

## **GI SPECIAL 3C62:**



# Something Worth Building

Comment: T

**Question:**

The question is, why did it take 9 months after the November election to call two (competing!) anti-war demonstrations in Washington, D.C.? Why did it take months for UFPJ and ANSWER to quit the nonsense and decide to have one demonstration 9.24?

And how many more troops will die before the anti-war movement is rebuilt to the point where it can achieve its goal: bringing them home now?

Reply: T

Maybe the place to start is to take a look under the surface.

Americans are turning against the war, more every day. In the most recent polls, 52% are for bringing troops home now.

That's good news.

As was true during Vietnam, the lower you go on the income ladder, the more widespread the opposition to the war. The wealthy are least opposed, of course, since they benefit most from the Empire, and their kids are safe at home, preparing to manage the family fortunes.

The pressure has built up so much that even some of the politicians in DC are making squeaking noises about the war, as the heat from below starts singeing their butts.

Mild squeaking noises to be sure. The Congressional critics aren't calling for bringing all the troops home **now**. They know who pays their campaign contributions, and its not Joe and Jane Nine-To-Five. It's the big corporate donors who benefit from the Empire.

There's no personal pressure either: their kids are safe at home too, preparing to manage the huge sums of money most Senators and Representatives pocket from campaign contributions during their very profitable Washington careers.

So they play it safe, critical of the war but not *too* critical. After all, their careers are at stake, and what are more dead U.S. troops and more dead Iraqis in the balance against their Congressional careers?

To sum up:

### **The Good News:**

There are more and more people turning against the war, and more and more people wanting the troops to come home now.

The anti-war movement, meaning the movement of people moving from support of the war to opposition to the war, has never been healthier or more powerful.

**Most importantly, it is spreading in the armed services as well. Where it really counts.**

To talk about "rebuilding the anti-war movement" is a denial of this powerful reality, as if the only dimension worth paying attending to is what happens among the squabbling opportunists on top of the movement.

### **The Bad News:**

The politicians edging towards opposition to the war will are followers at best, mostly careerists who will betray you in a heartbeat. They are loyal to their class and their contributors.

The biggest two operations focused on the war, UFPJ and Answer, are competing for followers and funding.

And you're right.

It's a betrayal of every U.S. troop and every Iraqi who dies in this miserable, dishonorable U.S. war for oil and Empire that they waited for months to do the right thing and have one, united action against the war 9.24 in Washington.

That's why neither members of the armed services, nor working class Americans, can rely on them for leadership. They're too opportunistic and tactically dim to provide leadership that can be trusted.

## **Lesson Learned**

It isn't the movement of ever increasing numbers of people into opposition to the war that's the problem. No "rebuilding" needed there, thank you very much.

It's the people running the store that just don't get it.

**What's the weakest link in the Empire?**

**The people in the armed forces.**

**As civilian Americans turn against the war, they also turn against the war, and often express the fiercest opposition, having their lives at stake.**

**Who does the leadership of the anti-war organizations devote the least effort to organizing?**

**The people in the armed forces.**

**With a very few honorable exceptions, the leaderships of the divided, competing, irresponsible anti-war organizations are, so far, irrelevant to getting that work done, off in another world.**

**They mouth abstract phrases about their concern for the troops, and turn their backs on them in real life. When was the last time you heard any of the peace movement big shots offer to go down to a local Guard or Reserve meeting and try to meet some anti-war troops?**

"Who, us?" "We have more important things to do." "Gee, I'd love to do that, but I'm busy next week a) rebuilding the anti-war movement; b) giving a speech; c) building a left alternative; d) getting ready for an interview on IndyMedia" or whatever other pathetic self-referential excuse comes in handy.

There is no gain, however, in pissing and moaning about their callous indifference.

How fortunate that members of the armed forces, veterans, military family members and responsible civilians have the skills, experience, intelligence, common sense, and commitment to put something together that works and could actually stop the war: organizing to give aid and comfort to members of the armed forces, reserves and Guard who are turning against the war.

Now there's something worth building.

Why wait?

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

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **One Soldier Killed And One Wounded By IED Near Al Taqaddum**

Sept. 23, 2005 MNF Release A050923a

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – One 1st Corps Support Command Soldier was killed and one was wounded by an improvised explosive device while conducting a combat logistics patrol at about 09:00 p.m. Sept. 22, near Al Taqaddum, Iraq.

The Soldiers were taken to a Coalition Forces medical treatment facility.

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### **Soldier In Ar Ramadi Killed By Small Arms Fire**

Sept. 23, 2005 MNF Release A050923e

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Soldier assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action by small arms fire Sept. 22 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq.

