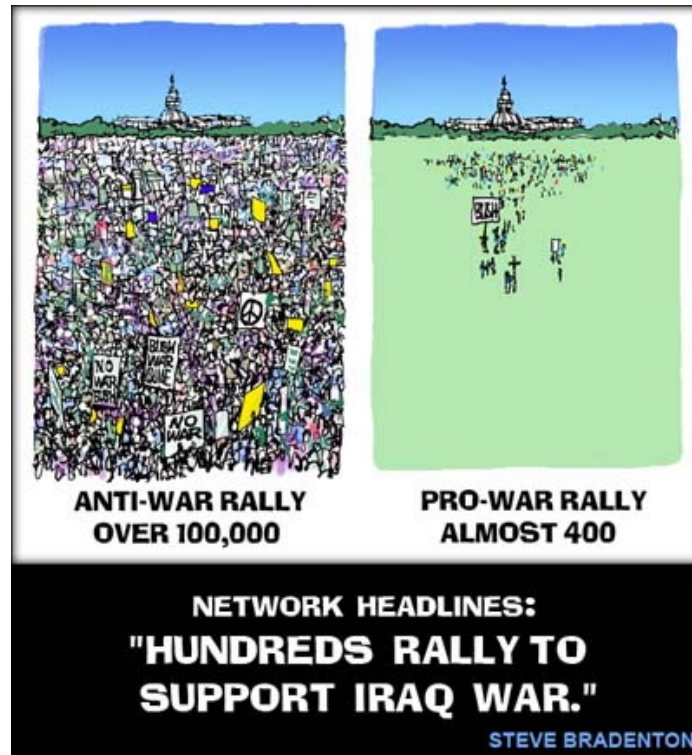


GI SPECIAL 3C65:



[Thanks to John Gingerich, Veterans For Peace]

“A Number Of Active-Duty Troops Attended Saturday’s Demonstration In Uniform”

“I Don't Know What We're Fighting For Over There. It's Not A Good Cause,” Sgt. Says

[Thanks to Ben Chitty, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, for posting.]

September 26, 2005 by Eric Herter, CommonDreams.org

The New York Times (Sept. 25, 2005) and much of the other news coverage of Saturday's anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C. failed to note the presence of a particularly knowledgeable group of protestors - recently-returned veterans of the war in Iraq.

Gathered behind a wide banner reading "Iraq Veterans Against the War," approximately fifty men and women in desert camouflage uniforms or IAVW T-shirts spoke with a handful of reporters before moving out to take their place in the miles-long march through the city streets and past the White House. Short-haired, neat and polite, they answered questions with a seriousness and conviction born of their first-hand experiences with the war.

Elizabeth Spradlin, an attractive Colorado Springs native with straight neck-length brown hair, spoke with quiet intensity of her year in Iraq. It began in March, 2003, when she was part of the invasion force moving from Kuwait to Baghdad.

"Going into that country, immediately they were welcoming, wanting us there. And over the course of three months we basically caused so much trouble in the area we were in. We didn't have interpreters. We were not helping them re-build their country. We were just driving around with our vehicles with guns, not communicating with them in any way, just basically occupying their space, their country. And they kept on coming to us asking us to help them re-build and -- based on my personal experience -- we weren't doing anything to help them."

Spradlin enlisted in the Colorado national guard as a medic, but in 2003, that changed.

"I was command-directed to go over to Iraq as an MP. So I was basically unqualified at what I was doing. I was a gunner, and I sat in a little turret and patrolled around Iraqi cities - causing problems, basically. Running children over."

She paused, blinking.

"It was terrible."

Chad Soloman, a husky young man with close-cropped reddish hair and goatee, served in Iraq as mechanic with the Ohio national guard. He smiled as he spoke, but his eyes were serious.

"We tried to survive. That was basically our objective. I saw nothing that could be said to be beneficial to the Iraqi people. When I tried to speak with Iraqi people, they did not at all see that we were there to help them. Certainly plenty of Iraqis spoke with mortars and with rifles, so obviously they were not content with our being there."

Tim Goodrich, a tall clean-cut Air Force veteran who's spoken at several previous IVAW demonstrations, was an electronics technician on E-3 AWACS surveillance aircraft. He spoke of the heavy bombing that, in effect, started the Iraq war months before the March, 2003, invasion.

"My involvement in the Iraq war was the bombing of Iraq - the intensified bombing in the fall of 2002. While Bush kept saying we were going to try diplomacy, in fact we were over there bombing the heck out of them. So I saw the lie, right from the start."

Other members of Iraq Veterans Against the War expressed their skepticism about the administration's explanations for the war. One uniformed young man with a southern accent said he'd been a military driver trucking supplies from Kuwait to many destinations in Iraq.

"We went in there for weapons of mass destruction. There are no weapons of mass destruction - I think that's perfectly clear. So we have no reason to be there. Plain and simple."

In addition to the Iraq Veterans Against the War, a number of active-duty troops attended Saturday's demonstration in uniform, and told the press of their opposition to the war in Iraq.

A tough-looking regular Army sergeant in camouflage fatigues preferred not to give his name because he was still in the service, but said he was just back from eight months in Baghdad.

"I don't know what we're fighting for over there. It's not a good cause. They don't appreciate us when we're there. They look at us as enemies, not as friends. So it's kind of hard when you're trying to help the enemies, and not the friends."

He shook his head with a sad smile.

Chad Soloman, the Ohio national guardsman in IVAW, probably spoke for many of the Iraq veterans at the demonstration:

"It's a war based on greed and selfishness and ignorance and incompetence, and I just see no reason why we should be continuing it. So we're here to show that not all veterans are supportive of the war, that some of us feel it's wrong, and that we need to take a stand against it."

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

MARINE KILLED BY IED IN KHALIDIYAH

September 27, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-09-27C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action by an improvised explosive device on Sept. 24 while conducting combat operations in Khalidiyah, Iraq.

Two Area Soldiers Killed

Sep 27, 2005 CBS Broadcasting Inc

Two soldiers from a Wisconsin National Guard unit have been killed in Iraq, family members and school officials say.

