

GI SPECIAL 3D51:

BULGARIAN TROOPS GOING HOME NOW: NEVER TO RETURN



Bulgarian troops from Iraq arrive at Sofia, Bulgaria airport Dec. 20, 2005. Bulgaria began withdrawing the remainder of its troops from Iraq on Tuesday, the Defense Ministry announced. All are expected to return home by the end of this month.
(AP Photo/Dimitar Deinov)

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: COALITION OF THE SHRINKING. MAYBE BUSH WILL ORDER THE NSA TO TAP THEIR PHONES SO HE CAN GET ADVANCE NOTICE OF WHO THE NEXT COUNTRY TO BAIL WILL BE?]

12.20.05 By JASON STRAZIUSO & By ALEKSANDAR VASOVIC, Associated Press

Ukraine began the final withdrawal of its remaining 876 troops Tuesday. The government began calling home troops in March. President Viktor Yushchenko made a pullout from Iraq one of his campaign promises.

The U-S is picking up the three million dollar cost of Ukraine's withdrawal.

The multinational force has steadily unraveled as the death toll rises and angry publics clamor for troops to leave.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Summers County Soldier Dies

12/15/2005 Story by Aaron Mesmer, West Virginia Media

22-year-old Brian Karim is the second soldier from Hinton to die in combat this year.

22-year-old Army Staff Sgt. Brian Karim from Hinton died Tuesday when his Humvee ran over a roadside bomb in Baghdad, Iraq. Karim died of head injuries while being transported to the hospital.

"It is hard for all of us to think he had so much potential and just to think that everything is now lost," said David Harvey, who graduated from Summers County High School with Karim in 2001.

Harvey said he last saw Karim in Hinton about three months ago. "I seen him in the store and I said, 'Oh, so you're back, thanks for serving over there, and thanks for doing this.' And he said, 'you know, you're the first person to thank me,'" Harvey said.

In addition to a son who's less than a year old, Karim leaves behind his wife and high school sweetheart Rachel Lasley, who Harvey said was the center of Karim's universe. The two were voted cutest couple when they were seniors in high school.

Karim is the second soldier from Hinton to die in combat this year. 25-year-old Sgt. Bernard Sembly Junior was shot in the chest by a sniper in May.

People in the close-knit community of Hinton said they'll pull through just as they did six months ago.

"Everybody will just rally around their family, and we will be OK, but it's just very hard," said Harvey. "He died...trying to make life better for people."

"We'll all probably always remember him, you know, but life goes on," said Henry Jackson, a friend of Karim's family.

According to friends, funeral arrangements will be made after Karim's body is brought back to the U.S.

Irwin Soldier Killed In Iraq By Explosives

December 13, 2005 By ADRIENNE ZIEGLER, Staff Writer, Desert Dispatch

A Fort Irwin soldier was killed Friday in Baghdad, Iraq when an improvised explosive device hidden in a vehicle detonated on a road in the western Abu Ghraib region of Baghdad

Sgt. Adrian Orosco, 26, was doing unspecified combat operations when the IED exploded, said Fort Irwin Public Affairs Officer Maj. John Clearwater.

Orosco was an infantryman with the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, stationed at Fort Irwin. He was from Corcoran.

Orosco leaves behind a wife, Elizabeth, and three children between the ages of 3 and 7, who still live at Fort Irwin, Maj. Clearwater said.

Orosco arrived at Fort Irwin in October 2004, and was deployed to Iraq shortly after his arrival. Fort Irwin was his first assignment after his initial Army entry training, according to Clearwater.

Orosco's death is Fort Irwin's 14th casualty since Operation Iraqi Freedom began, and the third soldier killed in Iraq from the 1st Squadron.

U.S. Military Convoy Hit In Baghdad



U.S. Military convoy of trucks in flames after they were attacked by insurgents in al-Adel highway in the outskirts of west Baghdad December 20, 2005. A group of insurgents opened fire at the convoy of six trucks loaded with pipes killing two of its drivers. REUTERS/Ali Jasim

1,492 Air Missions In November

December 20, 2005 Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps have flown thousands of missions in support of U.S. ground troops in Iraq this fall with little attention back home, including attacks by unmanned Predator aircraft armed with Hellfire missiles, military records show.