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### **Hardwick Guard Soldier Shot Dead**

September 23, 2005 WCAX

MONTPELIER, Vt. Another Vermont National Guard soldier has been killed in Iraq.

The military says 29-year-old Scott P-McLaughlin of Hardwick was shot early yesterday morning.

He was patrolling an observation post near Ramadi when he was killed.

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## **U.S. Armored Vehicle Destroyed In Ramadi**

Sep. 23, 2005 By STEVEN R. HURST, Associated Press Writer

**Ramadi Police Lt. Mohammed Tirbas Al-Obaidi said a roadside bomb destroyed an American armored vehicle, but it was impossible to say if there were casualties because U.S. forces blocked the area.**

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## **7 U.S. Troops Killed In Ramadi Since 9.1: Heavy Fighting Reported**

Sep. 23, 2005 By STEVEN R. HURST, Associated Press Writer

**Heavy fighting surged Friday in the Euphrates River city of Ramadi, police and hospital officials said, and the U.S. military reported the deaths of two more soldiers around the militant stronghold, scene of nearly one-quarter of 29 American deaths this month.**

The U.S. military declined to say if it was conducting a large offensive against Ramadi, but police and residents have reported heavy fighting there during the past week.

**Seven service members have died in or near the city since Sept. 1.**

**Ramadi police Capt. Nasir Al-Alousi said American forces airlifted equipment into the city stadium before dawn Friday. He said clashes erupted in that area and spread to an industrial zone after sunrise, continuing until at least midday.**

Dr. Omar al-Rawi at Ramadi General Hospital said two people were killed and eight wounded in the fighting.

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**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:**

## **BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Army soldiers from the 34th Armor Regiment search for insurgents and weapons in Baquba, north of Baghdad August 3, 2005. REUTERS/HO/US Army/Staff Sgt. Suzanne Day

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **U.S. & Australian Soldiers Wounded In Fierce Fighting**

23 September 2005 Aljazeera

**A soldier from the US-led coalition was wounded in an operation to arrest a top Taliban commander in southern Afghanistan, a governor and the US military said.**

**Coalition and Afghan troops came under attack from up to 20 rebels "firing small arms, heavy machine guns, mortar rounds and rocket-propelled grenades," the US military said in a statement on Friday.**

**"Coalition and US close air support and US attack helicopters arrived at the scene, blasting enemy positions killing 10 enemy combatants," it said.**

**A purported spokesman for the Taliban said six of the group's fighters were killed. Abdul Latif Hakimi also claimed that eight US and 10 Afghan soldiers were killed but the US and Afghan armies said only one Afghan had died.**

**Australia's defence department said earlier on Friday that an Australian special forces soldier was wounded in an operation in Afghanistan in which an Afghan soldier was killed.**

In a statement released in Australia, the department did not say when or where the clash took place but said the soldier was already back on duty.

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## **Occupation Staff Suck Up Money, Live Like Pigs; Afghan Rage Growing**

**"Why is it the international community in Kabul lives in luxurious guesthouses?" asks Bashardost. "They live like kings here and Afghans cannot even visit their offices - but an NGO in Europe, where do they live? Near the poor people they are helping."**

**"Of something like \$12 billion spent on aid and reconstruction in Afghanistan, it seems like 70 percent of it or more goes to the U.N. or non-Afghan NGOs," he says.**

21 September 2005 By Mitchell Protheero, Salon.com

It's been almost four years since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York City and Washington prompted an American invasion and occupation of Afghanistan to destroy the Taliban and the al-Qaida terror network it harbored. But despite last year's presidential election of Hamid Karzai and Sunday's apparently successful parliamentary elections, huge problems remain.

**Al-Qaida commander Osama bin Laden and Taliban leader Mullah Omar remain at large. There is increasing violence, not just by the Taliban insurgents but also by criminal groups. Drug cultivation and trafficking, often supported by corrupt government officials, is skyrocketing. Powerful warlords limit the writ of the Karzai regime, which has not dared to confront them; some of those warlords, who helped tear the country apart, may soon be elected governmental officials.**

**And many ordinary Afghans resent international aid groups, which they see as wasteful, ineffective and cut off from the people they are supposedly helping.**

**A few dozen kilometers north of Kabul, a former Talib says that the fight against the Americans is legitimate.** Mullah Kudus was once a spiritual and military leader of the Taliban and before that in the anti-Soviet jihad. Now he works a farm on the Shamali Plain, which lies at the foot of the Hindu Kush mountains and served as the front line during every Afghan war since 1979.