They were Michael Wendling, 20, of Mayville, and Andy Wallace, 25, of Oshkosh, members of the 2nd Battalion of the 127th Infantry Regiment.

Randy and Carrie Wendling, the parents of the 2003 graduate of Mayville High School graduate, said military personnel went to their places of employment Monday to inform them of their son's death.

"Two guys just came down, but there was very little they could tell us," Wendling's mother said. "They just said it was a roadside bomb."

A third member of the 2nd Battalion, Jeremy Roskopf of Brownsville, who graduated from Mayville High School in 2003 with Wendling, was injured in the same incident in which the other two were killed, his mother, Sherri, said.

"He has some shrapnel injuries, but otherwise hes doing OK," she said.

Insurgents Seize 5 Towns Near Syria

September 27, 2005 Anna Badkhen, Chronicle Staff Writer

Marine units stationed outside al Qaim and four neighboring towns perched along the Euphrates River -- Dulaym al Husayba, Karabila, Sada to the west of al Qaim, and Al Ubaydi to the northeast -- do not venture into these towns, Lt. Col. Julian Alford, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines Regiment said.

Insurgents open fire at any Marine patrol that approaches the town lines. No Iraqi soldiers or police officers operate inside the towns.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

TWO U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS KILLED IN ATTACKS

9.27.05 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE
Number: 05-09-26C

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – One U.S. soldier and one U.S. Marine were killed yesterday in separate attacks near Kandahar and Asadabad.

The U.S. soldier was taking part in an Afghan and U.S. forces ground assault operation, west of Kandahar, when enemy forces fired rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire at their vehicles. One other U.S. soldier was wounded in the attack and was taken to Kandahar hospital for treatment where he is listed in stable condition.

The unit returned fire killing two enemy and wounding a third. The wounded enemy was taken to Kandahar Airfield for treatment and is currently in stable condition.

At a U.S. forward operating base, near Asadabad, U.S. Marines reported receiving enemy mortar, rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms fire. One U.S. Marine was killed in the attack. Coalition forces responded with mortar fire and coalition close air support aircraft.

Battle damage assessment is on-going.

Resistance Claim Killing 8 US Troops In Kandahar

September 25, 2005 Pakistan News Service

KABUL: Taliban claim to have killed eight US troops in southern Afghanistan.

Taliban spokesman Latifullah Hakimi said that the Taliban blew up two vehicles of the US military with remote-controlled landmine in Arghandab district of Kandahar province last night that resulted in killing eight US soldiers, reports Radio Tehran.

About ongoing clashes between the Taliban and the US and Afghan troops in Charchino district of Uruzgan province, Hakimi said that eight US troops, 10 Afghan soldiers and 6 Taliban have so far been killed.

The Taliban spokesman further said that the Taliban fired 12 rockets on a US base in Kunar province last night, however no casualty was reported.

Roadside Bomb Wounds Two U.S. Soldiers

September 26, 2005 Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A roadside bomb wounded two soldiers on patrol in southern Afghanistan, the military said Saturday.

The attack happened Friday near Kandahar city, a former Taliban stronghold. About eight militants fired at the patrol after the bomb exploded, the statement said.

“The War Is Not Over”

September 26, 2005 By Steve Gutterman, Associated Press & Christian Science Monitor

“The war is not over. They’re still there and they’re still armed, resourced, well-equipped, fed. So you’ve heard the term ‘broken back’ or ‘on the ropes’ — far from it. We don’t see that at all.” -- Col. James Yonts

The Taliban in Afghanistan have gone on the offensive, launching more pitched battles in an effort to persuade the international community and Afghans that the country remains at war, according to a Taliban leader.

He said that if U.S. troops don't begin drawing down their numbers after this month's parliamentary elections, the Taliban would increase their military operations.

TROOP NEWS

Entire 101st Airborne Division Deploying To The Imperial Slaughterhouse

9/23/2005 NewsChannel 5

Around 20,000 soldiers got their final briefing Friday afternoon at Ft. Campbell. It's been two years since the division was last deployed to Iraq.

Soldiers will board planes and be heading off Friday to do numerous duties, including helping train Iraqi law enforcement. Families took the afternoon to say goodbye.

This is just the 5th time in the history of the 101st that the entire division has been deployed all at once. The soldiers will be gone a year.

Nonstop War Duty Fucks Marines

September 25, 2005 Honolulu Advertiser

Marines of the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines are moving out of Afghanistan to deploy to Iraq late this winter or early spring. **It is the same across the Corps---Marines are preparing for repeat deployments with minimal breaks in between, leaving families fretting anew at home.**

100,000 March Against War In London

9.25.05 By Lindsay Germain, stopwar.org.uk

Up to 100,000 people marched on Saturday in London for peace and liberty. The march took 2 hours to move into Hyde Park, transport came from everywhere from Aberdeen to Cornwall.

There was a wonderful mix of people on the march: trade unionists, large numbers of Muslims, a lot of young people, pensioners, Woodcraft Folk, campaigners against climate change, for civil liberties - united in their demands above all for troops out of Iraq.

The march was led by Military Families against the War, including Sue Smith whose son died in July and who delivered a letter and petition to Downing St.

“Few Hundred” At DC Rally To Support War; “Embarrassingly Small Turnout For A Dying Cause”

September 26, 2005 Jesse, Editor, TVNewsLIES.org & By Elisabeth Goodbridge, Associated Press

A Handful Came to Honor Military Families & Support the Troops

They came to cheer for Bush's war. They came to counter the anti war rally. They came to heap praise on their president for his leadership and wisdom. What a sorry group they were.

Their organizers had planned for thousands. The glitzy bandstand looked out on a sea of chairs prepared for a large turnout of real Americans to show their support for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the end, a meager few hundred souls showed up. They came to prop up their trusted leader and his blind commitment to staying the course. They failed quite miserably.