The number of U.S. airstrikes increased in the weeks leading up to last Thursday's election, from a monthly average of about 35 last summer to more than 60 in September and 120 or more in October and November.

The monthly number of air missions, including refueling and other support flights, grew from 1,111 in September to 1,492 in November, according to figures provided by Central Command Air Force's public affairs office.

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



11.4.05: US soldiers during a patrol of western Baghdad. (AFP/David Furst)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**Just In Case You Missed It The First Ten
Times**

20 December 2005 By Françoise Chipaux, Le Monde & 12.19.05 Reuters

The year 2005 was the deadliest since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, and **the American Army lost proportionally more soldiers in Afghanistan than in Iraq.**

Militants killed three policemen early on Monday.

TROOP NEWS

“Faced With Growing Unrest Among Soldiers”

12.20.05 USA Today

About two-thirds of the Army officers in a special Reserve program have been allowed to resign rather than go to war.

Faced with growing unrest among soldiers called back to active duty from the rarely used Individual Ready Reserve, the Army took the unprecedented step last month of letting officers who didn't want to go to war resign.

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.

Most Americans Want Troops To Come Home Within A Year

12.20.05 USA Today & Wall St. Journal 12.16.05

Most Americans want U.S. troops to come home from Iraq within a year and don't believe the war in Iraq is part of the broader war on terrorism, according to a USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll

Wall St. Journal/NBC News Poll:

Some 68% of those younger than 35 want a drawdown.

By 53% to 43%, they'd favor a candidate who wants to reduce troops in Iraq over one who advocates staying the course "until the situation is stable."

Americans rate Iraq a higher priority than the economy.

Vermont Governor Wants Troops To Get Out Of Iraq

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12.19.05 Boston Globe, December 19, 2005

Vermont has lost more soldiers per capita in Iraq and Afghanistan than any other state. Gov. James H. Douglas wants Washington to prepare a withdrawal schedule for bringing home U.S. troops.

County Native Wounded

December 19, 2005 By JIM TATUM, C-I senior staff reporter

It happened, as such moments do, so fast.

An Iraqi civilian vehicle was moving too fast toward a U.S. Army striker vehicle. The driver of the striker turned to ask his commanding officer what to do.

Then the Iraqi vehicle exploded right in front of the striker, the driver of the military vehicle lost control, and the striker plunged some 20 feet down an embankment, landing upside down. Two of the crew would escape with minor scratches. The others, including commanding officer 1st Sgt Mark Shaylor, son of Mazie and Jim Harrell of Camden, would not be as lucky.

"Two walked away with minor scratches, but Mark and the other four were sent to Germany for surgery, and Mark had surgery before he was flown out of Iraq," said Saylor's stepfather, Jim Harrell.

Shaylor was wounded Nov. 6, one day shy of his 21st year in the Army. His family was informed of the situation a few days later.

"You're shocked with news like that," Jim Harrell said. "You're shocked and you're hoping its not as severe as it could have been."

Shaylor suffered brain trauma, bone contusions, broken bones in his face, two broken fingers on his left hand, and six vertebrae in his neck and several vertebrae in his lower back ruptured, Harrell said.

Shaylor, who is believed to be the first soldier from Kershaw County severely wounded in action during the Iraq war, will have to have surgery to put a plate in his head, but it will probably be several months before that can happen, Harrell said.

The Harrells have seen their son twice since he was brought to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He is conscious now and responding well to therapy, Harrell said. He also is starting to eat on his own again; he had been fed through a tube since November.

"He had some ice cream the other day -- this is the first thing they've given him by mouth since he was injured," Harrell said.

Shaylor has some movement on his right side, although his left side is limited right now, Harrell said.

"He is responding very well to physical and occupational therapy they're giving him, but it's going to be a long, drawn-out thing for his rehabilitation," Harrell said. "He's trying to talk but cannot speak yet. But he's a fighter; he's determined to get it all behind him. He's progressing well every day."

Mark Shaylor grew up in Camden and attended Camden area schools although he attended his junior and senior years in high school in Virginia.

"He decided in high school that the military was what he wanted to do, and he made a career of it," Mazie Harrell said. "He wanted to travel, and he has traveled -- he's seen a lot of the world."

Shaylor has done tours in Germany, Saudi Arabia and Iraq; his current duty station is Fairbanks, Alaska, where he lives with his wife, Melissa.

