

GI SPECIAL 4A15:



The 1971 Armed Forces Day demonstration of over 1,500 GIs against the Vietnam War in Killeen, Texas, home of Ft. Hood. (www.citizen-soldier.org)

The Worst News Emperor Bush Could Hear: “A Soldier With Tears In His Eyes”

[The real news is buried at the end of this story reporting how U.S. occupation command has ordered brutal, stupid raids on Iraqi citizens to help the Iraqi resistance movement recruit new fighters.]

[The real news is about a soldier with tears in his eyes.

[Bush, Rumsfeld, and the rest of the scum who infest Washington have no clue what this means.

[Unfortunately, neither do the leaders of the U.S. "anti-war" movement. They have a nearly perfect record of helping Bush keep the war going by refusing to find and offer aid and comfort to anti-war troops in the reserve and National Guard units in their own home towns, or to active duty troops in U.S. military bases. The organizers of the Ft. Bragg rallies are an honorable exception.]

[As requested by L, the following two reprints following the news article, "The Chicken Factory" and "Let's Get To Work," restate the imperative for doing that work now. T]

Jan 22, 2006 By Michael Georgy

U.S. forces hunting kidnapped American journalist Jill Carroll are raiding Iraqi homes in a race against time but, as with much of their counter-insurgency war, face the dilemma that their tactics can foster resentment.

Operations designed to take her captors by surprise have angered those Iraqis who say troops have blasted their way into their homes, put sacks over their heads and detained their relatives in the search for Carroll, who was abducted on Jan 7.

One such raid, shortly after the reporter was seized, targeted one of Baghdad's biggest Sunni mosques; the sight of troops descending on ropes from helicopters and storming through the compound infuriated Sunni political leaders and drew condemnation from the United Nations envoy to Iraq.

Aware that Carroll's militant captors threatened to kill her if the authorities did not release women prisoners by Friday, U.S. troops have stormed homes in several areas of Baghdad. How many homes they have raided in the hunt is not clear.

In a typical instance, the Nazih family heard movements in their garden just after midnight. But they had no time to check.

"My son was in the garden so I went around the back door to see what was happening and suddenly American soldiers pointed rifles at us," said Hamdiya Sabri, 55, of her son Jassim, 23.

"Then all of a sudden we heard an explosion. They blew open the front door and fired stun grenades into the living room. They rounded us up and threw me on the floor and a soldier put me on the floor and kept his boot on my back. Why?"

Two of her other sons said U.S. troops asked if they knew anything about the neighbours and then they asked about Carroll, a 28-year-old reporter for the Christian Science Monitor.

"They told us that they had a tip that the American journalist was being held in this area and asked me what I thought of her," said Thamir Nazih, 40.

"I said I was sympathetic about Jill Carroll and that she is innocent.

"Then they asked me if I knew any terrorists: this only after they stormed the house and humiliated my family."

After the search, a U.S. soldier promised \$300 compensation and apologised, saying troops had acted on a faulty tip.

The soldiers took away Jassim, the youngest son of the family, saying he would be questioned and freed in a day or two.

The soldiers then descended on the Nazih's neighbours in the Ghazaliya section of Baghdad, where insurgents are active.

"They barged into our home then they pulled me by the hair. I kept telling them we had a baby. Then a soldier went into the room where my brother was sleeping near the baby and they punched my brother in the face," said Hubaab Hamid.

After searching the house, the soldiers told her that two of her brothers would be detained for questioning.

"I asked how long they would be away. They said they would be freed if they are innocent. I asked where they would be held and the Iraqi translator just laughed at me," she said.

Some 14,000 people are currently held by U.S. forces on suspicion of guerrilla activity. Thousands more have been released without charge, often after many months in captivity.

Hamid said one soldier showed compassion.

"I looked up and he had tears in his eyes as he was watching them humiliate my sisters and me," she said.

"Then he gave us a blanket and he apologised." [And that's how it begins.]

MORE:

The Chicken Factory

[This is from March-April, 2005 - Issue 10 Traveling Soldier]

Once upon a time there was a chicken factory, where, let us suppose, 1000 men and women work.

Live chickens come in one end of the factory complex, and cut up chicken parts and whole chickens come out the other end.

The people who cut up the chickens make about \$3 an hour, work in cold, wet rooms, get sick a lot, and frequently lose body parts during the chicken cutting process. The managers are cold assholes interested in profits, and don't give a shit how dangerous the equipment is. The supervisors are petty tyrants and frequently sexual predators.

If you get too sick or hurt to work, too fucking bad, you get put out the door.

This is not a desirable state of affairs.

You think maybe there should be some kind of organization of the work force to resist this shit. Maybe you can get more money, or insist that you have decent protection from being maimed or killed.

At that point you are alone, and powerless. So you have to very carefully find somebody else that agrees, and then somebody else, and all unnoticed by the assholes in command of the chicken factory, you slowly but surely build an organization.

You need meetings to talk over plans. Off company territory. You need security. You need some kind of way of communicating, maybe a newsletter, but you're careful about that too.

You can take it from there.

But it is obvious that you do not want anybody to stand up in the middle of the third shift and loudly tell management, "I refuse to participate any further in your immoral enterprise and will defy all your orders."