It wasn't only the poor turn-out that made this event so pathetic. First, it was the exploitation of the dead. Family member after family member of a dead soldier thanked George Bush profusely for waging the war that took the life of their loved one. And second, it was the concerted effort to portray the anti war protesters as fools and traitors and left wing radicals. That, too, fell totally flat.

They really tried, give them credit for that. It was a one-two punch. Hit the audience with a heart-wrenching story of valor and death, and then blame the protesters for not supporting the troops. Have a grieving parent or spouse share the real pain of losing someone in the war, and follow it up by someone telling Cindy Sheehan she should move to Iran.

And so it went for hours on end, interspersed with sparse applause and isolated war whoops. On and on and on.

And then, of course there were the highlights, the moments to remember – the ones that put the icing on this bitter, poisonous cake. Best of all was the introduction of “a great American” to help their cause – J. Gordon Liddy! Talk about scraping the bottom of the barrel! It could be that many in the audience had no clue that the man they were cheering and applauding had spent more than four years in prison for planning the Watergate burglary.

What a historic moment that was, witnessing the birth of Convicted Felons for War! Then again, thinking of Bush's appointees, how utterly fitting.

Their common rhetoric, to no one's surprise, featured three emotionally charged trigger words: terror, terrorist, and 9/11, while the continuous barrage against Cindy Sheehan and the anti war movement was relentless.

It could be that the real anger on display was motivated by the embarrassingly small turnout for a dying cause. My money is on that possibility.

Organizers of Sunday's demonstration acknowledged that their rally would be much smaller than the anti-war protest but had hoped that as many as 20,000 people would turn out.

48th Brigade Combat Team: 100 Have Been Wounded; “They Rarely Attract The Same Attention As Those Who Have Died”

Since the start of the war in Iraq, more than 14,500 American service members have been wounded, including nearly 7,000 whose injuries prevented them from returning to duty for at least 72 hours.

September 27, 2005 By JEREMY REDMON, Oxford Press

White dots glow like stars across Sgt. Jim Kirchner's chest X-ray. Each is a piece of shrapnel he carried home from Iraq. Kirchner has counted 28 throughout his body.

One is working its way out his left arm near a tattoo of a purple hooded Grim Reaper. Others, such as the pair close to his heart, aren't going anywhere. Doctors told him it would be too risky to pull them out.

The Georgia Army National Guard soldier carries his X-ray images around on a compact disc. He shows them off to friends and gripes about getting hassled at airport metal detectors.

"I'm going to print some of them off to give to my son to do connect-the-dots," said the father of four.

His sense of humor helps him cope. But he still hurts, sometimes intensely. An insurgent mortar attack on June 12 essentially ended his 18-year military career.

Kirchner's unit, the 48th Brigade Combat Team, has drawn considerable attention in recent months for the combat deaths it has suffered. Since the brigade arrived in Iraq in early June, 18 members have died, 14 in insurgent bomb attacks. But more than 100 others have been wounded, some severely. And they rarely attract the same attention as those who have died.

Since the start of the war in Iraq, more than 14,500 American service members have been wounded, including nearly 7,000 whose injuries prevented them from returning to duty for at least 72 hours. Many of the more seriously wounded probably would have died in earlier wars but were saved by advanced medical procedures and quicker evacuation to field hospitals.

But 17 soldiers from the 48th, including Kirchner, have suffered "serious" or "very serious" injuries, Driscoll said. The group includes two amputees, a soldier with serious burns and others with shrapnel and gunshot wounds.

The 48th also has counted 106 "non-serious" injuries, including concussions, broken bones and minor shrapnel wounds. Most of those soldiers were treated and returned to duty. Five were evacuated from the Middle East and remain in U.S. hospitals.

For those recuperating from their wounds, especially those with serious injuries, the struggle can be difficult, lonely and painful, as Kirchner has discovered.

Kirchner, 37, said the Army will retire him after his medical care is complete. He plans to return to his civilian job as a product specialist for a software company. That will be a challenge, however, because the job requires typing.

After five surgeries, parts of his neck, right arm and right hand remain paralyzed. His medical records say he can no longer carry a weapon or even salute. The doctors limit him to carrying no more than 5 pounds. He walks, but gingerly.

"I can't give my kids a big hug. That sucks," Kirchner said in a measured tone. "I'll never play catch with my sons. I'll never be able to teach my son to throw a baseball. That kind of stuff hurts me emotionally."

Kirchner remembers many details about the mortar attack. It was his third day at Forward Operating Base Michael, about 20 miles south of Baghdad. He had just finished night guard duty.

He took off his body armor and helmet and lay in his cot half asleep. Some time that morning, a mortar round exploded just outside his tent, spraying his back, shoulders, right arm and head with shrapnel. The deafening blast threw him to the floor.

He glanced around and tried unsuccessfully to raise himself off the floor. He was injured too badly. He remembers seeing sunlight pouring through holes in the tent wall and thinking, "All of that is inside you." His blood pooled beneath him on the plywood floor.

"My back was shredded. My arm was just bleeding like a pig. I was screaming, 'I'm hit! I'm hit! Medic! Medic!' "

Staff Sgt. Joe Wilson was also in the tent during the attack. He and other soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the 108th Armor Regiment rushed to Kirchner's aid.

"I couldn't hear anything because my ears had been blasted," Wilson, of Canton, said in a telephone interview from Iraq. "I had temporary hearing loss. The tent was full of

smoke and dust. Of course Jim was screaming in pain and bleeding. And I reached for my vest to throw over him to protect him from what else was going to happen."

Wilson joined Kirchner in yelling for medics. Help arrived in less than a minute.

At least three or four more mortar rounds exploded that morning, Kirchner said, seriously wounding two other soldiers and a civilian contract worker.

He said he nearly bled to death in the moments after the blast. His left lung collapsed. The explosion damaged his liver, pancreas and a kidney. Doctors cut him open to repair his damaged organs. A nearly foot-long red scar stretches up his belly and around his belly-button.