**"This government obliges people to fight against them for being servants of America," he says. "These Afghans have to say yes to anything America says."**

Although he does not threaten future rebellion, former planning minister Ramazan Bashardost makes many of the same points. Fired last year for unilaterally shutting

down all international aid organizations and NGOs without checking with his boss, President Hamid Karzai, Bashardost is running for parliament on a platform of reform, not just for Afghanistan, but also for the international community.

**"The NGOs, the U.N., and the large staff at the British, American, Japanese, French embassies has made a Mafia system of aid that lacks any transparency," he says while sitting in a campaign tent set up in a Kabul park.**

Bashardost argues that many NGOs are used for reconstruction efforts that would be best left to the Afghan private sector.

**He also notes a phenomenon that takes about five minutes in Kabul to notice. The international community - thousands of embassy personnel, aid workers, private contractors and U.N. staff - has almost no interaction with ordinary Afghans outside of their own limited local staff. Dozens of huge, white SUVs jam intersections, filled with armed security and covered in an alphabet soup of acronyms.**

**"Why is it the international community in Kabul lives in luxurious guesthouses?" asks Bashardost. "They live like kings here and Afghans cannot even visit their offices - but an NGO in Europe, where do they live? Near the poor people they are helping."**

**According to a Western analyst, the United Nations staff and some larger NGOs are all but barred for security reasons from interacting with Afghans not lucky enough to have jobs with them. They cannot ride in local taxis, eat in Afghan-run restaurants or shop in the many shops begging for foreign money. Most international organizations allow their employees to eat out in a handful of restaurants that not only cater to Western aid workers and journalists, but actively bar entrance by locals.**

There are also culture clashes between international workers and Afghans.

**Restaurants like the Elbow Room and Le Atmosphere serve cuisine that offers a half-decent imitation of high-end Western dining. Late at night these restaurants and a couple of nightclubs turn into drunken parties for aid workers, security consultants and U.N. officials as they spend their per diems. According to one owner, who preferred not to be identified, the eateries and clubs can take in around \$5,000 on a slow night, more than double that on weekends.**

But isolation from the communities they are supposed to help, or cultural conflicts, aren't the biggest problem, according to Bashardost.

**He singles out wasteful spending without accountability. "I am not against NGOs," he says. "I am against NGO-ism. My problem is financial: How much did you receive and how much did you spend? I want to ask them why logistics account for 60 percent or more of their budget. The donors cannot go to Kandahar and see the school people said was built. They cannot check the quality of the school or the road project. I am trying to protect Afghans and the donors from this waste."**



**Khan Mohammed Donishgo, a journalist with the Hindu Kush News Agency, also charges that not enough aid money is reaching its intended target, the Afghan people.**

**"Of something like \$12 billion spent on aid and reconstruction in Afghanistan, it seems like 70 percent of it or more goes to the U.N. or non-Afghan NGOs," he says.**

**"We know what happens here; a \$100,000 project is awarded to an American contractor and gets subcontracted down to another contractor for \$80,000 and then down again and again until it reaches the Afghans as a \$20,000 project. We see it all the time."**

**Despite these achievements, I never heard an Afghan praise the international aid effort. Afghans are angry because they see aid workers driving around in big cars, while the pace of change in their impoverished country is excruciatingly slow. The vast majority of places outside Kabul have not been significantly helped: Perhaps now a medical clinic is open within a six-hour donkey ride, where there wasn't one before.**

**And it is clear that the security situation is weakening.**

**Italian diplomat Antonio Maria Costa is aware of the problem. He told me last month that if he could, he'd "cut a lot of salaries and sell a lot of these 60,000-euro Land Cruisers that every international staffer seems to drive. I'd make a lot of staffers take Fiat taxis, if it were up to me."**

**"In this government, there are many government ministers and other people involved, not only little business people, but very big people, who control all the borders and the exports." [The opiate dealer] says his group does "not have to bother guarding our convoys because we buy everyone who can bother us." He uses a profane Afghan expression to explain: "Before you enter a house of a village elder, you pay the whole village," he says laughing. "Then the elder will] even let you fuck his wife."**

**As for the U.S. military presence, he shrugs. "They never bothered us even during the war and they don't bother us now."**

**With rumors - in some cases later backed by arrests - that many high-ranking officials in the current government are involved in the drug trade, as well as trafficking by warlords opposed to the Taliban, Costa says there has been a tendency by American and coalition forces involved in the hunt for al-Qaida targets to turn a blind eye to trafficking by allies.**

**Another major problem cited by Donishgo, the journalist, is Karzai's decision not to ban former warlords from the new parliament. Only a few dozen potential candidates were excluded for failing to disarm their militias. Any warlord or drug lord who bothered to try to look legitimate was allowed to run, according to Afghan and Western rights groups.**

**Karzai, according to many analysts and observers, has lost credibility, not just because of the perception that he is a pawn of the West, but because of his**

reluctance to confront warlords, who will likely become legitimate officials in the coming weeks as election returns are counted. Karzai and his backers argue that kicking powerful warlords out of public life is dangerous and could lead to new insurgents coming from the Tajiks and Uzbeks.