He or she is immediately gotten rid of, and is lost to organizing inside your chicken factory because he or she is gone. And the management is delighted, because they've just ID'd and fired somebody who could give them trouble in the future.

So, if you're alone, organize. People who act together can have an effect.

And if somebody snaps and does an individual refusal, and gets arrested, in trouble, or whatever, your organization does not leave them behind; they've been hurt, and let no one judge them, because anybody can snap, anytime.

A soldier from the 1st ID summed up his job situation like this:

"Before any soldier risks going to prison he should realize that his ability to communicate with other troops will be limited.

"We choose our battles and continue to speak out in our underground action.

"There has to be a point when we reach a high enough number of troops in our peace effort that a unified boycott of all military action will have a desired effect."

Use Traveling Soldier to serve your organizing purposes and say what you have to say. You say how. That's what it's for.



MORE:

Let's Get To Work

[Remarks given at Fayetteville, North Carolina, home of Ft. Bragg, at the rally 3.19.05. Thomas Barton, GI Special.]

Greetings from New York City Labor Against The War; GI Special; Traveling Soldier newsletter, produced by Pham Binh; and the Military Project organizing committee.

Here is a blinding flash of the obvious.

During the Vietnam war, the anti-war movement at home was necessary to stop the war, but it was not sufficient.

The resistance in Vietnam was necessary to stop the war, but it was not sufficient.

But the rebellion against the war in the armed forces was both necessary and sufficient to stop the war. And the war stopped.

It was the greatest insurrection against an Imperial war since the rebellion of the Russian army in 1917.

But you don't have to believe me about that, and you shouldn't.

Check out:

Heinl, Jr. Col. Robert D.
THE COLLAPSE OF THE ARMED FORCES
Armed Forces Journal, 1971

Lots of soldiers can fight in wars.

It takes something very special in soldiers to stop one. Honor and respect to them all.

Respect also to the civilians who forged the links to the anti-war troops, gave them aid and comfort, and helped make that rebellion possible.

Now it is time for us to follow the instruction of the prophet:

Go thou and do likewise.

Today, the anti war movement is necessary to stop the war in Iraq, but it is not sufficient.

Today, the Iraqi resistance to Imperial invasion and occupation is necessary to stop the war, but it is not sufficient.

But the coming rebellion in the armed forces will be both necessary and sufficient. It may not come as soon as we might wish, but it will come. And the war will stop.

But you don't have to take my word for that, and you shouldn't.

Here is what one 1st ID member from a group of anti-war soldiers in Iraq wrote to GI Special:

“Before any soldier risks going to prison he should realize that his ability to communicate with other troops will be limited.

“We choose our battles and continue to speak out in our underground action.

“There has to be a point when we reach a high enough number of troops in our peace effort that a unified boycott of all military action will have a desired effect.”

Nothing is more important today than forging new links with the troops turning against this war.

Our job is to help them do what is necessary to stop this war and end forever the power of the predators who rule in this society.

If we act together to take back our lives and our futures from those who would steal both, there is no force on earth that can stop us.

We need our troops by our side.

Without them we are truly lost.

With them, everything is possible.

Let's get to work.

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)

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

Two U.S. Soldiers Receive “Minor” Wounds Near Hawijah

Jan 22, 2006 The Leaf Chronicle

Soldiers with Task Force Band of Brothers Friday detained a suspected terrorist after a roadside bomb was found near Hawijah Thursday.

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team were recovering a vehicle damaged by the improvised explosive device when they began taking small arms fire. The soldiers returned fire, forcing the gunman to flee.

A patrol en route to the site chased and stopped the suspect's vehicle, and a search revealed a sniper rifle and a rocket propelled grenade launcher with a warhead.

Two soldiers received minor injuries and were treated and returned to duty.

Latvian Soldier Wounded In Al Kut

January 22, 2006 MNF Release A060122a

CAMP ECHO, Iraq – A Latvian Soldier was injured by small-arms fire Jan. 22 in al Kut.

Persons unknown fired at the guards in an observation post in the Multinational Division Central South area of responsibility. The guards returned fire.

The wounded Soldier received first aid and was transported to a military medical facility. His condition is stable.

120 Helicopters Down In Iraq & Afghanistan

Army Times (Jan. 9, 2006, p.8) reports a total of 120 copters down in Afghanistan and Iraq since the wars started.

The \$ cost: \$1,870,408,000. That's one Billion, 870 Million.

"We see an average of slightly more than 1,000 SAFIRE incidents during the year," said [Col. Paul W.] Bricker." "Of those ... only 10 percent have damaged an aircraft, and of those 10 percent, only 7 percent have caused major damage or killed a soldier or a Marine."

Translation: 100 damage "incidents" and 70 have caused major damage or killed a soldier or a Marine. And Bricker says "only"! Time for Bricker to spend his days riding in them, instead of talking to reporters about them.

The story reports 26 "Hostile" losses and 94 "Nonhostile" loses. The very long story does not report how many troops were killed in hostile loses.

U.S. Troops Give The Resistance Some Help: Kill Occupation Trained Iraqi Collaborator Troops

2006/01/22 IRIB News

U.S. troops opened fire at civilian cars Saturday night in Baiji town, some 200 km north of Baghdad, killing three people, who turned out to be U.S.-trained Iraqi army soldiers, a source from the Iraqi-US liaison office in Tikrit said on Sunday.