Armed Dolphins AWOL; Attacks On Surfers Feared

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

September 25, 2005 by Mark Townsend Houston, The Observer

It may be the oddest tale to emerge from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Armed dolphins, trained by the US military to shoot terrorists and pinpoint spies underwater, may be missing in the Gulf of Mexico.

Experts who have studied the US navy's cetacean training exercises claim the 36 mammals could be carrying 'toxic dart' guns. Divers and surfers risk attack, they claim, from a species considered to be among the planet's smartest.

The US navy admits it has been training dolphins for military purposes, but has refused to confirm that any are missing.

The US Atlantic bottlenose dolphins have apparently been taught to shoot terrorists attacking military vessels. Their coastal compound was breached during the storm, sweeping them out to sea. But those who have studied the controversial use of dolphins in the US defence programme claim it is vital they are caught quickly.

Leo Sheridan, 72, a respected accident investigator who has worked for government and industry, said he had received intelligence from sources close to the US government's marine fisheries service confirming dolphins had escaped.

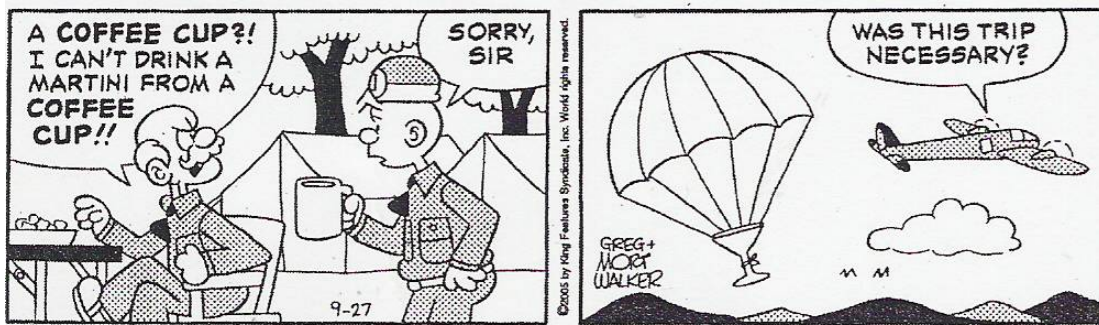
'My concern is that they have learnt to shoot at divers in wetsuits who have simulated terrorists in exercises. If divers or windsurfers are mistaken for a spy or suicide bomber and if equipped with special harnesses carrying toxic darts, they could fire,' he said. 'The darts are designed to put the target to sleep so they can be interrogated later, but what happens if the victim is not found for hours?'

The mystery surfaced when a separate group of dolphins was washed from a commercial oceanarium on the Mississippi coast during Katrina. Eight were found with the navy's help, but the dolphins were not returned until US navy scientists had examined them.

Sheridan is convinced the scientists were keen to ensure the dolphins were not the navy's, understood to be kept in training ponds in a sound in Louisiana, close to Lake Pontchartrain, whose waters devastated New Orleans.

The navy launched the classified Cetacean Intelligence Mission in San Diego in 1989, where dolphins, fitted with harnesses and small electrodes planted under their skin, were taught to patrol and protect Trident submarines in harbour and stationary warships at sea.

Criticism from animal rights groups ensured the use of dolphins became more secretive. But the project gained impetus after the Yemen terror attack on the USS Cole in 2000. Dolphins have also been used to detect mines near an Iraqi port.



Prosecutors Investigate Maker Of Defective Body Armor

September 26, 2005 By John Solomon, Associated Press

Federal prosecutors are investigating whether a maker of bulletproof vests endangered lives, including that of President Bush, by concealing potentially deadly flaws in the body armor sold to the government and police agencies.

A whistle-blower from the company, Second Chance Body Armor Inc., of Central Lake, Mich., testified this month that the Secret Service tested and bought some of the defective vests for the president and first lady Laura Bush.

The Pentagon also obtained the same armor for elite troops who guard generals, according to transcripts obtained by The Associated Press.

Many sales occurred well after Second Chance had been alerted that the Japanese-made Zylon synthetic material in the vests was degrading faster than expected from heat, light and moisture exposure, allowing bullets to potentially penetrate the armor, according to the whistle-blower's testimony and other company documents.

Prosecutors have gathered documents showing that Second Chance was alerted as early as 1998 by the Japanese material maker, Toyobo Co., that Zylon had trouble maintaining its protective properties.

By 2001, Second Chance's research chief, Aaron Westrick, was pleading unsuccessfully with his company's president to replace the vests after his own tests showed them degrading, the memos show.

"Lives and our credibility are at stake," Westrick wrote then-Second Chance president Richard Davis in a Dec. 18, 2001, memo. "We will only prevail if we do the right things and not hesitate. This issue should not be hidden for obvious safety issues and because of future litigation."

Westrick urged Davis to "immediately notify our customers of the degradation problems," let those with pending orders cancel them and cease all executive bonuses to save money so the company could pay for a replacement initiative, the memo shows.

But Second Chance customers were not alerted to the problems until September 2003 — after a California police officer was shot to death wearing the vest and a Pennsylvania officer was seriously wounded.

In the interim, the Secret Service paid \$53,000 in 2002 to Second Chance for body armor, enough to equip the president and the security detail that protects him and other VIPs, federal procurement records show.

Westrick's lawyer, Stephen M. Kohn, said Sunday that his client is cooperating with the criminal investigation.

"Greed prevailed over the safety of police, soldiers and even the president of the United States," Kohn said. "The officials who personally profited from selling the defective vests to law enforcement must be held accountable to the fullest extent of the criminal code."

Throughout 2001 and 2002, agencies from the Pentagon to local police bought vests from Second Chance, records show. The company now says more than 100,000 Zylon vests it sold are in question, and the government said it bought at least 40,000.

Data Theft Puts Soldiers At Risk Of Identity Fraud

September 25, 2005 Washington Times

Four computer hard drives containing soldiers' Social Security numbers and other personal records were stolen from Fort Carson---a crime that could expose GIs to identity theft.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Having encouraged Moqtada al-Sadr's militias to resist the slavishly pro-Iranian faction, why are the British surprised when they demand real independence?
Tariq Ali, September 23, 2005, The Guardian (UK) via PB

Assorted Resistance Action

September 27, 2005 By Associated Press & (KUNA) & Reuters

A bomber attacked a group of Iraqis applying for jobs as policemen Tuesday, killing 12 and wounding 30, a police officer said.

