

GI SPECIAL 3D50:

UKRAINIAN TROOPS GOING HOME NOW: NEVER TO RETURN



Ukrainian soldiers march during a turn-over ceremony in the Iraqi city of Kut, December 19, 2005. **More than 900 Ukrainian troops stationed in Iraq since 2003 are leaving.** REUTERS/Erik de Castro

**The Lone Whistle:
“Military Commanders Offered
Glowing Reports, But The Rank-
And-File Troops Cheney Met
Did Not Seem To Share Their
Enthusiasm”**



Cheney gets a “lone whistle” from Marines at Al-Asad Air Base, December 18, 2005.
REUTERS/Lawrence Jackson/Pool

[Thanks to D, PB and Justin Dressler for sending this in.]

[David Cortright, author of *Soldiers In Revolt*, commented to Max Watts: “Reminds me of LBJ talking to the 82nd Airborne after TET.”]

[Justin writes: “the 'lone whistle' is huge.”]

[Both have it right. When the history of the rebellion of the U.S. troops that finally stopped this war is written, this moment will be well remembered.]

[Here is the proof, as if any more were needed, that the troops have had enough of Cheney, Bush, the lies, the deaths, and this evil Imperial war. The plain fact is that the enemy of every member of the armed forces of the United States is in Washington DC, in control of the government, not in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy, killing both for their own greed. That requires an appropriate course of action.]

[Bush is too stupid understand what this means, as are the “anti-war” leaders who refuse to reach out to the troops. Both merely prolong the war and the killing.]

12.18.2005 AP

Facing tough questions from battle-weary troops, Vice President Dick Cheney on Sunday cited signs of progress in Iraq and signaled that force changes could come in 2006.

Cheney rode the wave of last week's parliamentary elections during a 10-hour surprise visit to Iraq that aimed to highlight progress at a time when Americans question the mission.

Military commanders and top government officials offered glowing reports, but the rank-and-file troops Cheney met did not seem to share their enthusiasm.

"From our perspective, we don't see much as far as gains," said Marine Cpl. Bradley Warren, the first to question Cheney in a round-table discussion with about 30 military members. "We're looking at small-picture stuff, not many gains. I was wondering what it looks like from the big side of the mountain - how Iraq's looking."

Cheney replied that remarkable progress has been made in the last year and a half.

Another Marine, Cpl. R.P. Zapella, asked, "Sir, what are the benefits of doing all this work to get Iraq on its feet?"

Cheney said the result could be a democratically elected Iraq that is unified, capable of defending itself and no longer a base for terrorists or a threat to its neighbors. "We believe all that's possible," he said.

Although he said that any decision about troop levels will be made by military commanders, Cheney told the troops, "I think you will see changes in our deployment patterns probably within this next year."

More than 2,100 troops have died in Iraq since the U.S. invaded in March 2003.

Shouts of "hooah!" from the audience interrupted Cheney a few times, but mostly the service members listened intently.

When he delivered the applause line, "We're in this fight to win. These colors don't run," the only sound was a lone whistle.

The skepticism that Cheney faced reflects opinions back home, where most Americans say they do not approve of President Bush's handling of the war. It was unique coming from a military audience, which typically receives administration officials more enthusiastically.

The daylong tour of Iraq was so shrouded in secrecy that even Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari and President Jalal Talabani were kept in the dark. The prime minister said he was surprised when he showed up for what he thought was a meeting with the U.S. ambassador and saw Cheney.

His next visit was to Taji Air Base, where he saw tanks that Iraqis had rebuilt and watched while they practiced a vehicle sweep at a security checkpoint.

U.S. forces guarded Cheney with weapons at the ready while Iraqi soldiers, who had no weapons, held their arms out as if they were carrying imaginary guns.

Cheney flew over Baghdad in a pack of eight fast-moving Blackhawk helicopters, following the airport road that has been the site of so many insurgent attacks and passing the courthouse where Saddam Hussein is being tried.

Cheney's staff kept the Iraq portion secret from reporters, waiting to reveal the plans when Air Force Two was preparing to refuel in the United Kingdom.

Once on the ground, the entourage transferred from his conspicuous white and blue 757 to an unmarked C-17 cargo plane that would fly overnight to Baghdad International Airport.

**LIAR
TRAITOR
SOLDIER-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



AFP/File/Tim Sloan

MORE:

**“The Public Understands The
Nature Of The Enemy When They
Recognize The Current Federal
Government As Being The Enemy”**

From: David Honish [Veterans For Peace]
To: president@whitehouse.gov

Sent: December 19, 2005 12:34 PM
Subject: Your press conference of 19 DEC 05

Mr. President:

This would be the part where normally one would start, "with all due respect..."

I've been trying to think for several minutes now why you would be deserving of any respect, and I draw a blank. I guess I'll just get right to it then.

About your press conference; please don't pee on my leg and tell me it is raining.

I only saw the last few minutes of it after coming home from an overnight shift. The press discussion after the conference mentioned you spoke of being angry at Congress for not allowing you to have people tortured anymore.