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

## TROOP NEWS

# Rose Gentle In USA For 9/24

**[Her son was killed in Iraq. She lives in Scotland and leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now.]**

September 21, 2005 Wes Hamilton, Veterans For Peace

**I want to thank all of the NW VFP chapter members who contributed to our effort to bring Rose Gentle over to the US to be a part of the events leading up to 9/24. Rose arrived in the DC on Tuesday.**

**She arrived in time to join the convergence of families in Baltimore as the Bring Them Home Now tour buses completed their historic march across the country. She and Cindy Sheehan finally had a chance to meet. I am told they hugged for a long time. It's hard to imagine the loss they have suffered, and the courage they have shown to find the truth. We have done something amazing.**

I also wanted to share with you some of the highlights of Rose's journey to America. When she arrived at Glasgow airport to catch her flight, the Scottish media was waiting to greet her. There were dozens of TV cameras, reporters, and photographers taking pictures and pleading for comments.

**As I have said before, Rose is the face of the loss and tragedy of the war in the United Kingdom. She handled it typically well, but the entourage surprised the airlines. When they saw all the media, they must have thought she was a rock star or something, so they bumped her up to first class. I must say, if anyone deserves that it's Rose.**

When she arrived in Philadelphia to go through customs, they pulled her aside for a game of 20 questions. They wanted to know why she was coming to the US, who was she going to see, what was she going to do, whether she was being paid for her "services"? **It was apparently obvious this Scottish Mum was a real treat to national security. Perhaps they thought she was the lead element of an invasion from Scotland. They even asked her if she was bringing in any fruit with her. We're talking serious threat here.**

In any event, after they called our own Judy Linehan to confirm Rose's "story", they let her in. But not before she tried to negotiate with them to send her home first class if they weren't going to allow her to stay.

Today Rose and the other family members are at the Washington Monument setting up the Arlington memorial. She had never seen it before. When I spoke with her, she was clearly moved by it. She said it one of the most visually powerful displays she had ever seen. I felt her pain when she said she planned to organize similar memorials back home for the British soldiers who have died. She felt certain, even though the numbers a fewer, it would have a similar impact.

**Finally, for those of you who intended to contribute, and haven't sent it off yet, I want to encourage you to do so as soon as you can. We have received contributions totaling \$540. The flight alone cost us just over \$700, and we want to contribute to the MFSO for some of Rose's lodging and meal expenses. Anything you can send would be appreciated, and remember it is tax deductible because it is a donation to VFP.**

Please make your checks payable to: VFP #109 (indicate it is for Rose Gentle)  
Mail your checks to:  
Veterans For Peace # 109  
P.O. Box 6275  
Olympia, WA 98507

Again thank you for your support. See you in DC.

In peace and solidarity,  
Wes Hamilton  
Rachel Corrie Chapter VFP #109  
(serving you in the UK)

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## **Pentagon Report Finds Muslim Society Doesn't Want Liberation *By* U.S.; Wants Liberation *From* U.S. Backed Tyrants**

09/17/05 WASHINGTON, MENL

A Pentagon advisory board has released a report that.....said that unlike those who lived in East Bloc states, Muslims do not see the United States as their liberator.

**"There is no yearning-to-be-liberated-by-the-U.S. groundswell among Muslim societies -- except to be liberated perhaps from what they see as apostate tyrannies that the U.S. so determinedly promotes and defends," the Pentagon board said in a report.**

The 102-page report by the Defense Science Board reviewed U.S. information policy toward the Arab and Muslim world as part of an effort to stem the tide of anti-Americanism.

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## Reporters Catch Nit-Wit General With His Thumb Up His Ass

September 23, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Transcript, Special Defense Department Operational Update Briefing [Excerpt]

**Presenter: Deputy Commander, Multinational Force-Northwest, Brig. Gen. Kevin Bergner**

GEN. BERGNER: **Charlie, let me start off by saying I said 80 percent of the network has been affected by our operations**, and when I say affected I mean in terms of either disrupting the flow of resources to them, disrupting the flow of people that participate in those terrorist acts, disrupting the leadership, and so forth.

Since January, we have captured or killed 80 senior leaders -- and by that, I'd say mid- to senior-level leaders -- that we know were part of the al Qaeda network in northern Iraq. And that's just the people that we captured or detained. That doesn't count the effectiveness of our operations against their resources and their support bases.