The blast occurred in Baqouba, 30 miles north of Baghdad, said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of concerns about his security.

A man wearing explosives under his clothes blew himself up in a building where Iraqis were submitting applications to join the country's Quick Reaction Police Force.

Adhid Mita'ab, an official in Baqouba General Hospital, said nine Iraqis were killed and 21 wounded. The commander confirmed those figures.

An Iraqi policeman was killed and three others were injured Tuesday during an armed attack in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

A source at the Iraqi Interior Ministry told KUNA that unidentified armed fighters opened fire on a police patrol on a highway near the green zone.

A roadside bomb on a police patrol killed an Iraqi civilian and injured two policemen in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, police Captain Salam Zengena said.

Insurgents assassinated police Major Fakhir Jalal Amin in central Kirkuk. Amin worked for the city's counter- insurgency centre, police Colonel Sarhat Qadir said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Opportunist Trash In Charge Of 9/24 DC Protest Still Don't Get It

September 26, 2005 Dennis Perrin, redstateson.blogspot.com. [Excerpt]

With the majority of Americans turning against the war, a leaner, tighter, more direct series of speakers (with labor groups, military relatives and dissident soldiers and Marines leading the way -- why wasn't someone from Iraq Veterans Against The War invited to speak?) would've been electrifying.

The Imperialization And Militarization Of America

26 September 2005 By Stirling Newberry, Truthout Perspective. [Excerpt]

The reason we are in Iraq is because imperialization and militarization of America was the only way to make the countryside's supply of military men into a source of foreign cash.

The first Iraq war turned a profit. The cost was that the US did not get to dictate the terms of the peace, but instead accepted arrangements that kept Iraq's oil off the market, but Saddam in power.

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.

“She's A Mother And Just Like Our People Are Hurting, She's Hurting Too”

September 22, 2005 By Borzou Daragahi, L.A. Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD — Khalda Khalaf feels Cindy Sheehan's pain. She's been there, too.

Her 28-year-old son, Majid Khalid Kabi, died in 2004 fighting on the opposite side in the same months-long stretch of clashes between Shiite militiamen and U.S. soldiers in which Spc. Casey Sheehan perished.

"Of course, she's a mother and just like our people are hurting, she's hurting too," says Khalaf, a 52-year-old resident of Sadr City, the east Baghdad slum where Sheehan's son died in April 2004. "Just as she wants America out of Iraq, so do we."

Sheehan has become a minor celebrity in Iraq as well. The same satellite channels that bring quick, often gruesome coverage of the violence in Iraq to the nation's TV screens also gave regular updates on Sheehan's lengthy vigil outside President Bush's Texas ranch.

Now on the streets of Baghdad, Najaf and Mosul, even ordinary Iraqis have heard of Cindy Sheehan and formed opinions about her and her movement. "I sympathize with her and her cause, but I don't think that the American administration will be affected by such a thing," said Hassan Hashim Mahmoud, a 32-year-old government employee in Najaf.

Even poor families such as Khalaf's know about Sheehan via "news" videos distributed by political parties, such as the radical Shiite Muslim cleric Muqtada Sadr's movement, for whom Kabi died in August 2004 in Najaf.

To some Iraqis, Sheehan's stand at Bush's ranch and her continuing opposition to the war make her a hero.

"The president doesn't have the credibility to face the mother of the U.S. soldier who was killed in a war that many in the U.S. say was a fatal mistake," columnist Muthana Tabaqchali wrote in the Iraqi daily Azzaman, which the U.S. Embassy considers hostile to the American mission in Iraq.

"Sheehan was a lady who stood like a lioness with her lofty staff in front of the president," he wrote. "She collected all her strength and motherhood to face the strongest president in the world to tell him enough!"

Nabeal Mohammed Younis, a professor of political science at Baghdad University, recalled seeing Sheehan's image on Al Jazeera, the Arab news channel, while having lunch at a Baghdad hotel with colleagues.

"We said that this woman is not very different from the women in Iraq who've lost their sons," Younis recalled. "We started talking about Cindy Sheehan and started to distinguish between how the women are affected by the war and how the men are affected."

With thousands of Iraqis killed in violence since the March 2003 invasion and with the legacy of Saddam Hussein's tyranny still haunting them, Iraqis are inclined to sympathize with a grieving mother, regardless of their political views, Younis said.

"Most of them are with her and share her misery for losing her son," he said.

Sheehan's plight, as well as the news of thousands of Americans voicing concern about the troubles in Iraq, helped Haqqi Fathulla, a 33-year-old Mosul resident, feel personally connected to Americans.

"The stand of this woman emphasizes the fact that there are no hostilities between Iraqi and American people," he said.

OCCUPATION REPORT

General Boasts That U.S. Occupation Controls The Whole Iraqi Collaborator Government: "From Foot Soldier And Policeman To Minister"

26 September 2005 By Bradley Graham and Robin Wright, The Washington Post

Military and State Department officials confirmed that a tentative agreement had been reached to transfer authority over the Iraqi ministries to the Pentagon, although they said the move was not a reflection on the State Department's performance. They described the change as an effort to consolidate assistance under a single organization and take advantage of the Pentagon's larger pool of resources.

"We now have the opportunity to have one organization control the entire process, from foot soldier and policeman to minister," Army Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, who recently assumed command of the U.S. effort to train Iraq's security forces, said.

"We have a police force, we have an army, and so we think that now is the time to make the change to a single organization that sees the entire scope of work."

U.S. Officer Boasts Of Violating Geneva Conventions:

Punishes Non-Combatant Civilians For Acts Done By Resistance

September 25, 2005 Washington Times

Col. Steven Salazar, commander of "Task Force Sledgehammer," does his best to convince Iraqi locals that working with the Americans can more rapidly bring better days to all concerned.