Apparently it requires more than just a memo from Alberto Gonzalez to void international law and the treaty obligations of this nation that prohibit torture.

You profess to be a Christian? Is torture a Christian value?

Had you done something more useful than get drunk and dance on the table tops of the officers club for the brief time you actually attended your Air National Guard unit training, you might grasp that other than the obvious moral reasons, this nation does not condone torture because to do so is to invite our service members captured by enemy forces to also be tortured. (Have Senator McCain explain it to you.)

You told the press that the public "doesn't understand the nature of the enemy."

I beg to differ.

The daughter of one of the hospice patients I was working with this weekend told me that her church from North Texas had sent a mobile kitchen to Louisiana and Mississippi to assist in recovery after hurricane Katrina.

She said her church pastor suffered a non-life threatening gunshot wound to the head in Biloxi Mississippi.

It seems that he was mistaken by an angry local resident as being a FEMA staff member. This clearly indicates to me that the public understands the nature of the enemy when they recognize the current federal government as being the enemy.

You made a feeble attempt to justify the unconstitutional violations of civil liberties by the patriot act as being useful "to connect the dots."

I suppose some people think that was a metaphor? Somehow, I envision the CIA finding it more useful to provide you with a daily intelligence briefing in the format of a connect the dots booklet, or perhaps a coloring book in order to improve your comprehension?

You need better speech writers who can use a more popular form of comedy than irony to brighten up your presentation.

I refer to you telling one reporter "I'm not going to answer that question," and then stating that to have done so would have been "revealing secret sources."

Did you mean like having Whitehouse staff deliberately exposing the identity of covert CIA WMD experts in order to exact revenge on their spouse for exposing Whitehouse lies about nonexistent WMD's?

Sincerely,
David Honish

Veteran of the US Army, US Army Reserve, and Texas Army National Guard
(none of which I deserted from)

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 IN ACTION AT RAMADI

December 19, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-12-25C

FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action by small arms fire while conducting combat operations against the enemy in ar Ramadi, Dec. 18.

Marine From Cullman Murdered

Dec 19 News42 WIAT

A marine from Cullman is dead after being shot in the head while in his barracks Friday night in Iraq.

21-year-old marine Corporal Adam Fales was asleep when someone came in and shot him in the back of the head.

Fales was nearing the end of his four year tour of duty and was due home in February.

The incident is under investigation by the Marine Corps.

Valley Soldier Killed By Device

Dec 18, 2005 KGBT

Less than two weeks before Christmas and Valley family learns their son is killed in Iraq.

Spc. James C. Kesinger, 32, was among four soldiers killed Tuesday conducting combat operations in Taji when an improvised explosive device detonated near their armored vehicle.

Kesinger was assigned to the Army's 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Fort Riley, Kan.

The serviceman is not originally from the Valley, but his wife's family is from Pharr.

Kesinger leaves behind his wife Janie, two step-daughters and a five month old son named Jared.

His in-laws, Jesus and San Juanita Zuniga, tell Action 4 News they loved their son-in-law very much.

They say they were planning to spend Christmas with their daughter on base in Fort Riley, Kansas, where Kesinger was stationed.

But instead she will be coming to the Valley to plan her husband's funeral, which will be held in Corpus Christi.

"My daughter can't sleep. She gets up and goes to the computer to look for his emails - he always emailed her every day."

She says her daughter and Kesinger actually met on the Internet.

Kesinger was among three Texas service member who have died in Iraq in December, and at least 187 have died since the war began in March 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Soldier From Lovelock Dies

Dec 09, 2005 By ED VOGEL, REVIEW-JOURNAL CAPITAL BUREAU

A 20-year-old U.S. Army soldier from Lovelock died Tuesday of noncombat injuries in Iraq.

Army Private First Class Thomas C. Siekert died in Bayrj, Iraq, according to the Army. He is the 30th military person with ties to Nevada to die in the war on terror.

Siekert's father, Curtis, said, "My son has died in Iraq.

"I don't know what to say. I am trying to get more information," the tearful father said in a telephone interview. Curtis Siekert said that funeral arrangements have not yet been made.

Thomas Siekert was assigned to the 101st. Airborne Division in Fort Campbell, Ky.

He was a 2004 graduate of Lovelock High School, where he participated on the school's track team.

"He was a fine young man," Lovelock High School Principal Charles Sanford said. "It doesn't get any harder than this. As one staff member said quite eloquently: 'Everyone knows everyone here. Everyone has a broken heart.' "

Lovelock, in Pershing County about 90 miles northeast of Reno, has a population of 2,500.

**LETHAL ENVIRONMENT
NO HONORABLE MISSION
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. serviceman beside a car bomb explosion in Baghdad November 26, 2005.
REUTERS/Ali Jasim

TROOP NEWS

“We Want To Come Home And It's Only People Like You In The Peace Movement That Give Us Hope”

December 9, 2005 Duncan Campbell, The Guardian: Interview With Cindy Sheehan, London [Excerpts]

"I don't buy into the fact that George Bush and Tony Blair can't be called terrorists because they are elected officials. This occupation of Iraq is killing innocent people by the thousand."