**Q Well, "by quantify it," 80 percent is a pretty specific figure. If you say you've captured 80 of the mid- or high-level leaders, does that mean there were a hundred of them; there are only 20 left? I mean, how do you --**

GEN. BERGNER: Yeah, it's a much more dynamic assessment than that, Charlie. And you know, you have people that move all around this network. You have guys that are killed and captured, and someone will step up and try to take their place. **So there's no single basis to say what their current strength is**, but we know how much we have attrited over time, and we know what the effect of those efforts have been.

MR. WHITMAN: Bob?

**Q General, this is Bob Burns from AP. I don't mean to take this too far, but I don't understand what you're saying on the 80 percent. I mean, it's got to be 80 percent of something. What's the figure that you use to calculate to get to your 80 percent?**

GEN. BERGNER: Yeah, it's not -- **Bob, I guess what I'm trying to tell you is, it's not just the number of people.** It's also the interruption of the support bases, the resource flow and their freedom to conduct operations. That all goes into our overall assessment of how effective we've been.

**Q** General, it's Al Pessin from Voice of America. Back on the statistics, have you seen or can you report to us any change in the number or intensity or sophistication of attacks to support your 80- percent reduction figure?

GEN. BERGNER: Let me just go back and make one point real clear. I said we have been effective in our work against -- what we think -- about 80 percent of the al Qaeda network. So I didn't say reduction, I said effect has been achieved in various ways.

[Another world-class idiot blowing smoke.]

**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](http://www.ivaw.net))

## **Famous Last Words: Vietnam Then; Iraq Now**

17 September 2005 By Bradley Graham, The Washington Post

US military commanders anticipate that reductions in ground forces in the region will not necessarily mean reductions in air power - or at least not as quickly.

In Afghanistan, where plans call for NATO troops to supplant some US soldiers, possibly by next year, US aircraft will still be needed to provide cover, officers said.

**"As the ground force shrinks, we'll need the air to be able to put a presence in parts of the country where we don't have soldiers, to keep eyes out where we don't have soldiers on the ground," said Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan III, who oversees Central Command's air operations.**

At its peak strength in the region during the "shock and awe" phase of the invasion of Iraq, the US Air Force operated from about three dozen bases. Some were in Central Asian countries that previously had been closed to US military aircraft, others in Middle Eastern countries that expanded the number of airfields available for US flights.

**In the past two years, the number of bases in the region used by US military planes has dropped by more than half, to about 16, as the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have evolved into grinding ground campaigns against elusive insurgents.**

But US aircraft still fly often - an average of 170 sorties a day last month for strike, airlift, refueling and surveillance missions over Iraq, and 65 a day over Afghanistan, according to Central Command figures.

**And combat planes frequently are being used in nontraditional ways - for instance, to scout for suspicious activity or to ferry supplies to reduce the load for more vulnerable ground convoys.**

## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Assorted Resistance Action**



An Iraqi boy taunts British soldiers after a shooting incident in the southern Iraqi city of Basra September 19, 2005. (Atef Hassan/Reuters)

Sep. 23, 2005 Canadian Press & Aljazeera & (KUNA) & Reuters

**In Baghdad, armed fighters killed two members of the commission charged with ensuring former members of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime were banned from the Iraqi hierarchy, police said.**

Their deaths raised to 14 the number of commission members who have been killed since the 323-member Supreme National Commission for de-Baathification was created two years ago.

**One Iraqi soldier was killed and four were injured in when a booby-trapped car, driven by an assailant, went off near a checkpoint in southern Baghdad Friday.**

The injured were rushed to a hospital according to a source of the Iraqi police.

**BAGHDAD - An official in the Ministry of Interior was killed along with his brother by armed fighters in the western Doura district of the capital and a third brother was wounded, police said.**

**BAGHDAD - Armed fighters killed an official in Ministry of Interior in the capital's Mansur district.**

**LATIFIYA - One official in the railway directorate was killed and six were wounded by a bomb planted beside the railway in the town of Latifiya, 40 km (25 miles) southwest of Baghdad, police said.**

**MOSUL - One policeman was killed on Thursday by armed fighters in Mosul, a police source said.**

**Unidentified fighters also assassinated Ali Abd al-Rida Khalaf, an Iraqi Oil Ministry employee, in al-Shurta tunnel west of Baghdad, he said.**

**Khalaf, killed in his civilian car, was also a member of the Iraqi al-Dawa party, led by the Iraqi Prime Minister, he added.**