"The multi national force opened fire last night at four civilian cars travelling on the main road between Tikrit and Baiji, setting fire to all the cars," the source from the joint coordination center in Tikrit said.

The U.S. shoot-out killed three people and wounded four others and the U.S. soldiers detained six other people, who turned out to be Iraqi soldiers travelling to their base in Samarra in the south of the country, the source said.

He said the Iraqi soldiers' cars were surprised by a U.S. military convoy travelling wrongly on their side of the two-side road and opened fire.

**NO JOY HERE:
NO HONORABLE MISSION;
NO HOPE OF MILITARY VICTORY;
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



U.S. Marines take cover after being fired at by small fires while they were on patrol in Kubaysah December 31, 2005. (Gunnery Sgt. Keith A. Milks/Handout/Reuters)

TROOP NEWS

How Bad Is It? **Vets Cemeteries Running Out Of Room**

January 09, 2006 Army Times [Excerpts]

Maryland's five veterans' cemeteries are expected to reach capacity in the next 15 to 70 years, but space could run out even sooner if casualties of the Iraq war escalate.

"Nationwide, and in Maryland in particular, there is an increasing demand for veterans' burial space," said Mike Nacincik, a spokesman for the National Cemetery Administration.

HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR? BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Estilita Maravillosa, right, and cousin Darlene Rodrigues, in front of the coffin of U.S. Army Sgt. Myla Maravillosa during her funeral Jan. 19, 2006 in Inabanga, in Bohol province in central Philippines. Sgt. Maravillosa was the first Filipino-American woman killed in Iraq. (AP Photo/Pat Roque)

500 Connecticut Guards Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

1.23.06 Army Times

The largest deployment of Connecticut National Guard soldiers since the start of the war on terrorism began Jan. 6 as 500 left for training, The Associated Press reported.

After training for three to five weeks at Fort Bragg, N.C., the New Haven-based 102nd Infantry Battalion will deploy to Afghanistan to help in rebuilding efforts [translation: occupation guard duty].

Come And Meet Cindy Sheehan And Ann Wright In Baton Rouge February 12th

January 22, 2006

From: Vietnam Veterans Against the War

Sent: 1.22.06

From: Ward Reilly

Friends, come and meet Cindy Sheehan and Ann Wright in Baton Rouge on February 12th at our 3rd Annual (unfortunately) "Vigil For the Dead", sponsored by CAWI, Bienville House Center For Peace & Justice, Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and Iraq Veterans Against the War.

More on that soon.

For info contact:

wardpeace@hotmail.com

Combatants For Peace, Speaker: Yonatan Shapira Jan. 24, at 7:00-8:00 PM Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), 521 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY.

From: Shirley H. Young, Veterans For Peace

To: GI Special

Sent: January 22, 2006

At the last Veterans Peace Council meeting, there was a guest speaker. His name is Yonatan Shapira and he is a former captain in the Israeli Air Force.

He told us that he is a refuser, and is part of a newly forming organization of Israelis and Palestinians speaking out against the occupation (by Israel).

He contacted VFP because he wants to form an alliance and have the support of American veterans groups. I took his contact info and contacted the FOR. I thought they would like to help in this cause. Seems as if they do!

I received this from the Rockland Coalition for Peace and Justice tonight:

Peace,

Shirley

Combatants For Peace, Speaker: Yonatan Shapira
When: Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 7:00-8:00 PM
Where: Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR),
521 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY.

Yonatan Shapira, a former Israeli Air Force officer, is involved in forming an Israeli/Palestinian organization called "Combatants for Peace", which will connect former Israeli and Palestinian armed combatants in a new initiative for nonviolent social justice.

This event is jointly sponsored by FOR and RCP&J.

The Great IRR Call Up Fiasco Rolls
On:
“I Don’t See Any Signs The Army
Couldn’t Have Survived Without
Me”

January 23, 2006 By Michelle Tan, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

The Army began calling up IRR soldiers in the summer of 2004, reflecting the strain of providing enough manpower to fight the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As of Dec. 11, the Army had called up 7,380 IRR soldiers.

Of those, 4,417 were supposed to report for duty by Dec. 11, but 383 had not and the Army hadn't been able to find them. Eighty others did not report even though they had been contacted, so the Army is moving to discharge them.

Sgt. Chris Bray, who's in Kuwait for a year with 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, of the Wisconsin National Guard. a 37-year-old from Los Angeles, said he, too, found disorganization when he showed up for duty.

Bray was in the active Army from 1999 to 2001, and his eight-year service obligation is up in April 2007.

In May 2005, Bray was working as a teaching assistant and finishing his master's degree at the University of California-Los Angeles. He had plans to start on a doctorate degree but was mobilized.

On June 16, he left home and reported for duty at Benning, where he sat through a variety of briefings.

"Dental hygiene in a combat zone is one I'll never forget for the rest of my life," he said sarcastically.

After a month at Benning, he, like Piccolo, was shipped to Camp Shelby, where it started all over again with briefings, medical and dental screenings and in-processing.