“I get feedback from the troops all the time and 99.9% say, 'Keep on doing what you're doing because it's a nightmare here and we want to come home and it's only people like you in the peace movement that give us hope.'”

Army Took More Low-Aptitude Recruits

Dec. 16, 2005 By Tom Bowman, Baltimore Sun

WASHINGTON: The Army met its recruiting goal for November by again accepting a high percentage of recruits who scored in the lowest category on the military's aptitude tests, Pentagon officials said Thursday, raising renewed concerns that the quality of the all-volunteer force will suffer.

The Army exceeded its 5,600 recruit goal by 256 for November, while the Army Reserve brought in 1,454 recruits, exceeding its target by 112. To do so, they accepted a “double digit” percentage of recruits who scored between 16 and 30 out of a possible 99 on the military's aptitude test, said officials who requested anonymity.

The Army may accept no more than 4 percent annually, according to Defense Department rules. While officials last month disclosed the percentage accepted in October, Thursday they refused to reveal the November figure.

For more than a decade, the Army kept its Category IV soldiers to 2 percent of its recruitment pool.

But last year, faced with a difficult recruiting climate because of the war in Iraq, Army Secretary Francis Harvey decided to double the number of Category IV soldiers.

The increasing reliance on the lowest-scoring recruits is troubling to former officers who fear that the quality of the force will erode.

They say that the increasingly high-tech Army needs even more qualified soldiers. And with troops facing more complex duties involving nation building and peacekeeping duties, good judgment is more important.

“It Is A Cheap Shot At The Vietnam Vet”

Letter To The Editor
12.19.05
Army Times

I'm a retired E-8 who spent four years of active duty in the Air Force way back when. I put in my year in Vietnam like most everyone I know and later rejoined the Army National Guard, serving a total of 26 years combined.

Among the many proposals over the last five years to lower the age at which a reservist can receive retired pay, the latest by Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., is among the worst.

I understand it will allow soldiers who are eligible for retired pay to receive it three months earlier for every three months spent on active duty. On the surface, this sounds fair, but it isn't because only active duty since Sept. 11, 2001, will count.

This proposal is just another slap in the face of every Vietnam veteran and any other soldier who served our country in an earlier conflict.

Is this the “what have you done for me lately” approach?

Our service is not valued by some, it appears. So you can add this to the long list of insults we have endured.

This proposal may pass because it's cheap — just a few will qualify. Well, it's cheap in another way: It is a cheap shot at the Vietnam vet.

Master Sgt. Ben Delaney (ret)
Olympia, Wash.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



Iraqi policemen examine vehicles after a bomb attack against a police colonel in Baghdad, December 19, 2005. (Faleh Kheiber/Reuters)

Dec 19 AFP & AlJazeera & (AP) & Deutsche Presse-Agentur & Reuters

Resistance fighters seriously wounded Baghdad's deputy governor, Ziyad Tarek al-Zubai, and killed three of his bodyguards in an ambush on his convoy in the south of the capital. Another bodyguard was also hurt.

A car bomb wounded policemen in an attack on a police colonel.

Colonel Salam Aalag Zahal, police chief in the capital's southern district of Dura, was driving to work when the bomb exploded. Both he and two bodyguards were hurt. Seven policemen are said to be among the wounded.

Killed in Bayji by insurgents was an employee of the Northern Oil Company.

BALAD - Insurgents killed two Iraqi contractors who were travelling to a U.S. military base near Balad. Another person was wounded in the attack, the U.S. and Iraqi military said.

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

Falluja 12.05:

The First Inside Report From The City: “His Life Would Be Better Spent Planning To Kill Americans Over A Long Period”

In a sign that tactics may be changing, Abu Safi said his spiritual leader had advised him against a suicide mission. The cleric told him his life would be better spent planning to kill Americans over a long period.

December 18, 2005 Hala Jaber, Falluja, The Sunday Times [Excerpts]

FIRST they made me change out of my western clothes into a flowing black burqa and slippers. Then I squeezed on to the back seat of a car packed with other women and children for the nerve-jangling journey ahead. A toddler was told to sit on my lap so I was almost hidden from view.

The driver warned me not to speak if we were stopped, in case Iraqi National Guards noticed my foreign accent. All the precautions were in place for a perilous drive past roadblocks into Falluja, the shattered Iraqi city that no western newspaper reporter has entered for more than a year without the supervision of coalition forces.

The car bumped along a dusty track across farmland and through small villages on a roundabout route to the city in Iraq's Sunni heartland, 40 miles west of Baghdad.

Eventually we were stopped at one of the checkpoints where access is restricted to residents carrying biometric identity cards. I held my breath as a guard glanced inside our car. The women beside me chatted, trying to appear unconcerned.