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

**“I Have Never Met Anyone Who Said:  
My Ancestor Was Nouri Al-Sai'eed...”**

September 15, 2005 By Faiza Jarrar, [afamilyinbaghdad.blogspot.com](http://afamilyinbaghdad.blogspot.com). Translated by May/Baghdad

**And Nouri Al-Sai'eed, the Premier then, was the closest to them, and the most loving, and faithful to Britain, but after the revolution in Iraq, in 1958, and the throwing out of his government, his body was pulled around in the streets of Baghdad....his story kept circulating among generations, as an example of that who sold his country, his people, and their interests, to become a servant for the foreign occupation's interests.....**

**I have lived in Iraq for long years of my life; I have seen many sons and daughters of families who proudly declared that their families had an honorable nationalistic history against the British occupation, that their grandfathers were defending the rights of the Iraqis during the dark days...**

But I have never met anyone who said: My ancestor was Nouri Al-Sai'eed....

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## **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 Occupation Is Creating The Conditions For Sectarian Bloodletting Right Now**

September 23, 2005 By Lance Selfa, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

THE SEPTEMBER 15 bombings in Baghdad that left more than 200 dead again raised the threat that Iraq is descending into a religion-inspired civil war that will be worse than the 1990s massacres and ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia.

The attacks also raised important questions about the resistance to U.S. forces in Iraq. Is the resistance simply a religious-based insurgency, of Sunni Muslims determined to target Shiites? Is it attempting to provoke (or has it already started) a civil war between Sunnis and Shia?

**To answer these questions, it's important to establish a few basic points about the Iraqi resistance.**

**First, it's important to reject the media caricature of the resistance, encouraged by the Bush administration, which portrays it as terrorists led by "foreign fighters," like the al Qaeda-linked Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.**

**Actually, every reasonable description of the Iraqi resistance--including those produced by the Pentagon and the CIA--has established that it is overwhelmingly an Iraqi-based and -led movement.**

**Second, the resistance overwhelmingly targets the U.S. military and its Iraqi collaborators. Attacks on civilians account for fewer than 5 percent of all acts of**



**violence attributed to the Iraqi resistance, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies.**

Third, there is much more to the resistance in Iraq than military attacks. The resistance includes guerrillas groups, but also unionists struggling to prevent the privatization of the oil industry and the unemployed demanding jobs. Lost in the news of the Baghdad bombings was the announcement of the General Union of Oil Employees in Basra that it would oppose the U.S.-sponsored privatization of the Iraqi oil industry.

**If the antiwar movement shouldn't accept the media caricature of the resistance, neither should it tolerate the sloppy reporting that constantly refers to the conflict in Iraq as being Shiites and Kurds vs. Sunnis.**

**One of the strongest opponents of the occupation is the Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, who has the support of hundreds of thousands of the poorest Shiites in Iraq. Al-Sadr has allied with the Sunni-led Association of Muslim Scholars to demand that the U.S. get out of Iraq immediately. And last month in Najaf, Sadr's militias clashed with the Badr Brigade, the militia of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a Shiite party.**

***That said, there are forces that are trying to stir up sectarian tensions. The most important of these is the U.S. occupation itself.***

The U.S. has used sectarian and ethnic militias, such as the Kurdish peshmerga--for example, in its assault on Falluja. Washington also allowed militias connected to two of the largest Shiite parties--the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the Dawa Party--to carve up the security services among themselves.

Ethnic and religious tensions are immediately inflamed when the Iraqi security forces are used in assaults on Sunni and Turkmen towns like Tal Afar and Ramadi.

While the U.S. would certainly prefer not to see a division of the Iraqi state into ethnically based enclaves--a result that some observers predict if the Iraqi constitution fails in the planned October 15 vote--there are some Washington think-tankers promoting this as a "Plan B."

**While politicians and some in the antiwar movement worry that a quick U.S. withdrawal from Iraq will open the floodgates to sectarian bloodletting, exactly the opposite is the case.**

**The U.S. occupation is creating the conditions for sectarian bloodletting to take place right now. As Cockburn puts it, "[T]he thing to bear in mind is that it was the antipathy to the occupation that enabled some of the more vicious groups, who carry out sectarian attacks on Shia, to stay in business."**

**It would be utopian to think that all sectarian tensions will disappear with the withdrawal of the U.S. occupiers. But getting the U.S. out of Iraq will go a long way to alleviating those tensions.**

# OCCUPATION REPORT

## **The Al-Zarqawi Legend: “All Accusation Fingers Are Pointing To The Occupiers”**

September 15, 2005 By Faiza Jarrar, [afamilyinbaghdad.blogspot.com](http://afamilyinbaghdad.blogspot.com). Translated by May/Baghdad