"He's had a good career and done well," Harrell said.

Meanwhile, family members have been going to Walter Reed to be with Shaylor and to support his wife, who has been staying there since Shaylor was transferred in. But all anyone can really do at this point is continue to pray, the Harrells said.

"It's like his wife says; he's in God's hands right now, and God is the chief doctor," Harrell said. "When he decides, that's when things will come along."

"I can't wait to hear his voice again," Mazie Harrell said.

"I Was Required To Provide Medical Care To Wounded

Prisoners Who Were Tortured During Questioning”

I was asked by the regimental intelligence officer if I would administer succinyl choline to temporarily paralyze the muscles of respiration of POWs as an aid to interrogation. I could not abide it and after six months I registered a public protest during a change-of-command ceremony for my commanding officer. I was arrested for "conduct unbecoming an officer" and my career in military medicine was over.

November 6, 2005 Gordon S. Livingston, S.F. Gate

Recently, I went back to West Point for my 45th reunion. We members of the class of 1960 are 67 years old now. We have lived through a lot: the decade of the moon landing and the war in Vietnam, the end of the Cold War in which we enlisted in 1956, the advent of the Internet, and the conflicts in the desert.

We're a surprisingly varied group. Only about half of us finished 20 or 30 year careers in the Army. The rest chose civilian vocations as businessmen, engineers, lawyers, even a poet or two.

Out of the 550 of us that graduated, 82 are now dead. We lost our first classmate to an auto accident one week after graduation; our most recent death, from lung cancer, came two weeks before the reunion. In between, 12 were killed in Vietnam. We are, as expected, dying more rapidly now.

It was good to go back to that citadel of our youth and strength for the first time in many years.

It looks much the same. The Gothic granite barracks have been expanded to accommodate more cadets. The Protestant chapel still dominates on the hillside. There are new buildings and the football stadium has been improved even as the team has grown worse.

On parade the Corps of Cadets still looks to be the best close-order drill unit in the world, though the sight of women marching, even leading companies and battalions, is difficult to absorb for older graduates, steeped in the monastic masculinity of outdated tradition.

The real evidence that the place has changed, however, came on Friday night when the entertainment in Eisenhower Hall consisted of Jon Stewart doing a stand-up routine in front of hundreds of cadets. They loved him.

The department of history is compiling oral histories from graduates who have served in combat, apparently in an effort to impart to the cadets of today some lessons they can use in wars of the future. This is how I came to be interviewed by an earnest young major about my experiences as the regimental surgeon of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam.

He sent me some questions ahead of time ("How can current cadets best prepare for their roles as officers in an unconventional environment?") I wanted to talk about something else: What does a soldier do when he discovers that the rationale for the war he has been sent to fight bears no relationship to what is happening on the ground?

What I found in Vietnam was that in spite of our protestations about "winning hearts and minds" we treated the Vietnamese with contempt. They were commonly referred to as "gooks" and "dinks."

As a doctor, I was required to provide medical care to wounded prisoners who were tortured during questioning.

I was asked by the regimental intelligence officer if I would administer succinyl choline to temporarily paralyze the muscles of respiration of POWs as an aid to interrogation.

I could not abide it and after six months I registered a public protest during a change-of-command ceremony for my commanding officer. I was arrested for "conduct unbecoming an officer" and my career in military medicine was over.

The reunion was the first time since I returned from Vietnam 36 years ago that West Point has shown an interest in what happened to me there. So into that video camera I poured everything I could say in an hour about what I had seen and done and learned. I didn't have much advice to offer cadets.

I just told my story and asked them to think about who they are and where their core identities fit with their duty as soldiers, what they stand for, and what they cannot.

I have no idea whether any cadet will ever see this tape, but it was an important moment for me nonetheless, the confession of a man once faced with an irresolvable conflict between my loyalty to the Army and to my deepest convictions about what it means to be a physician, a patriotic American and a free man upon the Earth.

And through it all ran my love for West Point, which had brought me back one more time to celebrate my connection with the place that had taught me the values of honor and obligation that I tried to reify, even at the cost of all that I had aspired to be.

