, sweetheart, because this isn't about one man and one machine. The evildoing slots aren't doing their life-destroying thing only at the Baghdad; they've struck in Bali, in Riyadh, in Istanbul and Madrid and London and Sharm el-Sheikh and elsewhere. They have no regard for human life. They have a strategy, and part of that strategy is they're trying to shake our will. Their goal is to drive the good guys into retreat so they can spread their slot empire across the world."

"Well, I won't retreat, no matter how determined they are to seize the civilized world by the throat. I'm prepared to take the fight right to the seizers' palace. Get me another bucket of coins."

"George, I didn't want to say this, but you're starting to sound like -- well, like an addict. I've been reading this little book about gambling addictions. Let me read you some of the symptoms: 'Spending a lot of time with other gamblers.

Continuing to gamble despite negative consequences. Gambling as a means to cope with uncomfortable feelings. Chasing losses with bigger bets.

Swearing to quit as soon as you get your money back. Borrowing, or taking out secret loans, to pay for gambling. Bragging about wins, but not mentioning losses. Spending more than originally planned.'

Any of that sound familiar? I don't think you planned to drop 1800 and change at the Baghdad, did you?"

"For heaven's sake, honey, I thought you were with me."

"I am, George, but a lot of people are having second thoughts. The polls are just awful, and more and more Americans think you made a mistake even going into the casino. Can't we just leave now?"

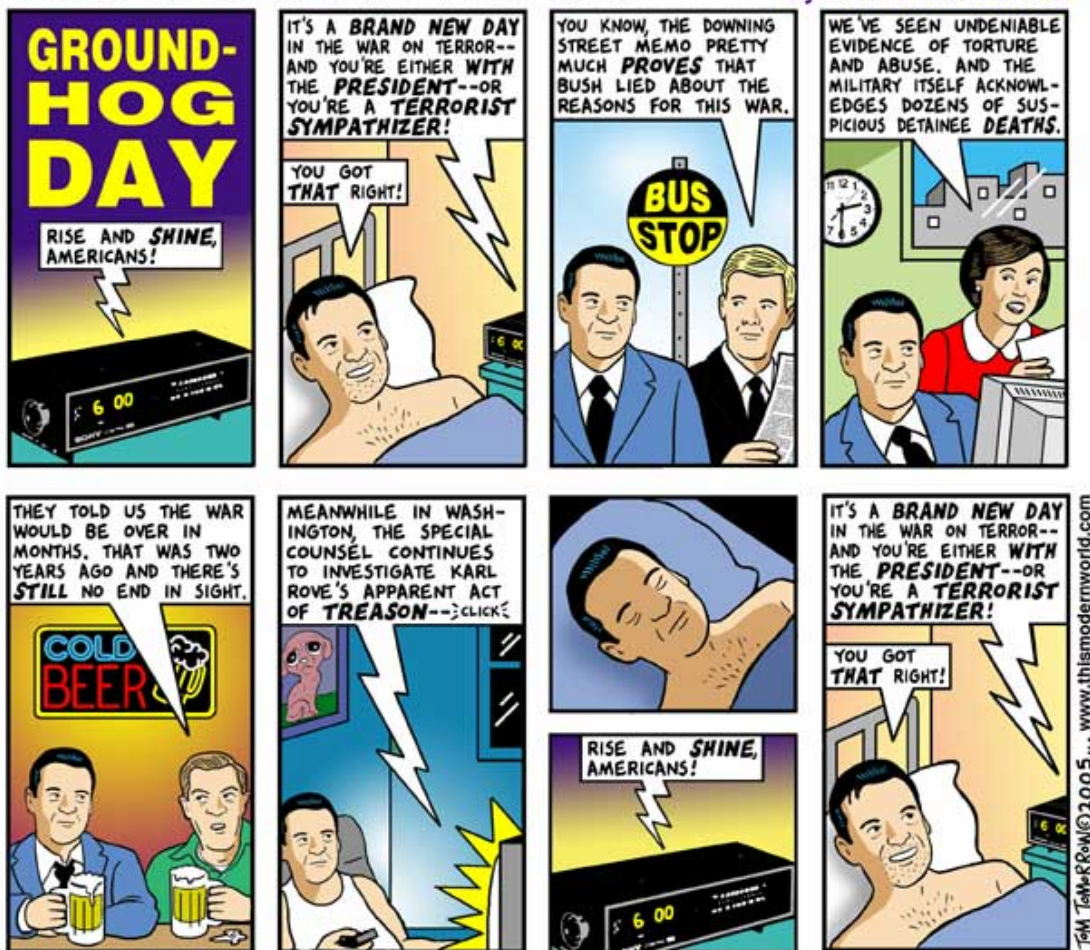
"Don't you see, if I leave now, I'll always be remembered as a loser. But suppose I stay and get a little help from my friends and beat this doggone machine. If I hang in there and win, historians will look at me and say, 'There was a man.' "

"And if you hang in there and lose?"

"Why don't you go on up. I'll see you as soon as I break even. Promise."

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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