**A lot of the Iraqis, and some of the clergies, Sunnies or Shia'ats, doubt the existence of Al-Zarqawi, and say his family held a funeral for him along time ago, and they deny his being alive, that these explosions are for the benefit of no one but the occupation forces, as the only losers in them are the Iraqi people, by all their factions, and the only winner being the occupation forces, to justify the reason for them to remain, and to kindle the fire between the Sunnies and the Shia'ats.**

**Those who live in Baghdad, or generally in Iraq do not smell that smell of turmoil and hatred among the Iraqis as the media portray it, and as America wants to send the story and market it to the world, and whoever lives in Iraq doesn't see or hear about any true existence of Al-Zarqawi or his gang, he is merely a lie about which many stories are repeated daily on TVs and on the internet, so the Iraqis and the others would believe it.**

**What is the benefit of Al-Zarqawi in killing the Iraqi civilians, for example? Why wouldn't he go and kill the occupation forces, for example, if he was really a Muslim seeking Jihad?**

**That subject is getting sharper, questions are multiplying, and the doubts grow.**

**And all accusation fingers are pointing to the occupiers, because he is the only beneficiary from all this chaos. Nevertheless, he bursts into towns, kills civilians or detains them under the cover of Al-Zarqawi story, for that story, it seems, is to his benefit from all sides.**

**And every Iraqi is subjected to the stupid question every day, especially by the deluded westerners, ignorant about what is happening in Iraq, as their source of information is their own lying, poisonous media.**

**The question is always: Why do Iraqis kill each other?**

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

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



## ***The Losers Club Never Dies Body Counts Back; The Soldiers Do The Dying***

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

Sep 21, By DOUGLASS K. DANIEL, Associated Press Writer & 22 September 2005 By Sidney Blumenthal, Salon.com

**The question of progress amid a rising death toll dogged [Lyndon] Johnson as much as it has Bush.**

***In part, Johnson measured progress by the number of enemy soldiers killed and the much smaller number of U.S. troops dying in Vietnam.***

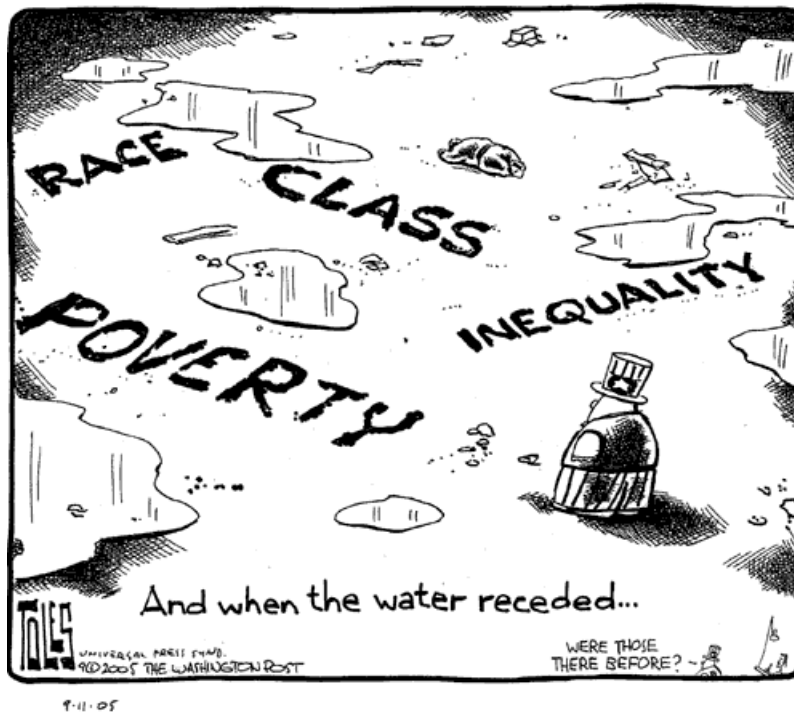
**Other Americans in uniform would carry on, the president pledged.**

**"Be assured that the death of your son will have meaning," Johnson told the parents of a posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor during a Rose Garden ceremony on April 6, 1967. "For I give you also my solemn pledge that our country will persist — and will prevail — in the cause for which your boy died."**

Speaking to military families in Idaho on Aug. 24, Bush said: "These brave men and women gave their lives for a cause that is just and necessary for the security of our country, and now we will honor their sacrifice by completing their mission."

*The Pentagon publicizes body counts of insurgents killed, the metric from the Vietnam War that Rumsfeld once said he would never use.*

Meanwhile, the Government Accountability Office reports that since the beginning of the cakewalk the U.S. military has used 1.8 billion rounds of small-caliber ammunition.