"We all showed up thinking we were going to Iraq," Bray said. "It took five months before we got to Kuwait." There, Bray works in a training office, where he keeps track of vehicles.

"I maintain a list of serial numbers," he said.

It's a far cry from being in the infantry.

Ignoring his orders wasn't an option, but Bray still said he's disappointed.

"I could be working on a dissertation right now," he said. "I would be home with my wife. When I look at the work I do, I don't see any signs the Army couldn't have survived without me. But, what the hell? I'm here, and I'll do the job."

The entire experience reeks of a lack of planning, Bray said.

"They threw a few thousand of us to the wall to see how many would stick," he said. "I do think the shoddiness, the sloppiness with which the Army handled the recall list needs to be addressed."

Bray said he has written letters about his experience to Lt. Gen. James Helmly, chief of the Army Reserve; officials at the Defense Department; and members of the Senate and House Armed Services committees.

"I hope that someone will bother to inquire, to look at the planning process, and to figure out how the Army planned this and what went wrong, because from here, it looks like they didn't plan it at all.

"I regard (obeying the mobilization order) as a duty, and I would assume that everyone would regard it as a duty, including the Army. But apparently not."

Command Caught Lying Again: DU Found At Hawaii Base

[Thanks to Shirley H. Young, Veterans For Peace, who found this.]

January 6, 2006 By Rod Ohira, Honolulu Advertiser Staff Writer

SEVERAL environmental and native Hawaiian groups are accusing the Army of misleading the public after the groups discovered that a heavy metal known as depleted uranium was recovered at Schofield Barracks' range complex.

During a news conference yesterday, the groups said the Army has repeatedly assured the public that the heavy metal was never used in Hawaii.

"These recent revelations, then, indicate that the Army is either unaware of its DU (depleted uranium) and chemical weapons use or has intentionally misled the public. Both possibilities are deeply troubling," said Kyle Kajihiro, program director of the American Friends Service Committee and member of DMZ-Hawaii/Aloha Aina.

Some members of the various groups read about the depleted uranium in e-mails detailing documents submitted in federal court in December, showing that heavy metals were found at Schofield Barracks' range complex area during clearing efforts.

The clearing was being done to prepare for the expansion of additional training space and the construction of a rifle and pistol range for a new Stryker brigade combat team.

Depleted uranium is a byproduct of radioactive enriched uranium and has been used by the U.S. military in bullets and other weapons designed to pierce armor. Some researchers suspect exposure to depleted uranium might have caused chronic fatigue and other symptoms in veterans of the first Gulf War, but there is no conclusive evidence it has.

In a letter sent yesterday to Maj. Gen. Benjamin Mixon, commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division, Kajihiro wrote that several groups were outraged by the use of the uranium, which they say poses a public health hazard even in small amounts.

During community discussion on the Stryker Brigade environmental impact statement in 2004, Army officials assured the public that depleted uranium was never used in Hawaii, Kajihiro said.

Fifteen tail assemblies from spotting rounds made of D-38 uranium alloy, also called depleted uranium, were recovered in August by Zapata Engineering, a contractor hired by the military to clear the Schofield Barracks' range impact area of unexploded ordnance and scrap metal, according to a news release from the 25th Infantry Division.

In an e-mail dated Sept. 19, a contractor told an Army official at Schofield: "We have found much that we did not expect, including recent find of depleted uranium. We are pulling tons of frag and scrap out of the craters in the western area to the point where it has basically turned into a manual sifting operation.

"Had this not been a CWM site, we would have moved mechanical sifters in about 5 weeks ago but the danger is just too high."

Dr. Fred Dodge, Waianae resident and member of Malama Makua, said, "DU is a heavy metal similar to lead. It can be toxic particularly to the kidneys," and could cause lung cancer if the metal in dust form is inhaled.

The tail assemblies are about 4 inches in length and an inch in diameter. Army officials said they are from subcomponent remnants from training rounds associated with an obsolete weapon system that was on Oahu in the 1960s.

Relatives Set Up A Press Section At Huge Public KIA Funeral: Then Sue To Get \$ For Invasion of Privacy!

January 09, 2006 Army Times [Excerpts]

A judge has ruled against relatives of an Oklahoma soldier slain in Iraq who sued Harper's magazine for publishing a photograph of the soldier's body in an open casket.

Spc. Kyle Brinlee's father and grandfather claimed publishing the photo was "so extreme and outrageous as to go beyond all bounds of decency."

But U.S. District Judge Frank Seay noted that the photo was taken at a funeral attended by about 1,200 people, including Oklahoma's governor.

"If the plaintiffs wanted to grieve in private, they should not have held a public funeral and had a section reserved for the press," Seay wrote in his ruling.

Everyone who attended the May 2004 funeral could gaze upon the slain soldier lying on a white pillow, with his white-gloved hands folded over his crisp uniform.

Why Grandma Went To Jail: "We Decided To Enlist So That We Might Replace Young People"

January 16, 2006 by Joan Wile, CommonDreams.org

On October 17, eighteen grandmothers were arrested at the Times Square Recruiting Booth and incarcerated. We were charged with disorderly conduct as a result of our attempting to enlist and, when denied entrance, sitting down in front of the door.

Why did we do it?

People ask us if we have grandchildren fighting in Iraq. Actually, none of us have, but that's really beside the point.