Moments later we were waved forward and my visit to Iraq's most defiant insurgent stronghold had begun. For the next five days residents and insurgents alike smuggled me around the ruined city, showing me the searing reality of life under American siege.

In November 2004 I was the last western reporter to leave Falluja before the US Army launched Operation Phantom Fury, an air and land assault aimed at eliminating insurgents from a city that had become a bastion of resistance to coalition rule.

Last weekend I was the first to return independently and it was impossible not to be shocked by the devastation. Huge areas of what were once homes have been

flattened. On countless street corners, mountains of rubbish spew plumes of black smoke into the air.

Fields of rubble stretch as far as the eye can see. Here and there children scamper across the ravaged landscape, seeking out larger bricks and rocks for use in laborious rebuilding.

Of the swift reconstruction promised by Baghdad in the wake of the US-led assault, there are only sporadic signs in wealthier areas. Mostly there are women like Rasmiya Mohammed Ali, crouching in the ruins of her home, chipping away with a small hammer at broken breeze blocks salvaged by her sons, aged seven and eight.

“They did not even give us a tent. What can I do but clean and clear these stones so that we can rebuild our home?” said Ali, a mother of five who received only \$700 compensation after her home was destroyed during the American onslaught.

I had been trying for months to re-enter Falluja to report on its progress since US-led forces in effect cut it off from the rest of Iraq.

When I finally reached the city, I was reminded of a remark by a US officer in Vietnam who claimed he had to destroy a village to save it. Falluja has indeed been destroyed. But I found nobody there who thinks it has been saved.

By sheer force of arms, the Americans occupied Falluja and put a temporary stop to resistance in the city. As the rest of the world soon discovered, the insurgency continued elsewhere.

Yet what I found in Falluja last week was even more dispiriting. It is not only that promises to reconstruct the city and restore normality have manifestly been broken.

The bitter truth is that the actions of US and Iraqi forces have reignited the insurgency. Anger, hate and mistrust of America are deeper than ever.

Mistakes by American soldiers and Iraqi National Guards, drawn mainly from the country's Shi'ite majority, have alienated residents and encouraged support for insurgents.

“They said they attacked us to provide us with security,” complained Um Ahmad, whose family had agreed to shelter me at considerable risk to themselves.

A few weeks ago her home was raided by US soldiers, who broke down doors and searched through family possessions. They claimed to be hunting an insurgent suspect, but later apologised. They had raided the wrong house.

“We are afraid of the National Guards and American soldiers who are supposed to be protecting us,” Um Ahmad said. “Things are getting worse.”

Abu Seif had no way of knowing when he went to bed one night last February that he was about to be seized and accused of killing Kenneth Bigley, the British engineer who was taken hostage and later beheaded.

It was 4am when Abu Seif, a wealthy businessman, was awoken by the sound of American helicopters flying low and close. Moments later US Marines with dogs burst into his house firing percussion grenades of tear gas.

Handcuffed and blindfolded, he was thrown on to a helicopter and eventually found himself being asked why he had murdered Bigley. His answer, "Who's Bigley?" apparently enraged his American interrogator, who unsheathed a knife and pressed it against his neck.

Over the next 15 days he was subjected to the interrogation routines that have become notorious in US internment camps. Electric cables were placed on his chained legs and he was subjected to a mock electrocution, he said. He suffered sleep deprivation and disorientation. Headphones were clamped to his ears and played "indescribable, ugly, loud noises".

His captors soon realised that he had nothing to tell and he was flown to another location, where his handcuffs were removed and an Arabic-speaking woman marine was assigned to prepare him for release.

She brought him good food and let him use her CD player. A few days later he was offered a Koran and a new prayer mat, and was told to walk away without looking back.

The experience so embittered Abu Seif that he now supports the insurgents. "What the Americans have done to Falluja is unacceptable, and if they think it is over they do not know what is coming," he said.

City officials warned that hardships and detentions were intensifying hostility to the Americans.

Stoking the anger has been the slow pace of compensation payments, despite the allocation of \$490m by Iraq's interim government last year.

Falluja's mayor, Dhari abdel Hadi al-Irssan, claims that only 20% of the compensation promised has reached the city.

By early evening the streets of Falluja begin to empty. Only 170,000 people, half the original population, have returned. They live in difficult conditions with 4,200 American Marines and 5,000 Iraqi troops enforcing a curfew from 11pm to 6am.

"The Americans should take heed that when people reach desperation it will be difficult to control the outcome," al-Irssan warned. "The rage inside Falluja is not in anyone's interest. But no one is listening to our warnings."

Nor is the coalition making much effort to enlist the mayor's support. US soldiers have raided his house four times, he said, most recently last week when one of his bodyguards was shot by a marine.

"He is in hospital having been injured in the lungs and liver," the mayor said, shaking his head in bewilderment.

With so many institutions damaged, those that remain are under intolerable pressure. School buildings are being used by three or four schools holding classes in shifts. Electricity and water are severely limited.