On the afternoon I left home for my reunion I received an e-mail from the mother of a young West Point graduate recently killed in Afghanistan. She had read a book of mine and wanted something that might comfort her in her mourning. I sent her a prayer I had composed for bereaved parents after the death of my 6-year-old son:

May we all find peace in the shared hope that our children who brought us such joy with their short lives are now a host of angels, loving us still, feeling our love for them, awaiting our coming, and knowing that they are safely locked forever in our hearts.

During our reunion we had a memorial service for our departed classmates in which each of their names was called out by someone who had been his friend. We prayed for their eternal rest and sang the alma mater.

We listened to a retired general evoke their memories with cliches about honor and duty and freedom that are as inevitable as they are irrelevant to men who died in ways heroic and prosaic, with thoughts and fears likely unrelated to the mantle of patriotism in which we would now wrap their souls.

In the chapel at West Point as before the black granite wall in Washington, I remember my classmates dead in Vietnam, eternally young, immortal in my mortal mind.

They will not grow old and frail like the rest of us.

They will not linger on beds of pain.

Perhaps, after all, they are the lucky ones. But what of the songs unsung, the children and grandchildren unborn, the peaceful pleasures of longtime love? These things they were denied.

The circle, it seems, is never closed.

I fear that young men and women are still dying for reasons that 45 years from now will cause another group of old graduates to honor their memories, as did we, with devotion and regret.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Three Provinces And Unions Reject Fuel Price Increases

Dec 20 (KUNA) & Middle East Online

Kirkuk Governorate Council decided to contact proper authorities in Baghdad and maintain the current prices of oil products that were increased by Iraq's Cabinet.

The council will inform Baghdad of increase's affect in light of the standard of living and income of Kirkuk's residents.

Since Sunday there have been demonstrations around the country.

As the cost of all local goods soared due to the increase, Iraqi labor syndicates organized protests all over Iraq and met city officials to explain their reasons behind opposing the rise.

Three southern Iraqi provinces have refused to implement a wildly unpopular government increase in petrol prices, despite insistence in Baghdad on Tuesday that the measure would help the poor.

In Misan, Dhi Qar and Basra provinces, petrol is still available at the highly subsidized price of 50 dinars (three US cents) per litre rather than the new price of 150 dinars, AFP correspondents reported.

"This (rise) risks provoking a widespread increase in other prices that will have direct impact on the lives of citizens," said Fadel Nema, president of the provincial economic commission, justifying Misan's decision.

On Monday, the government of Dhi Qar province, whose capital is Nasiriyah, asked gas stations to stick with the original price after clashes between angry demonstrators and police.

Moqtada Sadr sent a delegation to meet Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari to get assurances that the nation's numerous poor would be exempt or receive some sort of compensation.

Assorted Resistance Action

12.20.05 By JASON STRAZIUSO, Associated Press

A driver for the Jordanian Embassy was captured after his car was "intercepted" by three vehicles as he was driving to work, Jordanian government spokesman Nasser Judeh said in Amman.

Two police officers were shot to death in Baqouba, about 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, and one officer was slain in the capital, police said.

Attackers in southern Baghdad shot to death a member of the Badr [collaborator] organization, the military wing of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI, police Capt. Taleb Thamer said.

North of Baghdad, three policemen were killed in the town of Tuz.

Two local employees on a US military base died when resistance fighters opened fire on their car in Balad, police said.

In the western district of the capital, an employee from the electricity ministry was killed and one of his colleagues wounded when insurgents attacked their convoy, a security source said.

"Armed men ambushed a civil defense vehicle in Ameriayh district and opened fire with small arms, wounding three of them," Captain Ahmed Abdullah said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

The Argument For The Resistance:

“The More The United States Tries To Destroy Its Enemies In Iraq, The More It Finds That The Resistance Of The Iraqi People Grows”



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

December 8, 2005 Abdul-Ilah Al-Bayaty, Al-Ahram Weekly (Egypt) [Excerpts]

The American ship of state will be broken on the rock of the nation of Iraq, leaving unconditional withdrawal as Washington's only option, writes Abdul-Ilah Al-Bayaty

The defeat of the United States' aggression on Iraq was expected even before the beginning of the invasion. There were many indicators to show that the right of Iraqis to independence and democracy would be stronger than all the military might of the US.

As is well known in war theories, aggressive power cannot achieve victory except under two scenarios: by its ability to destroy completely, or by destroying the will to continue resisting.