When playing nice doesn't work, [making people inform on the resistance] Salazar does things like completely shutting down a road that had roadside bombs [found] on it.

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

'Green Slime' Invades Iraq

September 26, 2005 By William Bowles, williambowles.info. [Excerpt]

This month Geoff Hoon, the Defence Secretary, announced the establishment of a new regiment, the Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR), to provide covert surveillance expertise for operations by the SAS and the Special Boat Service. Although he did not specify which experts he had in mind, the new regiment is largely based around the surveillance specialists of the 14th Intelligence Company, also known as "the Det" (Detachment), which has operated in Northern Ireland for many years. (The Times, April 2005)



This is Brigadier Gordon Kerr, identified as being involved in the deaths of at least fifteen Irish Republicans during his tenure as head of the FRU or the Force Reconnaissance Unit in Northern Ireland.

Promoted from Lt. Colonel to Brigadier for his efforts, Kerr was given the job as military attaché in Beijing, largely to keep him out of the way of an investigation into the activities of the FRU in the assassination of human rights lawyer Pat Finucane and as many as fourteen other people.

“THERE’S a phrase set aside in the British army for men like Brigadier Gordon Kerr and it’s “Green Slime”. “Soldiers don’t mince words, and to regular squaddies and military brass, Kerr and his Intelligence Corps are on roughly the same level as pond life. Highly effective, immensely powerful and very dangerous pond life, but pond life nevertheless.”

This is from an article by Neil Mackay on Kerr written in November 2000 for the Sunday Herald.

That pond life has been given the job of ‘democratising’ Iraq speaks reams about the real objectives of the occupation of Iraq and surely should disabuse anyone of the idea that we’re there to bring ‘human rights’ to the Iraqis.

Another Bush Regime Success Story

September 26, 2005 Los Angeles Times & Chicago Tribune

The failure to rebuild Iraq's oil producing infrastructure has impeded production and may have permanently damaged the largest of the country's vast oil fields.

A small group of reform-minded Iraqis who have fought to change Iraq's corrupt oil sector find themselves on a hit list that targets those want the oil wealth to benefit the country, and not the crooks who currently infest the oil industry.

Hunt For International Terrorists Finds Three In Baghdad



General Casey, Rumsfeld and US Ambassador Khalilzad in Baghdad.
(AFP/POOL/Joe Raedle)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Movon.org Wants More Dead American Troops, More Dead Iraqis; Front Organization For Imperial Democrats Called Out

September 23, 2005 by Charlie Savage, Boston Globe

Some major groups, including protest organizers United for Peace and Justice, demand that the United States immediately withdraw from Iraq. Others, including Moveon.org, instead back resolutions calling for a pullout starting in late 2006.

In a public statement last month, the Green Party of the United States accused Moveon.org of having "undermined such (antiwar) efforts by refusing to endorse an immediate end to the occupation of Iraq."

Green Party spokesman Scott McLarty explained that his faction believes Moveon.org is giving cover to Democrats who have criticized the war but have not supported proposals to cut off funding.

"The more we prolong the occupation, the more dead American soldiers and the more dead Iraqi civilians there will be," McLarty said. "It's going to be a disaster whether we stay there or whether we don't stay there. And by staying there, we are aggravating the disaster."

“A Recipe For Disaster”

With his successive rounds of tax cuts skewed to the wealthiest Americans, in tandem with a 37 per cent increase in federal expenditures and Bush's refusal to veto a single spending bill from the GOP-controlled Congress, this White House has in a short five years boosted the national debt by 12 per cent, to almost \$8 trillion. America is increasingly a hostage of its foreign creditors.

Sep. 25, 2005 DAVID OLIVE, Toronto Star Newspapers

The legacy of the Bush administration may well be that government can no longer be entrusted to business people.

With his successive rounds of tax cuts skewed to the wealthiest Americans, in tandem with a 37 per cent increase in federal expenditures and Bush's refusal to

veto a single spending bill from the GOP-controlled Congress, this White House has in a short five years boosted the national debt by 12 per cent, to almost \$8 trillion. America is increasingly a hostage of its foreign creditors.

In the aftermath of Katrina, Bush and Congress hastily began to channel what may ultimately amount to \$200 billion — the equivalent of Denmark's GNP, or \$400,000 for each of Katrina's half-million displaced people — through FEMA, which lacks the prowess to handle anything like \$200 billion.

Its 2003 budget of \$87 million accounted for a miniscule 0.03 per cent of total government spending.

"You can easily compare FEMA's internal resources to what you saw in the early days of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq: a small, underfunded organization taking on a Herculean task under tremendous time pressure," Steven Schooner, a contracting expert at George Washington University, told The Wall Street Journal last week.

"That is almost by definition a recipe for disaster."

But for now, at least, the White House refuses to relinquish control of the biggest domestic reconstruction project in U.S. history, which will require the removal of enough debris across a six-state region to fill more than 600 football fields to a depth of 15 metres.

Instead, as in Iraq, the administration has swung into action on behalf of Bush campaign donors, swiftly granting no-bid, cost-plus contracts in the Gulf Coast region to the usual suspects — Halliburton, Bechtel Corp., and Fluor Corp.

Bush, more obsessed with tax cuts than any president in modern times, has also declared a tax-free Gulf Opportunity Zone. A tax holiday might help the few surviving restaurateurs in the French Quarter, but not 400,000 New Orleans residents who have lost their jobs and have no income from which to deduct tax.

Asked about this odd policy move at a luncheon for GOP supporters last week, Bush responded: "Somebody said the other day, well, that's a tax break. That region is going to have zero income anyway. There's nothing there, in many parts of it. It makes sense to provide economic incentives for jobs to exist."

Read that passage six times and it still doesn't make sense.

Last week he linked Katrina with the war on terrorism. Terrorists, the president said, are "the kind of people who look at Katrina and wish they had caused it. We're in a war with these people." It appears that the president and the rules of logic have parted ways.