We are concerned for grandchildren in the generic sense. They are all our grandkids, and we grieve for each young person who dies or is maimed as a result of our tragically ill-conceived, illegal occupation of Iraq.

"Ill" is an apt prefix, for the unfeeling monsters who perpetrated this crime are sick to their very cores. Otherwise, how could they have sent all these brave kids off to die for what we are convinced they knew was a lie?

How could they have launched bombs killing thousands of innocent Iraqis, many of them children?

We don't for one moment think, nor did we ever, that they were persuaded by faulty intelligence that there were weapons of mass destruction in Saddam's arsenal. WE were the ones with such weapons, which rained mass destruction on the hapless Iraqi people.

We decided to enlist so that we might replace young people, enabling them to come home. After all, we've all lived long lives, so better us than them.

And, judging from the way the recruiters inside the facility cowered behind their desks when they saw us at the door, imagine how the insurgents would run when they saw us coming.

Failing enlistment, which we knew was not really a viable option, we hoped that our actions would draw attention to the wisdom of we grandmothers that this war must end--now! We are positive that nothing is being gained by our continued presence in that beleaguered nation. The argument that we are needed to defeat the insurgency just doesn't hold up inasmuch as the insurgency keeps growing the longer we are there. It's very simple, really. Why go on and on fighting a losing battle with more and more of our youths being thrown away in the process?

It's ironic to me that we old broads knew all along that this war was totally unjustified and was doomed to be a disaster, and yet all our great statesmen and politicians are just beginning to realize that it may have been a mistake.

In the future, therefore, my advice is "Listen to your Granny." Granny knows best.

Joan Wile is the Founder/Director of Grandmothers Against the War and member of the Granny Jailbirds 18. Email to: Joanwile263@aol.com

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

01/22/06 AP & (KUNA) & The Leaf Chronicle & Reuters

Four policemen were killed and nine were wounded in a pre-dawn roadside bomb blast that targeted their patrol in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, the police center said.

The source said that the bomb exploded in the middle of the Baqouba City while the police vehicle was driving near by and that the injured policemen were transported to the Baqouba Hospital.

The Iraqi police on Sunday said a car bomb blew up near a police patrol in southern Iraq. A source told KUNA the explosion took place near the Aqsa Mosque, in the town of Cidia in Baghdad, but declined to reveal information about the victims.

Meanwhile, another Iraqi policeman was injured today when a bomb exploded near his police vehicle in Shaqaq Al-Ghaz area south of Kirkuk city, an Iraqi police source.

An explosion ripped through the As Siniyah city government building Thursday evening. The explosion in the small city west of Bayji reportedly leveled the building, but no injuries were reported to Coalition Forces.

MOSUL - Four Iraqi policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in the northern city of Mosul, police said.

HAWIJA: Three policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Hawija, southwest of the northern oil city of Kirkuk, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Abu Zarqawi Hour

The second point worth mentioning, of course, is that an insurgent group that operates its own clandestine TV studio and runs promos for future programming is not exactly a fly-by-night operation, constantly on the run from safe house to safe house.

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

January 13, 2006 Billmon.org [Excerpts]

Fans of Paddy Chayefsky's incredibly prophetic '70 satire Network may remember the Mao Tse-tung Hour: the terrorist-of-the-week reality show produced by his fictional UBS news division:

"Diana: Look, we've got a bunch of hobgoblin radicals called the Ecumenical Liberation Army who go around taking home movies of themselves robbing banks. Maybe they'll take movies of themselves kidnapping heiresses, hijacking 747's, bombing bridges, assassinating ambassadors. We'd open each week's segment with that authentic footage, hire a couple of writers to write some story behind that footage, and we've got ourselves a series."

Given that Paddy's dark vision of the future of broadcast journalism has since become the programming bible for an entire generation of cable news executives, I guess it's no great surprise that the Mao Tse-Tung Hour has also reached the little screen, but in Iraq, not the U.S., and suitably updated to reflect both modern political realities and the rise of the Internet.

Iraqi blogger Nibras Kazimi (a neocon fan of Ahmed Chalabi, but also an increasingly disillusioned witness to Iraq's "democratization:") tells the story at his blog, Talisman Gate:

"Remember the days when a bunch of ragtag hoodlums in ski-masks and training suits would hover over a hapless victim to read their jihadist manifesto?"

"Remember those same thugs brandishing Kalashnikovs and RPG-7s under crackling fluorescent lighting, with a tattered banner advertising their group's name and slogan as a backdrop?"

"Well, times have changed if the latest video installment from the "Media Division of the Jaish Ansar Al-Sunna" is any measure to go by. In this 30 minute video, we see two individuals, Abu Munther Al-Ansari, and Abu Ahmad Al-Baghdadi, comfortably sitting in a studio modeled along a talk-show format. Yes, they are SITTING IN A STUDIO!

"And I'm not talking about two stools and a desk; this is a modern studio with ample lighting, three camera angles and nice woodwork. They've even got the name of their organization, Jaish Ansar Al-Sunna ('JAS,' the no. 2 organization on the terrorist charts after Al-Qaeda in Iraq), engraved up at the front.