In the case of the war on Iraq, it is evident that the enemy of the United States is the majority of the Iraqi people which it attacked to destroy its Arab-Muslim appurtenance and identity, plunder its natural resources and subjugate it to a puppet government it creates.

This is impossible for geopolitical, moral and practical reasons. The consequence of this impossibility is that the more the United States tries to destroy its enemies in Iraq, the more it finds that the resistance of the Iraqi people grows.

The Iraqi people by its culture, civilisation and heritage supported, and supports always, the oppressed against the oppressor.

If it seemed to some that the Iraqi people are against Saddam Hussein, they forgot that the same people were never against the Iraqi state that the United States invaded to crush, abolish and remake according to its interests and will.

Only some Kurdish leaders who seek separation, and some Shia politico/religious men who want to install Wilayat Al-Fakih (the rule of the supreme guardian) under Al-Hakim family, can accept to destroy the secular Iraqi state. Iraqis are proud of being Iraqis. They consider themselves all sons of Iraq and are proud of having a united Iraq that possesses oil, culture and science, water and a strategic position.

The ignorance of the American strategists and their allies -- Ahmed Chalabi, Rend Rahim, Kinaan Makiyah, Falih Abdul-Jabar, and the like -- who theorised the US invasion of Iraq is such that they took their interests as reality, forgetting Iraqis' pride in their free will and independence, and in their Arab-Muslim identity which passes to them from father to son.

They believed, or wanted to believe, that with some money and much terror, Iraqis would bow before their imperial project as they bowed -- at least they think -- before Saddam Hussein.

They forgot, or wanted to forget, that Saddam Hussein, in spite of his dictatorship, has the support of the secular, educated middle class for the nationalisation of the oil industry, the development of Iraq's modern infrastructure, the universalisation of electricity, education and health services, and for putting Iraq on the plain of Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea in refusing imperialist diktat.

They forgot also, Kurds and pro-Iranian religious leaders excepted, that Iraqis may differ but they continue to feel that they are the same people, that they are brothers, and that they don't want Iran, Arab, Western or Eastern interference in their affairs.

In addition, the invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies took place when imperialist powers wherever are no more able to invade other countries as they used to do in the 19th century. The reasons are multiple.

Firstly, the wars in Vietnam, Cuba, South Lebanon and Palestine proved that military superiority and military victory don't mean the ability to occupy the invaded country if its people resist; and the Iraqi people proved it would resist from the very first battles in Um Qasr and Nassiryah.

Secondly, it is the youth of the world and its progressive movements that builds world public opinion, not the mainstream media controlled by the US. This was proven in Seattle, Durban and in the world's demonstrations against the war on Iraq. We see the result of this fact in the demonstrations against the war in the US itself.

Thirdly, war and invasion cost money and the American people have no interest in paying money to invade other countries, by way of which only the military industries and oil multinationals make profits, especially when the Iraqi military,

as every patriot would do, prevented the occupation from using Iraqi petrol to finance the occupation's military operations.

Fourthly, civilisation and international law don't permit any more adventurers like President Bush and the neo-buccaneers around him to insult the world's human consciousness by invading poor peoples in name of lies.

Fifthly, Iraqi people, like all living peoples, do not accept occupation and slavery.

Now we arrived to a situation where the US, by invading Iraq, is in a political and moral ruin from which it will not recover -- if it tries to recover -- for years. On the other hand, Iraq has suffered political, moral and economic crimes committed by the US. What is the way out?

I think it is of no use all this changing of tactics, like the Cairo Conference or the phony next elections, whose end is that the US decides the destiny of Iraq and escapes liability in waging an illegal war on Iraq.

As long as Iraq is not left to its people, America's military, economic, political and moral losses will continue to increase. There is no path before the US but to pull out rapidly and unconditionally, taking with it this monster which it created and called the government and security forces, recognising that all oil in Iraq is the property of the whole Iraqi people, and letting the legal administration pre-invasion, especially the national army and its resistance groups, take power and administer the country until free and fair democratic elections can take place.

The people of Iraq will never, however long is the time afforded, recognise the puppet government, its contracts and agreements and laws, as legal or legitimate. In addition, if the US wants to have amicable relations with the people of Iraq, it should pay compensation for all the damage and suffering it caused Iraq.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“The US Presence Perpetuates The Resistance”

18 December 2005 By Laith Saud, Aljazeera [Excerpt]

It had to be known that US forces would be resisted, thus their role as facilitators of reconstruction would be minimal at best.