I was lucky enough to stay with a family that can afford a generator, but they still have to ration themselves. At night many people rely on oil lanterns. A dire petrol shortage compounds the frustration.

Um Ahmad's elder son said that US and Iraqi troops were preventing residents from filling jerry cans outside Falluja and bringing them back into town, perhaps because they fear the petrol will be used for fire bombs.

In some areas the stench of sewage fills the air, as grimy toddlers and barefooted children clamber over the skeletons of vehicles piled in the rubble. I discovered for myself how hard it is to keep clean when Um Ahmad offered me a pot of water that she had boiled on an ancient stove in the bathroom, to be mixed with a pot of cold water for pouring in a makeshift shower.

While the city's residents struggle with their daily routine, new tensions are spreading. The activities of the Iraqi National Guards are heightening sectarian strains.

Sunni residents claim the National Guards routinely break into their shops and businesses at night for supposed security operations. Many complain of verbal abuse from Shi'ite soldiers. Random arrests are said to be commonplace.

The mayor showed me complaints from Falluja residents who say their belongings were stolen during raids by US troops and the National Guards. Al-Irssan claimed that factories and homes had been stripped of machinery, generators and other valuables.

One woman was driving home with \$2,000 she had just received as compensation for losing her home when she was stopped and robbed by Iraqi troops. She has filed a formal complaint. Another man lost \$3,500 in a similar incident.

Yet even these deprivations pale by comparison with the fatalities Falluja families claim to have suffered at the hands of occupying forces. Witnesses spoke of American Marines dumping bodies in the Euphrates just after the offensive and of mass graves where hundreds are allegedly buried.

Last week Abu Salam walked into a makeshift graveyard — once a football stadium — to perform his daily ritual of reciting the Koran's opening verses for the souls of the dead. He hopes that one of his sons is among the scores of unnamed and unmarked mounds.

Abu Salam has lost four children to US operations in Falluja. Bilal, a five-year-old boy, and Nawal, a three-year-old girl, were killed in the April offensive; two sons, aged 15 and 18, disappeared after Operation Phantom Fury.

"My 18-year-old was a fighter, a resister who stayed to defend his city; there was no shame in that," Abu Salam said. "He was no terrorist, but I will not hide his participation."

Abu Salam has no idea how his sons may have died, but he fears their bodies were consigned to the river or one of the mass graves. He has since joined the resistance himself.

“They are treading on our honour,” he said of US forces. “They want to destroy us because we said no to occupation, but by the will of God they will not be able to.”

It was made clear to me that most of Falluja’s residents are alienated from authority. My conversations repeatedly revolved around stories of the dead and allegations of new killings by pro-government forces.

“There is now hatred and anger against the government and the forces representing this government,” the mayor said.

The insurgents are returning to exploit the popular rage. At a clandestine meeting with insurgent leaders representing the main factions fighting in Iraq, I learnt that a new form of resistance is taking shape.

The meeting was attended by 11 commanders who sat on thin mattresses scattered around the floor of a house. Some leant semi-automatic rifles against the wall in one corner; others kept their pistols beside them.

“The new resistance that has been forming in Falluja is one that will be characterised by revenge and settling scores,” the commander of one fundamentalist faction explained.

“As well as fighting the occupation, its aim will include avenging . . . the crimes committed by the so-called (Iraqi) forces in the period after the offensives,” he said.

The commander claimed that US and Iraqi troops had “violated the sanctity of homes, families and even religion . . . The arrests of thousands of men mean that every home now has suffered the loss or detention of at least one of its males”.

Having melted away in the face of earlier US onslaughts, the resistance has learnt to organise itself differently. Another faction commander added: “Groups and cells are being formed but, unlike in the past, the hierarchy and leadership will be difficult to track.”

The insurgents also appear to be learning that random attacks producing heavy civilian casualties can divide communities. “Lessons have been learnt that the people are important for the survival of the resistance and to alienate the residents will foil our work,” the commander said.

The insurgent leaders appeared to be waiting for the results of last week’s elections before deciding how to proceed. There was talk of a “period of grace” to see if anything in Falluja changes as a result. If there is no early relief, one commander added, attacks will be intensified.

At a separate meeting I saw Abu Safi, a member of the Ansar al-Sunnah insurgent group which has claimed responsibility for several suicide bombings and executions of both foreign and Iraqi hostages. But in a sign that tactics may be changing, Abu Safi said his spiritual leader had advised him against a suicide mission.

The cleric told him his life would be better spent planning to kill Americans over a long period. Abu Safi said his group was now forming smaller cells to avoid infiltration by informers and was planning more use of hit-and-run attacks.

“It is hard to say, but there is sympathy for the insurgency,” a US military official admitted recently. “Basically everyone here has the potential to be an insurgent.”

For Falluja’s beleaguered residents, no early end appears to be in sight to the conflict that has crushed their city. When short bursts of gunfire echoed through the night close to the house where I was meeting the insurgent commanders, my heart sank and I braced myself for a raid.