"Now if they were real propaganda professionals, the terrorists would have had multiple copies of some trite but catchy slogan -- "Killing the Crusaders" -- posted as the backdrop to the set, like Bush at one of his "Saving Social Security" town hall meetings. But even if the production values are still a little rough, the insurgents clearly see ratings potential in the talk show format:

"Abu Munther sits sporting a black blazer and a white turtleneck, even though the ski-mask is still a mandatory part of the wardrobe, and he's performing the role of the host of this setting. Today's guest is Abu Ahmed from the Military Council of JAS, who is

underdressed for the occasion because 'I didn't know that this was going to happen,' as he apologetically explains towards the end.

"Talk, however, doesn't hold that prized young-armed-male demographic. So it isn't long before Abu Munther and his guest switch to the bang bang shoot 'em up:

We are shown a montage of JAS's 'Greatest Hits,' which run the gamut from blowing up Humvees in Ramadi to firing-off C5K missiles in Samarra. We are shown about twenty such operations, including one in which an observation tower within a US base is blown-up in broad daylight.

"Abu Ahmad explains that JAS has spies operating inside US military installations. These spies are equipped with GPS navigation devices and their job is to deliver the coordinates of sensitive points within these far-flung bases to those rigging up missiles or setting-up mortar attacks. We even glimpse a scene of a man sitting down with a calculator and a notepad making preparations for just such an attack.

Then it's back to the studio for the wind up:

"The half-hour interview, interspersed with footage and commentary, ends with a customary handshake and a plug for future programming. End credits include 'Pray for us' and 'Copyright is reserved for any Muslim, 2005.'"

Insurgents: You hear that, CNN? And don't give us any of that "fair use" bullshit or you'll be hearing from our lawyers.

Now you gotta admit, that's a pretty slick piece of work, especially for a bunch of desperate terrorists who are relentlessly being hunted down and killed by the U.S. Army and its heroic Iraqi allies in their drive to total victory. That probably explains the wardrobe problems.

Desperate as he is, Abu Zarqawi isn't going to let a rival network steal audience share so easily. According to Kazimi at Talisman Gate, he put up the first installment of his own new show the same week that the JAS version of 60 Minutes (well, 30 Minutes) debuted. I guess it must have been sweeps week.

However, being more of a Fox Network/Spike TV kind of guy, Zarqawi skips the talk show wrapper and sticks with his classic reality TV formula: confession followed by execution:

So what did (Al Qaeda in Iraq) come up with? Their own version of Cops . . . a response to a popular version of that show being shown on the official Iraqi TV network, Al-Iraqiyya, and called "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice."

But this time around, Zarqawi's Omar Brigade (set-up to kill and capture members of SCIRI's Badr Brigade) showcases a bunch of captured Badrists and has them utter their confessions on tape.

As with most reality shows, you already know how this one will end:

Abu Zemen, whose confession is shown towards the very end after we hear voice-overs from Zarqawi condemning Shias in general, lists the goals of the Badr Brigade as follows: to distribute drugs, to kill Sunnis and rape their women, and to kill Sunni university professors, doctors, and ex-officers.

The video ends with Abu Zemen being shot in the back of the head, as well as having his house blown up.

Let's see Kiefer Sutherland top that.

Now it seems to me there are a few things worth noting about the ratings war in Iraq.

One is that the terrorists appear to be getting a much bigger bang for their propaganda buck than the U.S. military is for its. With all due respects to the Lincoln Group, planting phony op-eds in Iraqi newspapers and blasting out text messages praising the democratic process is pretty thin gruel compared to exploding Humvees and videotaped executions. (Programming suggestion to JAS: Since you like to use highlights so much, why not take a look at the NFL Today format?)

The second point worth mentioning, of course, is that an insurgent group that operates its own clandestine TV studio and runs promos for future programming is not exactly a fly-by-night operation, constantly on the run from safe house to safe house.

To me, it's just another sign that the Sunni insurgency, or at least the homegrown parts, is evolving into a complex enterprise, one that has a mix of clandestine, semi-clandestine components, as well as public "front" organizations. The result might be something like the old IRA/Sinn Fein apparatus, with a similar strategy of combining guns and politics.

In any case, the metamorphosis of the Sunni insurgency into a multi-faceted, multi-layered resistance movement makes counterinsurgency an even more complicated task, and makes the U.S. military's emphasis on brute force (i.e. dropping 500 lb bombs on safe houses and leveling entire neighborhoods to chase out a few hundred rag tag guerrillas) even more inappropriate.

The strategy and politics of it aside, though, the most striking thing about the "Abu Zarqawi Hour" is how it demonstrates the deranged, almost hallucinatory, quality of our 21st century global village, in which the remaining boundaries between reality, propaganda and entertainment are all being rapidly erased, just as Paddy Chayefsky predicted 30 years ago.

It may not be a revolution, exactly, but it is being televised.

OCCUPATION REPORT

The Great Iraqi Pipeline Repair Follies Roll On: “If You Could Repair It Faster Than They Could Destroy It, You'd Win The Battle. But You Can't”

January 22, 2006 Farah Stockman, Boston Globe Staff [Excerpts]

"If you could repair it faster than they could destroy it, you'd win the battle. But you can't," said Lowell Feld, analyst with the Energy Information Administration, an arm of the US Department of Energy.