American forces have never been able to make the reconstruction a central feature of Iraqi life in the past years; rather, as an invading power, the United States has logically been exhausting more effort in attempting to put down the resistance.

Ironically, of course, the US presence perpetuates the resistance and by extension the instability of the country.

Simply put, the Americans cannot provide security and without security there will be no reconstruction.

Resistance Or Doom: **“You Cannot Save Your Ass, And Your Face At The Same Time”**



Peace. A road less traveled.
[Camp Casey, Crawford, Texas]

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: December 18, 2005
Subject: Resistance or Doom

The Iraqi resistance is going to continue non-stop, until the last American leaves Iraq.

This is no different than what happened in Vietnam.

The Iraq War is the same recipe of lies in a different bowl.

The U.S. government cannot control the destiny of 25 million Iraqi people. It will drain the U.S. economy of money and blood, and inflict death and suffering beyond belief in Iraq.

As this war continues, our society is becoming more and more mentally ill. I see it everyday, as I travel and walk the streets of America. As a photographer, I see it in the desperate faces of people everywhere.

Even after saying all this, there is one major issue that haunts me.

The biggest difference between Vietnam and Iraq, is that Vietnam was not sitting on the second largest oil reserves in the world.

This quagmire is potentially worse than Southeast Asia.

I can say one thing that will always be true, When You Bury Your Past, You Bury Yourself. And, America is very good at doing that.

While many U.S. citizens pray for peace, our economy worships war.

If more reluctant Americans do not hit the streets and protest this war, we are doomed.

There Are No Free Lunches!

You cannot save your ass, and your face at the same time.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 18, 2005**

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.

WHAT I HEARD ABOUT IRAQ

December 14, 2005 By Eliot Weinberger [Excerpts] Via Ward Reilly, Vietnam Veterans Against The War Net

I heard the vice president say that the war would be over in 'weeks rather than months'.

I heard Donald Rumsfeld say: 'It could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months.'

I heard Donald Rumsfeld say there was 'no question' that American troops would be 'welcomed': 'Go back to Afghanistan, the people were in the streets playing music, cheering, flying kites, and doing all the things that the Taliban and al-Qaida would not let them do.'

I heard the vice president say: 'The Middle East expert Professor Fouad Ajami predicts that after liberation the streets in Basra and Baghdad are "sure to erupt in joy". Extremists in the region would have to rethink their strategy of jihad. Moderates throughout the region would take heart. And our ability to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process would be enhanced.'

I heard the vice president say: 'I really do believe we will be greeted as liberators.'

I heard that the president said to the television evangelist Pat Robertson: 'Oh, no, we're not going to have any casualties.'

On 1 May 2003, I heard that 140 American soldiers had died in combat in Iraq.

I heard Richard Perle tell Americans to 'relax and celebrate victory'. I heard him say: 'The predictions of those who opposed this war can be discarded like spent cartridges.'

I heard that Pentagon planners had predicted that US troop levels would fall to 30,000 by the end of the summer.

I heard Paul Bremer say, 'Most of the country is, in fact, orderly,' and that all the problems were coming from 'several hundred hard-core terrorists' from al-Qaida and affiliated groups.

As attacks on American troops increased, I heard the generals disagree about who was fighting: Islamic fundamentalists or remnants of the Baath Party or Iraqi mercenaries or foreign mercenaries or ordinary citizens taking revenge for the loss of loved ones. I heard the president and the vice president and the politicians and the television reporters simply call them 'terrorists'.

I heard the president say: 'There are some who feel that conditions are such that they can attack us there. My answer is: bring them on! We have the force necessary to deal with the situation.'

I heard Colonel Nathan Sassaman say: 'With a heavy dose of fear and violence, and a lot of money for projects, I think we can convince these people that we are here to help them.'

I heard Richard Perle say: 'Next year at about this time, I expect there will be a really thriving trade in the region, and we will see rapid economic development. And a year

from now, I'll be very surprised if there is not some grand square in Baghdad named after President Bush.'

I heard an American soldier, standing next to his Humvee, say: 'We liberated Iraq. Now the people here don't want us here, and guess what? We don't want to be here either. So why are we still here? Why don't they bring us home?'