A few telephone calls later, laughter broke out in the lantern-lit room. It turned out that the Iraqi national soccer team had beaten Syria 4-3 on penalties to claim the gold medal at the West Asian games. Local people were celebrating by shooting into the air.

It was a rare moment of release for a city where gunfire usually means the return of a desperate cycle of rebellion, retaliation and revenge.

Some names have been changed to protect sources

“Thousands Of Angry Iraqis Took To The Streets”



Tyres burn in Basra as thousands of angry Iraqis took to the streets to protest government-imposed gasoline price increases. (AFP/Essam Al-Sudani)

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: **SOME BASTARDS RAISED GAS PRICES HERE TOO, EXCEPT IT DIDN'T LEAD TO "VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS" HERE. TOO BAD**]

12.19.05 By MARIAM FAM, AP & By Sinan Salaheddin, The Associated Press

Violent demonstrations broke out across Iraq and the oil minister threatened to resign after the government raised the prices of gasoline and cooking fuel.

The price of low-grade diesel was raised nine-fold to about 10 cents a liter, or about 38 cents a gallon. Kerosene prices were raised fivefold and cooking gas threefold.

Oil Minister Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum said that when the Cabinet increased prices, it also decided that the extra money would be used to establish a fund for more than 2 million low-income families to help them pay for the fuel.

Some aid money was supposed to reach the families before the price increases, but that did not happen, he said.

"Dr. Ibrahim will submit his resignation to the Iraqi government if the situation continues as is," he said, referring to himself. "We should take in consideration the living conditions and the economic situation of the citizens."

In Amarah, 180 miles southeast of Baghdad, police fired into the air to disperse hundreds of protesters gathered in front of the provincial government headquarters.

The demonstrators, however, did not leave, and some scuffled with police. Protesters also briefly blocked the main road between Amarah, Basra and Baghdad.

Drivers blocked roads and burned tires near fuel stations in the southern city of Basra, and hundreds of Iraqis demonstrated outside the governor's headquarters to protest the price increases.

In Tikrit, 80 miles north of Baghdad, about 500 people demonstrated against the price hikes, giving a letter of protest to the city council to hand over to Cabinet ministers.

The governor of Basra said he called an emergency provincial council meeting, during which members decided not to honor the price increases. Gov. Mohammed al-Waeli said provincial council members were informing gas stations in the province of the decision.

<p style="text-align: center;">OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

Collaborator Cops: Not Ready For Prime Time



Police car destroyed during fighting between a collaborator police patrol and a group of resistance soldiers in the Al-Jamiyah neighborhood, western Baghdad, Dec. 18, 2005. One policeman was killed and ten wounded. (AP Photo/Asaad Muhsin)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Then Why Aren't They Home Yet??”

From: PB
To: GI Special
Sent: December 19, 2005

"The Syrian border is back under Iraq control now," U.S. Lt. Gen. Marty Dempsey told the vice president, pointing to a map of Iraqi troop locations.

"When people say, 'When will Iraq take control of its own security?' the answer truly is it already has."

Then why aren't the troops home yet??

Got That Right

"In a speech, President Bush said, 'As president, I am responsible for the decision to go into Iraq.'

"Yeah, well, I don't think he has to worry about other people trying to take credit for that one. That's like the captain of the Titanic saying 'hitting the iceberg, that was my idea.'"

Jay Leno, New York Times, December 18, 2005

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



Foreign fighters from Charlie Company 2nd Battalion 22 Infantry regiment search an Iraqi citizen in eastern Baghdad, December 7, 2005. (Laszlo Balogh/Reuters)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can grab and search pedestrians at will, kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like

better and call it “sovereign” and “detain” anybody who doesn’t like it in some prison without any changes being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to occupy their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that?]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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Bush Least Popular Of Last Ten US Presidents

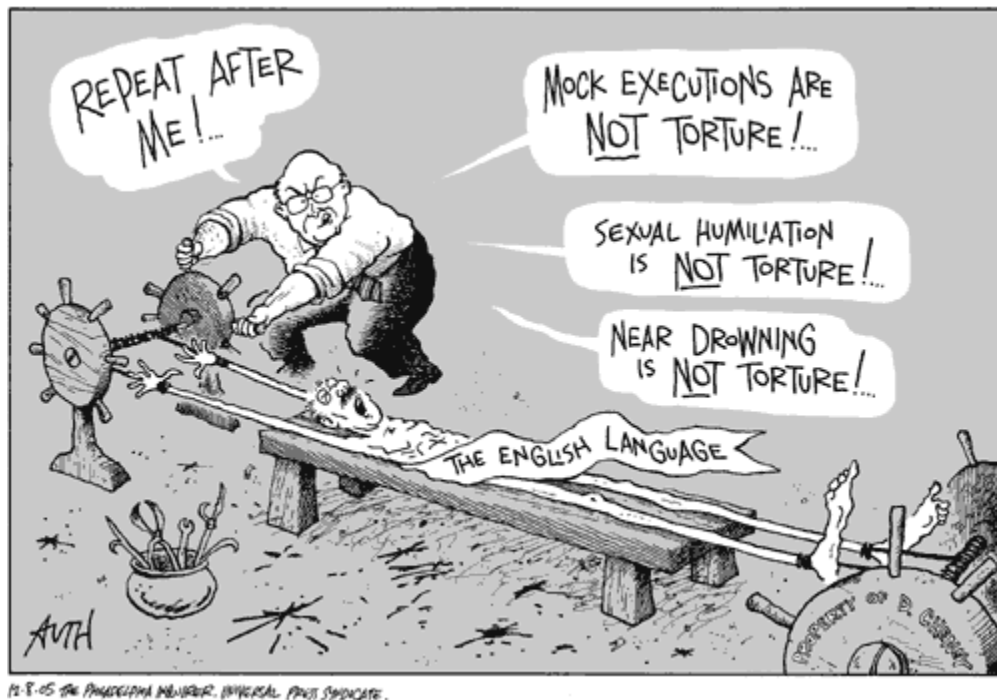
Washington, Dec 17 (Prensa Latina)