## **Deaconess, 73, Jailed For Alleged Looting: Looting: A Sausage Leaves Church Leader in Prison Since Hurricane Katrina**

[The Bush Buddies loot billions from Iraq, enjoying their wealth and power, despite a majority of Americans who do not want the Imperial war to go on, because the government has been bought and paid for by the rich, who could care less what the people want as long as they keep on getting theirs from the Empire. An old lady accused of looting a sausage in the middle of a Hurricane sits in

**prison. The necessary cure for a society this diseased has always been, and remains, revolution from below.]**

Sep. 15, 2005 By KEVIN MCGILL, The Associated Press

**Merlene Maten undoubtedly stands out in the prison where she has been held since Hurricane Katrina. The 73-year-old church deaconess, never before in trouble with the law, now sleeps among hardened criminals. Her bail is a stiff \$50,000.**

**Her offense?**

**Police say the grandmother from New Orleans took \$63.50 in goods from a looted deli the day after Katrina struck.**

**Family and eyewitnesses have a different story. They say Maten is an innocent woman who had gone to her car to get some sausage to eat but was wrongly handcuffed by tired, frustrated officers who couldn't catch younger looters at a nearby store.**

**Not even the deli owner wants her charged.**

***"There were people looting, but she wasn't one of them. Instead of chasing after people who were running, they grabbed the old lady who was walking," said Elois Short, Maten's daughter, who works in traffic enforcement for neighboring New Orleans police.***

Short has enlisted the help of the AARP, the senior citizens lobby, the Federal Emergency Management Agency legal assistance office, made up of volunteer lawyers, and a private attorney to get her mother freed. But the task has been complicated.

**Maten has been moved from a parish jail to a state prison an hour away. And the judge who set \$50,000 bail by phone 100 times the maximum \$500 fine under state law for minor thefts has not returned a week's worth of calls, her lawyer said.**

"She has slipped through the cracks and the wheels of justice have stopped turning for Mrs. Maten," attorney Daniel Beckett Becnel III said.

**The family has not been able to visit her during her two weeks of confinement and was allowed to talk to her by phone for only a few minutes. The state prison declined to let The Associated Press interview Maten by phone, demanding a written request.**

**Becnel, family members and witnesses said police snared Maten, a diabetic, in the parking lot of a hotel where she had fled the floodwaters that swamped her New Orleans home. She had paid for her room with a credit card and dutifully followed authorities' instructions to pack extra food, they said.**

**She was retrieving a piece of sausage from the cooler in her car and planned to grill it so she and her frail 80-year-old husband, Alfred, could eat, according to her defenders. The parking lot was almost a block from the looted store, they said.**

**"That woman was never, never in that store," said Naisha Williams, 23, a New Orleans bank security guard who said she witnessed the episode and is distantly related to Maten. "If they want to take it to court, I'm willing to get on the stand and tell them the police is wrong. She is totally innocent."**

Police Capt. Steve Carraway said Wednesday that Maten was arrested in the checkout area of a small store next to police headquarters.

The arrest report is short and assigns the value of goods Maten is alleged to have taken at \$63.50. The items are not identified.

"When officers arrived, the arrestee was observed leaving the scene with items from the store. The store window doors were observed smashed out, where entry to the store was made," police reported.

Williams, one of the witnesses, said Maten was physically unable to get inside the store even if she had wanted to.

"She is not capable of even looting it the way the store was at the time. You had to jump over a counter, and she is a diabetic and weak-muscled and wouldn't be able to get herself over it. And she couldn't afford to step on broken glass," Williams said.

Williams said she tried to explain that to police but was brushed off.

**"They didn't want to hear it. They put handcuffs on her. They just said we were emotional. It was basically, 'Just shut up,'" she said.**

**Maten's husband was left abandoned at the hotel, until family members picked him up. He is too upset to be interviewed, the family said.**

**Christine Bishop, the owner of the Check In Check Out deli, said that she was angry that looters had damaged her store, but that she would not want anyone charged with a crime if the person had simply tried to get food to survive. "Especially not a 70-year-old woman," Bishop said.**

Short, Maten's daughter, did not witness the incident. She said her mother has led a law-abiding life. She is a deaconess at the Resurrection Mission Baptist Church and won an award for her decades of service at a hospital, Short said.

**"Why would someone loot when they had a car with a refrigerator and had paid with a credit card at the hotel? The circumstances defy the theory of looting," said Becnel, Maten's lawyer.**

Robin Peak, a legal analyst from AARP who assisted Maten's family, declined to discuss the case. She wrote colleagues an e-mail earlier this week about the elderly woman's plight. It was titled, "50K: The Price of Freedom in New Orleans."

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