I heard Donald Rumsfeld say that the fighting was the work of 'thugs, gangs and terrorists'. I heard General Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, say: 'It's not a Shiite uprising. Muqtada al-Sadr has a very small following.' I heard that an unnamed 'intelligence official' had said: 'Hatred of the American occupation has spread rapidly among Shia, and is now so large that Mr Sadr and his forces represent just one element. Destroying his Mehdi Army might be possible only by destroying Sadr City.' Sadr City is the most populated part of Baghdad. I heard that, among the Sunnis, former Baath Party leaders and Saddam loyalists had been joined by Sunni tribal chiefs.

I heard Tony Blair say: 'Before people crow about the absence of weapons of mass destruction, I suggest they wait a bit.'

I heard General Myers say: 'Given time, given the number of prisoners now that we're interrogating, I'm confident that we're going to find weapons of mass destruction.'

I heard Tom Foley, director of Iraq Private Sector Development, say: 'The security risks are not as bad as they appear on TV. Western civilians are not the targets themselves. These are acceptable risks.'

I heard the spokesman for Paul Bremer say: 'We have isolated pockets where we are encountering problems.'

I heard Donald Rumsfeld say: 'Death has a tendency to encourage a depressing view of war.'

I heard Donald Rumsfeld say, when asked why the troops were being kept in the war much longer than their normal tours of duty: 'Oh, come on. People are fungible. You can have them here or there.'

I heard General John Sattler say that the destruction of Fallujah had 'broken the back of the insurgency'.

I heard a reporter say to Donald Rumsfeld: 'Before the war in Iraq, you stated the case very eloquently and you said they would welcome us with open arms.' And I heard Rumsfeld interrupt him: 'Never said that. Never did. You may remember it well, but you're thinking of somebody else. You can't find, anywhere, me saying anything like either of those two things you just said I said.'

I heard a reporter ask Lieutenant-General Jay Garner how long the troops would remain in Iraq, and I heard him reply: 'I hope they're there a long time.'

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)

“The American People Will Not Continue To Support Expeditionary Warfare With Either Their Taxes Or Blood”

Letter To The Editor

12.19.05

Army Times

The biggest mission creep the Regular Army faces is its continued existence.

Now that the Cold War is over, we have no more possessions to guard in China and the Philippines, and the Indians, Mexicans, British and Spanish no longer require what little constabulary forces we needed in the first 150 years of our existence as a nation.

The default peacetime defense establishment the founders originally intended is the National Guard, whose existence is guaranteed by the Second Amendment, plus a federal navy.

The only justification for a large standing army is to deal with foreign threats that are overseas or directly on our borders and pose an immediate, present and sustained threat to the continental United States.

The threats posed by weapons of mass destruction delivered through the air do not require modular brigades or expeditionary forces, and WMDs delivered by stealth are the responsibility of the police powers of the states and the nation.

The biggest successes against terrorist networks have been through cooperation among our CIA and FBI and their counterparts in foreign countries.

The standing force we need to keep foreign threats from developing overseas is today more a function of nation-building than nation-busting. Even nation-busting requires nation-building.

This is what the Army has been doing for the past 20 years, and missions like hurricane relief are the best form of experience.

The appearance of U.S. ships, aircraft and troops in Indonesia during the tsunami recovery totally reversed the attitudes of the Indonesian people toward us.

The American people will not continue to support sustained rotational expeditionary warfare with either their taxes or blood.

It may be time to restore the original peacetime establishment the founders intended, particularly since the Guard costs one-third to one-sixth as much to maintain the same capabilities.

Lt. Col. Gordon S. Fowkes (ret.)
Sugar Land, Texas

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



A US marine from 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines Regiment enters a house to search as an elderly Iraqi woman is seen inside a kitchen in downtown Fallujah. (AFP/Mauricio Lima)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses by force, 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 charges 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?]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



THIS IS NOT A SATIRE:

FBI Terrorist Hunters Spied On Vegetarians And Catholic Pacifists

December 20, 2005 By ERIC LICHTBLAU, The New York Times Company

Counterterrorism agents at the Federal Bureau of Investigation have conducted numerous surveillance and intelligence-gathering operations that involved, at least indirectly, groups active in causes as diverse as the environment, animal cruelty and poverty relief, newly disclosed agency records show.