If only the U.S. were run more like a business, was the Bush/Cheney mantra in 2000; then America would be a more contented kingdom.

But a sustainably prosperous business doesn't hand vital tasks to cronies, fail to vet its suppliers, starve essential employees of job fulfillment, or blame its shortcomings on bogeymen.

It's a pity the GOP running mates didn't say what kind of business they had in mind — the managerial prowess of a General Electric Co., or the train-wreck of Enron Corp.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

New Orleans Prisoners Abandoned To Drown In Floodwaters: Officers Deserted Jail, Leaving Inmates Locked In Cells

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

“The water started rising, it was getting to here,” said Earrand Kelly, an inmate from Templeman III, as he pointed at his neck. “We was calling down to the guys in the cells under us, talking to them every couple of minutes. They were crying, they were scared. The one that I was cool with, he was saying ‘I’m scared. I feel like I’m about to drown.’ He was crying.”

September 22, 2005 Human Rights Watch

As Hurricane Katrina began pounding New Orleans, the sheriff's department abandoned hundreds of inmates imprisoned in the city's jail, Human Rights Watch said today.

Inmates in Templeman III, one of several buildings in the Orleans Parish Prison compound, reported that as of Monday, August 29, there were no correctional officers in the building, which held more than 600 inmates. These inmates, including some who were locked in ground-floor cells, were not evacuated until Thursday, September 1, four days after flood waters in the jail had reached chest-level.

“Of all the nightmares during Hurricane Katrina, this must be one of the worst,” said Corinne Carey, researcher from Human Rights Watch.

“Prisoners were abandoned in their cells without food or water for days as floodwaters rose toward the ceiling.”

Human Rights Watch called on the U.S. Department of Justice to conduct an investigation into the conduct of the Orleans Sheriff's Department, which runs the jail, and to establish the fate of the prisoners who had been locked in the jail. The Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, which oversaw the evacuation, and the Orleans Sheriff's Department should account for the 517 inmates who are missing from the list of people evacuated from the jail.

The sheriff of Orleans Parish, Marlin N. Gusman, did not call for help in evacuating the prison until midnight on Monday, August 29, a state Department of Corrections and Public Safety spokeswoman told Human Rights Watch. Other parish prisons, she said, had called for help on the previous Saturday and Sunday. The evacuation of Orleans Parish Prison was not completed until Friday, September 2.

According to officers who worked at two of the jail buildings, Templeman 1 and 2, they began to evacuate prisoners from those buildings on Tuesday, August 30, when the floodwaters reached chest level inside. These prisoners were taken by boat to the Broad Street overpass bridge, and ultimately transported to correctional facilities outside New Orleans.

But at Templeman III, which housed about 600 inmates, there was no prison staff to help the prisoners. Inmates interviewed by Human Rights Watch varied about when they last remember seeing guards at the facility, but they all insisted that there were no correctional officers in the facility on Monday, August 29.

According to inmates interviewed by Human Rights Watch, they had no food or water from the inmates' last meal over the weekend of August 27-28 until they were evacuated on Thursday, September 1. By Monday, August 29, the generators had died, leaving them without lights and sealed in without air circulation. The toilets backed up, creating an unbearable stench.

"They left us to die there," Dan Bright, an Orleans Parish Prison inmate told Human Rights Watch at Rapides Parish Prison, where he was sent after the evacuation.

As the water began rising on the first floor, prisoners became anxious and then desperate. Some of the inmates were able to force open their cell doors, helped by inmates held in the common area. All of them, however, remained trapped in the locked facility.

"The water started rising, it was getting to here," said Earrand Kelly, an inmate from Templeman III, as he pointed at his neck. "We was calling down to the guys in the cells under us, talking to them every couple of minutes. They were crying, they were scared. The one that I was cool with, he was saying 'I'm scared. I feel like I'm about to drown.' He was crying."

Some inmates from Templeman III have said they saw bodies floating in the floodwaters as they were evacuated from the prison. A number of inmates told Human Rights Watch that they were not able to get everyone out from their cells.

Inmates broke jail windows to let air in. They also set fire to blankets and shirts and hung them out of the windows to let people know they were still in the facility. Apparently at least a dozen inmates jumped out of the windows.

"We started to see people in T3 hangin' shirts on fire out the windows," Brooke Moss, an Orleans Parish Prison officer told Human Rights Watch. "They were wavin' em. Then we saw them jumping out of the windows . . . Later on, we saw a sign, I think somebody wrote 'help' on it."

As of yesterday, signs reading "Help Us," and "One Man Down," could still be seen hanging from a window in the third floor of Templeman III.

Several corrections officers told Human Rights Watch there was no evacuation plan for the prison, even though the facility had been evacuated during floods in the 1990s.

"It was complete chaos," said a corrections officer with more than 30 years of service at Orleans Parish Prison. When asked what he thought happened to the inmates in Templeman III, he shook his head and said: "Ain't no tellin' what happened to those people."

"At best, the inmates were left to fend for themselves," said Carey. "At worst, some may have died."

Human Rights Watch compared an official list of all inmates held at Orleans Parish Prison immediately prior to the hurricane with the most recent list of the evacuated inmates compiled by the state Department of Corrections and Public Safety (which was entitled, "All Offenders Evacuated"). However, the list did not include 517 inmates from the jail, including 130 from Templeman III.

Many of the men held at jail had been arrested for offenses like criminal trespass, public drunkenness or disorderly conduct. Many had not even been brought before a judge and charged, much less been convicted.

More Racist Lies Knocked Down: "99 Percent Of The People In The Dome Were Very Well-Behaved," Sgt. 1st Class Says

The picture that emerged was one of the impoverished, overwhelmingly African-American masses of flood victims resorting to utter depravity, randomly attacking each other, as well as the police trying to protect them and the rescue workers trying to save them. The mayor told Winfrey the crowd has descended to an "almost animalistic state."

Four weeks after the storm, few of the widely reported atrocities have been backed with evidence. The piles of murdered bodies never materialized, and soldiers, police officers and rescue personnel on the front lines assert that, while anarchy reigned at times and people suffered indignities, most of the worst crimes reported at the time never happened.