Sabotage has wreaked havoc on domestic oil consumption, as well.

In one case, an insurgent crawled 120 feet inside a newly installed pipeline to set an explosion that took two weeks to fix,

"These insurgents are still around just looking for something to blow up," he said. "They can't blow it up here, because we have put it in under the river. But I'm sure once they start the pipeline back up, they are going to have problems" with other locations.

MORE:

“Reconstruction” Funds Went To Buy Armored Cars For Collaborators And Build 10 New Prisons

January 20, 2006 David Isenberg and William Fisher, Atimes.com

At least \$2.5 billion earmarked for infrastructure and schools was diverted to building up a security force. Funds originally intended to repair the electricity grid and sewage and sanitation system were used to train special bomb-squad units and a hostage-rescue force.

The US has also shifted funds to build 10 new prisons to keep pace with the insurgency, and safe houses and armored cars for Iraqi judges.

Hundreds of millions of dollars from the reconstruction fund were also used to hold elections and for four changes of government, and to establish a criminal justice system,

including \$128 million to examine several mass graves of Saddam Hussein's alleged victims.

In addition to the diversion of funds to other types of projects, the reconstruction efforts have been plagued by substantial corruption and overcharging by contractors.

Another problem hindering reconstruction is a familiar one: scandal.

More than 18 months after the Pentagon disbanded the Coalition Provisional Authority that ran Iraq, neither the Justice Department nor a special inspector general has moved to recover large sums (in the region of \$8 billion) suspected of disappearing through fraud and price gouging in reconstruction. Earlier audits by the IG found that oversight of contractors by the authority was so lax that widespread abuse was likely.

Welcome To Liberated Iraq: **“Shoot The Man With The Camera First”**

January 16, 2006 Baghdad Dweller, Roadstoiraq.com

Ali Omar Abraham al-Mashhadani is an Iraqi journalist arrested or better say "abducted" from his home and family by US occupation forces since August, 2005.

Ali is released today after five months without any charge, I found this Arabic interview with Ali explaining his experience in different American prisons in Iraq.

It is not available in English so this is the translation:

For five months I have been move to different prisons, I tried to keep my strength and hide my weakness from the American soldiers, I tried to support my fellow (brothers) citizens who imprisoned with me in case they show some weakness.

Now I am free all what I want to do is to be alone and cry as much as I can.

Until now I don't know the reason behind my arrest they found photos in my camera, pictures of every day's gun battle between the Americans and gunmen from Ramadi.

They took me and my brother a collage student who have nothing to do with the whole matter. They took me Abu-Ghraib and then they transferred me to Boka prison near Basra.

In their integration they asked questions about names and groups I have no connection with, they asked me if I have any connection with Hizb-Allah in

Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, Tawheed wal-Jihad in Iraq, Islamic army or "the Green Army" which I never heard about.

The integrators didn't hide their irritation on journalists in Iraq, especially Iraqi journalists behavior who always reports about gun fights but not on the Americans achievements in Iraq.

They didn't hesitate to tell me "if there are two men, one of them holding a camera and another holding a R.P.G., their instructions will be to shoot the man with the camera first."

Now I am trying to heel and return quickly as possible to my profession.

Welcome To Liberated Baghdad: **"If They Say They Have Spent Money, Where Is It?"**

January 15, 2006 Doug Smith and Borzou Daragahi, LA Times Staff Writers

Although U.S. officials say the projects have given a needed jolt to the economy, most Iraqis have seen little effect in their lives.

"If they say they have spent money, where is it?" asked Salah Qaragholi, 30, a barber in the poor neighborhood called Zafraniya. "Where are the projects? The electricity is only four hours a day."

Baghdad's roads are an obstacle course of barriers, potholes and debris. Many government and office buildings are either still gutted or strung with webs of electrical wire connecting to generators that run 12 hours on good days. A brown haze fouls the air and pools of sewage overflow dot the streets.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Bush Regime Traitors Approved
Pentagon Domestic Spying Program:**

Peanut Butter And Jelly Sandwiches A Threat To National Security

The demonstrators wore papier-mache masks and handed out free peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches to Halliburton employees as they left work.

The idea, according to organizer Scott Parkin, was to call attention to allegations that the company was overcharging on a food contract for troops in Iraq. "It was tongue-in-street political theater," Parkin says.

But that's not how the Pentagon saw it. To U.S. Army analysts at the top-secret Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA), the peanut-butter protest was regarded as a potential threat to national security.

Jan. 30, 2006 By Michael Isikoff, Newsweek [Excerpts]

The demonstration seemed harmless enough. Late on a June afternoon in 2004, a motley group of about 10 peace activists showed up outside the Houston headquarters of Halliburton, the giant military contractor once headed by Vice President Dick Cheney. They were there to protest the corporation's supposed "war profiteering."

The demonstrators wore papier-mache masks and handed out free peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches to Halliburton employees as they left work.

The idea, according to organizer Scott Parkin, was to call attention to allegations that the company was overcharging on a food contract for troops in Iraq. "It was tongue-in-street political theater," Parkin says.

But that's not how the Pentagon saw it.

To U.S. Army analysts at the top-secret Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA), the peanut-butter protest was regarded as a potential threat to national security.