One F.B.I. document indicates that agents in Indianapolis planned to conduct surveillance as part of a "Vegan Community Project." Another document talks of the Catholic Workers group's "semi-communistic ideology." A third indicates the bureau's interest in determining the location of a protest over llama fur planned by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

The latest batch of documents, parts of which the A.C.L.U. plans to release publicly on Tuesday, totals more than 2,300 pages and centers on references in internal files to a handful of groups, including PETA, the environmental group Greenpeace and the Catholic Workers group, which promotes antipoverty efforts and social causes.

Many of the investigative documents turned over by the bureau are heavily edited, making it difficult or impossible to determine the full context of the references and why the F.B.I. may have been discussing events like a PETA protest.

A.C.L.U. officials said the latest batch of documents released by the F.B.I. indicated the agency's interest in a broader array of activist and protest groups than they had previously thought.

"It's clear that this administration has engaged every possible agency, from the Pentagon to N.S.A. to the F.B.I., to engage in spying on Americans," said Ann Beeson, associate legal director for the A.C.L.U.

"You look at these documents," Ms. Beeson said, "and you think, wow, we have really returned to the days of J. Edgar Hoover, when you see in F.B.I. files that they're talking about a group like the Catholic Workers league as having a communist ideology."

The documents indicate that in some cases, the F.B.I. has used employees, interns and other confidential informants within groups like PETA and Greenpeace to develop leads on potential criminal activity and has downloaded material from the groups' Web sites, in addition to monitoring their protests.

"The fact that we're even mentioned in the F.B.I. files in connection with terrorism is really troubling," said Tom Wetterer, general counsel for Greenpeace. "There's no property damage or physical injury caused in our activities, and under any definition of terrorism, we'd take issue with that."

Jeff Kerr, general counsel for PETA, rejected the suggestion in some F.B.I. files that the animal rights group had financial ties to militant groups, and said he, too, was troubled by his group's inclusion in the files.

"It's shocking and it's outrageous," Mr. Kerr said. "And to me, it's an abuse of power by the F.B.I. when groups like Greenpeace and PETA are basically being punished for their social activism."

Democrat Leaders Whining Now Knew Of Bush Spying All Along

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

12.21.05 By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press Writer & December 18, 2005 By Barton Gellman and Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writers

Vice President Dick Cheney on Tuesday called for "strong and robust" presidential powers, saying executive authority was eroded during the Watergate and Vietnam eras. Some lawmakers objected that President Bush's decision to spy on Americans to foil terrorists showed he was flexing more muscle than the Constitution allows.

Bush and his top advisers have suggested senior congressional leaders vetted the program in more than a dozen highly classified briefings.

Democrats said they were told of the program, but had concerns.

West Virginia Sen. Jay Rockefeller, the Senate Intelligence Committee's top Democrat, on Monday released a letter he wrote to Cheney in July 2003 that, given the program's secrecy, he was "unable to fully evaluate, much less endorse these activities."

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan., pushed back Tuesday, saying that if Rockefeller had concerns about the program, he could have used the tools he has to wield influence, such as requesting committee or legislative action.

"Feigning helplessness is not one of those tools," Roberts said.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), who was also present as then ranking Democrat of the House intelligence panel, said in a statement yesterday evening that the briefing described "President Bush's decision to provide authority to the National Security Agency to conduct unspecified activities."

She said she "expressed my strong concerns" but did not elaborate.

In late 2003, the Bush administration reversed a long-standing policy requiring agents to destroy their files on innocent American citizens, companies and residents when investigations closed.

Future Backpedal



TERROR SUSPECTS TO RECEIVE FREQUENT FLIER MILES: New Program Makes Rendering Rewarding, Condi Says

December 19, 2005 The Borowitz Report

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice today acknowledged that the United States often flies terror suspects to foreign countries to be interrogated by means not allowed in the U.S., but said that the government was instituting a new program by which the suspects would receive frequent flier miles for their journeys.

Insiders say that the government's new Terror RewardsT program may be intended to make the practice of rendering, by which suspects are shuttled from country to country for the purpose of interrogation and torture, more palatable to the international community.

"With Terror RewardsT, an innocent terror suspect can say, 'I've just been held without being charged for the last two years of my life, but now I'm going to Disneyland,'" Secretary Rice said today.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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www.williambowles.info/gispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/,
<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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