September 26, 2005 By BRIAN THEVENOT and GORDON RUSSELL, Newhouse News Service

NEW ORLEANS — After five days managing near riots, medical horrors and unspeakable living conditions inside the Superdome, Louisiana National Guard Col. Thomas Beron prepared to hand over the dead to representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Following days of internationally reported murders, rapes and gang violence inside the stadium, the doctor from FEMA — Beron doesn't remember his name — came prepared for a grisly scene: He brought a refrigerated 18-wheeler and three doctors to process bodies.

"I've got a report of 200 bodies in the Dome," Beron recalled the doctor saying.

The real total?

Six, Beron said.

Of those, four died of natural causes, one overdosed and another jumped to his death in an apparent suicide, said Beron, who personally oversaw the handoff of bodies from a Dome freezer, where they lay atop melting bags of ice.

State health department officials in charge of body recovery put the official death count at the Dome at 10, but Beron said the other four bodies were found in the street near the Dome, not inside it. Both sources said no one had been murdered inside the stadium.

At the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, just four bodies have been recovered, despite reports of heaps of dead piled inside the building. Only one of the dead appeared to have been murdered, said health and law-enforcement officials.

The vast majority of reported atrocities committed by evacuees — mass murders, rapes and beatings — have turned out to be false, or at least unsupported by any evidence, according to key military, law-enforcement, medical and civilian officials in positions to know.

"I think 99 percent of it is (expletive)," said Sgt. 1st Class Jason Lachney, who played a key role in security and humanitarian work inside the Dome. "Don't get me wrong — bad things happened. But I didn't see any killing and raping and cutting of throats or anything ... 99 percent of the people in the Dome were very well-behaved."

As floodwaters forced tens of thousands of evacuees into the Dome and Convention Center, news of unspeakable acts poured out of the nation's media: People firing at helicopters trying to save them; women, children and even babies raped with abandon; people murdered for food and water; a 7-year-old raped and killed at the Convention Center.

Police, according to their chief, Eddie Compass, found themselves in multiple shootouts inside both shelters, and were forced to race toward muzzle flashes through the dark to disarm the criminals; snipers fired at doctors and soldiers from downtown high-rises.

In interviews with Oprah Winfrey, Compass reported rapes of "babies," and Mayor Ray Nagin spoke of "hundreds of armed gang members killing and raping people" inside the Dome. Other unidentified evacuees told of children stepping over so many bodies "we couldn't count."

The picture that emerged was one of the impoverished, overwhelmingly African-American masses of flood victims resorting to utter depravity, randomly attacking each other, as well as the police trying to protect them and the rescue workers trying to save them. The mayor told Winfrey the crowd has descended to an "almost animalistic state."

Four weeks after the storm, few of the widely reported atrocities have been backed with evidence. The piles of murdered bodies never materialized, and soldiers, police officers and rescue personnel on the front lines assert that, while anarchy reigned at times and people suffered indignities, most of the worst crimes reported at the time never happened.

"The information I had at the time, I thought it was credible," Compass said, admitting his earlier statements were false. Asked the source of the information, Compass said he didn't remember.

Compass conceded that rumor had overtaken, and often crippled, authorities' response to reported lawlessness, sending badly needed resources to situations that turned out not to exist.

The 400 to 500 soldiers in the Dome could have been easily overrun by increasingly agitated crowds in the Dome, but that never happened, said Col. James Knotts, a midlevel commander there.

"Everything was embellished, everything was exaggerated," said Deputy Police Superintendent Warren Riley. "If one guy said he saw six bodies, then another guy the same six, and another guy saw them — then that became 18."

Inside the Superdome, where National Guardsmen performed rigorous security checks before allowing anyone inside, only one shooting has been verified — and even that shooting, injuring Louisiana Guardsman Chris Watt of the 527th Engineer Battalion, has been widely misreported, said Maj. David Baldwin, who led the team of soldiers who arrested the alleged assailant.

Watt had indeed been attacked inside one of the Dome's locker rooms, where he entered with another soldier. In the darkness, as they walked through about six inches of water, Watt's attacker hit him with a metal rod, a piece of a cot. But the bullet that penetrated Watt's leg came from his own gun — he accidentally shot himself during the commotion. The attacker was sent to jail, Baldwin said.

Inside the Convention Center, Jimmie Fore, vice president of the state authority that runs the center, stayed in the building with a core group of 35 employees until Thursday. He said thugs hot-wired 75 forklifts and electric carts and looted food and booze, but he said he never saw any violent crimes committed, nor did any of his employees. Some, however, did report seeing armed men roaming the building, and Fore said he heard gunshots in the distance on about six occasions.

Rumors of rampant violence at the Convention Center prompted Louisiana National Guard Col. Jacques Thibodeaux to put together a 1,000-man force of soldiers and police in full battle gear to secure the center around noon on Friday.

It took only 20 minutes to take control, and soldiers met no resistance, Thibodeaux said. They found no evidence, witnesses or victims of any murders, rapes or beatings, Thibodeaux said.

One widely circulated story, told to The Times-Picayune by a slew of evacuees and two Arkansas National Guardsman, held that "30 or 40 bodies" were stored in a Convention Center freezer.

But a formal Arkansas Guard review of the matter later found that no soldier had actually seen the corpses, and that the information came from rumors in the food line for military, police and rescue workers in front of Harrah's Casino, said Col. John Edwards of the Arkansas National Guard, who conducted the review.

While numerous people told The Times-Picayune that they had witnessed rapes, in particular the rape of two young girls in the Superdome ladies' room and the killing of one of them, police and military officials say they know nothing of such an incident.

RECEIVED:

Thank You!

To everyone sending in material to GI Special. The count is now about 200+ a day, which means it's not possible to thank you individually, and if all the good stuff were used, each issue would run about 50 pages. Apologies that, with a full time job, it's not possible to acknowledge each contribution personally and still get the work done. T

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