George W. Bush has achieved the dubious honor of scoring as the least popular of the last ten US presidents, a National Qualitative Center survey reported Friday.

Only nine percent of the 662 surveyed people selected President Bush as their favorite in an opinion poll, in which JFK was favored by 27 percent and Bill Clinton by 25 percent.

Bush was considered the most warlike by 43 percent, the worst for economic progress (42 percent), and the less efficient (33 percent).

The National Qualitative Center usually carries out marketing studies and developed this survey as part of research for a book on popular preferences, explained Ken Berwitz, one of the authors.



The Traitor Bush Brings On “An Imperial Presidency”

December 18, 2005 St. Petersburg Times Editorial [Excerpt]

Just as the Senate was considering the reauthorization of the USA Patriot Act and debating the safeguards needed to protect Americans from excessive government snooping, it was revealed that the NSA has been spying on potentially thousands of people in this country, without first going to a court for approval.

This is part of an imperial presidency that has emerged under Bush since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

On the authority of the executive branch alone, the administration has imprisoned people for years without charge, captured suspects and put them in secret overseas prisons, and engaged in interrogation techniques that violate domestic law and international treaties.

Now the New York Times report on more spying reveals that the dictates of the Fourth Amendment, requiring a showing of probable cause before someone's privacy can be invaded, have been set aside upon the president's sole say-so.

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.

FBI Shits Pants Over Student Wanting A Book By Mao From School Library

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

17 December 2005 By Aaron Nicodemus, The Standard-Times

NEW BEDFORD -- A senior at UMass Dartmouth was visited by federal agents two months ago, after he requested a copy of Mao Tse-Tung's tome on Communism called "The Little Red Book."

Two history professors at UMass Dartmouth, Brian Glyn Williams and Robert Pontbriand, said the student told them he requested the book through the UMass Dartmouth library's interlibrary loan program.

The student, who was completing a research paper on Communism for Professor Pontbriand's class on fascism and totalitarianism, filled out a form for the request, leaving his name, address, phone number and Social Security number. He was later visited at his parents' home in New Bedford by two agents of the Department of Homeland Security, the professors said.

The professors said the student was told by the agents that the book is on a "watch list," and that his background, which included significant time abroad, triggered them to investigate the student further.

"I tell my students to go to the direct source, and so he asked for the official Peking version of the book," Professor Pontbriand said. "Apparently, the Department of Homeland Security is monitoring inter-library loans, because that's what triggered the visit, as I understand it."

Although The Standard-Times knows the name of the student, he is not coming forward because he fears repercussions should his name become public. He has not spoken to The Standard-Times.

The professors had been asked to comment on a report that President Bush had authorized the National Security Agency to spy on as many as 500 people at any given time since 2002 in this country.

The Little Red Book, is a collection of quotations and speech excerpts from Chinese leader Mao Tse-Tung.

In the 1950s and '60s, during the Cultural Revolution in China, it was required reading. Although there are abridged versions available, the student asked for a version translated directly from the original book.

The student told Professor Pontbriand and Dr. Williams that the Homeland Security agents told him the book was on a "watch list." They brought the book with them, but did not leave it with the student, the professors said.

Dr. Williams said in his research, he regularly contacts people in Afghanistan, Chechnya and other Muslim hot spots, and suspects that some of his calls are monitored.

"My instinct is that there is a lot more monitoring than we think," he said.

Dr. Williams said he had been planning to offer a course on terrorism next semester, but is reconsidering, because it might put his students at risk.

"I shudder to think of all the students I've had monitoring al-Qaeda Web sites, what the government must think of that," he said. "Mao Tse-Tung is completely harmless."

Pentagon Spies On Raging Grannies: “Are They Really That Stupid?”

17 December 2005 By Matthew Rothschild, The Progressive [Excerpt]

According to an MSNBC story on December 13, Rumsfeld's Pentagon is tracking some of the most innocuous and lawful protests.