Created three years ago by the Defense Department, CIFA's role is "force protection; tracking threats and terrorist plots against military installations and personnel inside the United States. In May 2003, Paul Wolfowitz, then deputy Defense secretary, authorized a fact-gathering operation code-named TALON, short for Threat and Local Observation Notice, that would collect "raw information" about "suspicious incidents." The data would be fed to CIFA to help the Pentagon's "terrorism threat warning process," according to an internal Pentagon memo.

A Defense document shows that Army analysts wrote a report on the Halliburton protest and stored it in CIFA's database.

It's not clear why the Pentagon considered the protest worthy of attention, although organizer Parkin had previously been arrested while demonstrating at ExxonMobil headquarters (the charges were dropped). But there are now questions about whether

CIFA exceeded its authority and conducted unauthorized spying on innocent people and organizations.

The number of reports with names of U.S. persons could be in the thousands, says a senior Pentagon official who asked not be named because of the sensitivity of the subject.

But as the new information about CIFA shows, the scope of the U.S. government's spying on Americans may be far more extensive than the public realizes.

It isn't clear how many groups and individuals were snagged by CIFA's dragnet. Details about the program, including its size and budget, are classified.

A Pentagon spokesman declined to say why a private company like Halliburton would be deserving of CIFA's protection. But in the past, Defense Department officials have said that the "force protection" mission includes military contractors since soldiers and Defense employees work closely with them and therefore could be in danger.

CIFA researchers apparently cast a wide net and had a number of surveillance methods, both secretive and mundane, at their disposal. An internal CIFA PowerPoint slide presentation recently obtained by William Arkin, a former U.S. Army intelligence analyst who writes widely about military affairs, gives some idea how the group operated. The presentation, which Arkin provided to NEWSWEEK, shows that CIFA analysts had access to law-enforcement reports and sensitive military and U.S. intelligence documents.

(The group's motto appears at the bottom of each PowerPoint slide: "Counterintelligence 'to the Edge'.")

But the organization also gleaned data from "open source Internet monitoring." In other words, they surfed the Web.

That may have been how the Pentagon came to be so interested in a small gathering outside Halliburton. On June 23, 2004, a few days before the Halliburton protest, an ad for the event appeared on houston.indymedia.org, a Web site for lefty Texas activists. "Stop the war profiteers," read the posting. "Bring out the kids, relatives, Dick Cheney, and your favorite corporate pigs at the trough as we will provide food for free."

Four months later, on Oct. 25, the TALON team reported another possible threat to national security. The source: a Miami antiwar Web page. "Website advertises protest planned at local military recruitment facility," the internal report warns.

The database entry refers to plans by a south Florida group called the Broward Anti-War Coalition to protest outside a strip-mall recruiting office in Lauderhill, Fla.

The TALON entry lists the upcoming protest as a "credible" threat. As it turned out, the entire event consisted of 15 to 20 activists waving a giant BUSH LIED sign. No one was arrested. "It's very interesting that the U.S. military sees a domestic peace group as a threat," says Paul Lefrak, a librarian who organized the protest.

Arkin says a close reading of internal CIFA documents suggests the agency may be expanding its Internet monitoring, and wants to be as surreptitious as possible.

CIFA has contracted to buy "identity masking" software that would allow the agency to create phony Web identities and let them appear to be located in foreign countries, according to a copy of the contract with Computer Sciences Corp. (The firm declined to comment.)

Last week Democrats on the Senate intelligence committee pushed for an inquiry into CIFA's activities and who it's watching. "This is a significant Pandora's box (Pentagon officials) don't want opened," says Arkin.

"What we're looking at is hints of what they're doing."

As far as the Pentagon is concerned, that means we've already seen too much.



Leading By Example

January 21, 2006, From AK, Veterans For Peace

Ronald Reagan - divorced the mother of two of his children to marry Nancy Reagan who bore him a daughter 7 months after the marriage.

Bob Dole - divorced the mother of his child, who had nursed him through the long recovery from his war wounds.

Newt Gingrich - divorced his wife who was dying of cancer

Dick Armey - House Majority Leader - divorced

Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas - divorced

Gov. John Engler of Michigan - divorced

Gov. Pete Wilson of California - divorced

George Will - divorced

Sen. Lauch Faircloth - divorced

Rush Limbaugh - Rush and his current wife Marta have six marriages and four divorces between them.

Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia - Not yet 50 years old, Barr has been married three times. He had the audacity to author and push the "Defense of Marriage Act." (The current joke making the rounds on Capitol Hill is "Bob Barr...WHICH marriage are you defending?")

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato of New York - divorced 3 X's

Sen. John Warner of Virginia - divorced (once married to Liz Taylor.)

Gov. George Allen of Virginia - divorced

Henry Kissinger - divorced

Rep. Helen Chenoweth of Idaho - divorced

Sen. John McCain of Arizona - divorced

Rep. John Kasich of Ohio - divorced

Rep. Susan Molinari of New York (Republican National Convention Keynote Speaker) - divorced

Don't let homosexuals destroy marriage. That's the job of heterosexual Republicans.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Replies confidential. Send to thomasfbarton@earthlink.net. Name, I.D., withheld on request.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out
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