The Pentagon's partial file on the spying lists 43 events in a six-month period alone, dating from November 11, 2004, to May 7, 2005. Pentagon political spying took place in the following states and the District of Columbia: Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nebraska,

New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

One took place in Madison, Wisconsin, on April 26, 2005, according to the Madison Capital Times.

It was sponsored by the Student Labor Action Coalition and the Stop the War, the Capital Times reported. “Participants in the rally numbered only about 20,” the paper said, and it was designed to protest recruitment in Madison. “A planned Air Force recruiting drive was abandoned as a result.”

The Pentagon’s database “listed the type of threat posed by the event as ‘anti-DOD vandalism’ and marked the source as ‘not credible.’ The case, however, was left on a status of ‘open/unresolved,’ ” the Capital Times reported.

The Pentagon snoopied on another counter-recruitment protest, this one in Santa Cruz on April 5. It labeled the protest a credible “threat.”

“Over 300 students marched into a campus job fair, occupying the building and holding a teach-in until all military recruiters left,” according Santa Cruz Indymedia. It quoted third-year student Jen Low saying: “The notion of the Pentagon spying on peaceful protesters is a major threat to the freedoms that they claim to protect.”

The Pentagon also surveilled Code Pink and the Raging Grannies in Northern California, starting a file on a November 10, 2004, protest at the Sacramento Military Entrance Processing Station (“Disposition: Open/Unresolved,” the document states) and a May 7, 2005, counter-recruiting protest at the San Francisco Recruiting Station (“probably peaceful,” it notes).

“It’s just a big waste of time and money,” says Natalie Wormeli, who is on the board of directors of the Northern California ACLU and is co-founder of the Davis chapter of Code Pink.

“I think taxpayers should be outraged at that.” She adds, “We are not the enemy of the state. And I do worry it could have a chilling effect on newcomers to the cause. I get concerned we’re headed to a new COINTELPRO. The U.S. can do better this. We should not be living in a surveillance society.”

Ruth Robertson of the Raging Grannies, who provided songs for the San Francisco rally, says, “I guess they still don’t get it that grannies in flowery hats are peaceable.”

Gail Sredanovic of the Raging Grannies makes an additional point: “Aside from the disturbing civil liberties aspects of the Pentagon spying on local peace groups, it makes me scared to think that the folks in charge of protecting us from possible terrorist attacks can’t tell the difference between a terrorist threat and a peaceful citizen gathering.

“Are they really that stupid?”

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Blacks' Joblessness Grows To Record Proportions

19 December 2005 The Louisiana Weekly

When the federal government last month released figures the unemployment rate among whites held steady at 4.3 percent, while the black unemployment rate climbed to a staggering 10.6 percent, according to the US Department of Labor.

The Bush administration however, is touting an overall positive outlook for the economy citing that America added 215,000 jobs for the month of November.

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)

Received:

Comment: "The Left-Behind Books"

From: JM
To: GI Special
Sent: December 19, 2005 2:20 AM
Subject: Comment: The Left-Behind Books"

"The Best Thing About The Left-Behind Books Is The Way The Non-Christians Get Their Guts Pulled Out By God"

Thank God for the sanity of Joe Bageant. When I first discovered these monstrous, best selling, books existed I was horrified.

It takes a power of evil to invent horror like this.

It's time God opened up a chasm to swallow the evil that claims to speak in his name.

What happened to the ideas of Jesus who started Christianity? He spoke of tolerance, forgiveness and love. His teachings are being destroyed by these new, Satanistic, Christians.

They most surely follow Satan, not Christ. Is the world about to enter a new Dark Age, the second Inquisition, wedded to the second lot of Crusades, or will sanity prevail?

Received:

Enlistments

From: Boat1956@aol.com
To: GI Special
Sent: December 18, 2005 5:19 PM
Subject: Enlistments

Former Military: Interesting that someone signs a contract with the national Guard or Reserves and then is pissed off because they got called to duty. No matter what duty, they said they would serve.

If they thought they were going to be stationed in the good USA, collect there pay and get college for service, It was a real eye opener to fulfill there contract by being called to "Real War" duty. Korea was the same, It was the Reserves who went and were probably ill trained, but they did there duty.

No one wants to be killed or seriously crippled, but this is a different service. They sign on, not being drafted and its usually for the learning a trade, getting college or for the money or what ever. We may not have liked it, but we served, so all this shit of bringing the troops now is bullshit.

Finish the job, good bad or ugly, but get it done to the best of your ability and forget about those naysayers.

This is not a perfect world, and we are not privy to all the politics that goes on between various countries. Ya, mistakes are going to be made, and hopefully corrected, but we don't need some private who gets his news from the media or some blog calling for shots he or she knows nothing about.

There are more Military personnel that are over there that think we are doing a worth while job as the minority that think we are not. Get Out Now, Bullshit.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

All GI Special issues achieved at website <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following have also posted issues; there may be others:

<http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>,
www.williambowles.info/qispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/,

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

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