

GI SPECIAL 4A8:



J.D. Englehart, (Former) SPC. 1st Infantry Division
Washington DC 9/24/05

**“It Is True That I Was A
Very Different Breed In
The Army”**

**“However, There Were
Others Like Me”**

“All Of Us Opposed The War, Sometimes Openly”

Some of these soldiers are still in the military and fear repercussions of speaking out. Soldiers who served several missions in Iraq and want no more. Soldiers tied to the war machine with no hope of escape. They wait for their day of freedom, hoping to avoid another stop-loss. They want out before death takes them first.

From: J.D. Englehart, (Former) SPC. 1st Infantry Division
To: GI Special
Sent: January 14, 2006

A recent article featuring soldier x addressing Spc y reinforced the idea that veterans have a responsibility to share their experiences with others, to enlighten the public of what's really going on and undermine the efforts of propaganda and lies to thwart the basics of truth.

Furthermore, we as veterans also have the responsibility to support other veterans and provide encouragement for those who may wish to speak out against the war.

Speaking out is not easy.

Many punditoids and armchair generals continuously try to shoot you down.

At times it can be grueling, but if we stay solidified as veterans who oppose this illegal war than the masses have no choice but to hear us.

All the best.

Jeff

People often ask me, “If you are so against the war and couldn’t stand the army, why did you ever join in the first place?”

I have answered the same every time, that perhaps I was naïve, that I wanted a chance to see the world and earn college money. Or that I felt trapped in a dead-end town and needed a chance to escape, or that I was curious to live life as a soldier and gain military knowledge.

These answers are never enough for some people, yet so many young Americans end up in the military the same exact way.

I understand that I joined just prior to September 11, 2001. Indeed, I was naïve then to think that we lived in a somewhat peaceful world. Soldiers at that time joined for other reasons. Maybe soldiers who join now are ones who want to fight in a war.

After much personal debate, I have learned that my resistance to war and empire was forged by the army itself. Since the very beginning of my four year military experience, I was simply a very different soldier.

In basic training, instead of attending church service with the rest of the privates for two hours of relaxation, I was in the barracks mopping the floors and cleaning toilets. I would not fake a belief in god for petty rewards.

While other soldiers were marching in rank and file to eat chow, I was off to the side, being smoked by a drill sergeant: doing pushups and flutter-kicks for refusing to yell out cadence like a dopey high school cheerleader.

As time went by, it never got any easier. I had a very hard time with the concept of conformity.

While other soldiers in the barracks were watching porno's and hitting the beer bong with their frat-buddies, I was sitting on my bunk in a dark corner of a room reading Noam Chomsky.

Instead of spending endless hours spit-shining my boots or ironing my BDU's, I was playing punk riffs on my guitar or perhaps writing poetry.

I would routinely skip out on company "mandatory fun days" and go back to my room and sleep. Beetle Bailey was my hero.

Instead of spending every weekend going to the same mundane hip-hop clubs and discos, starting fights and trying to get laid, I was backpacking across Europe with other like-minded friends. We traveled way beyond the limits that a mileage pass would allow. We were openly learning about other cultures, exploring a great unknown, and living life to the fullest while we had it.

Instead of hating Iraqis for their strange ways and resentful behavior, I was trying to imagine the world in which they lived, even before an unwelcome US occupation forced them to live in a war zone.

While other soldiers were bragging about how many hajis they had waxed in the last engagement, I was carefully pondering what the longtime ramifications would be for such inane bloodshed.

Instead of coming back from missions and going straight to the PlayStation, I was writing what I saw and how I felt on this blog.

It is true that I was a very different breed in the army.

However, there were others like me.

We were far and few between, we were misfits in an olive-drab green hell.

We solidified, became friends, and became brothers.

Most of the soldiers in my platoon were this way, outcasts. All of us opposed the war, sometimes openly. None of us were persecuted for our beliefs because, although we were angry, we were a whole. We were a group of covert-subverts and our chain of command hated it.

I came home from Iraq and was awarded combat spurs, a glorious achievement for a cavalry scout. I contemplated the true meaning of these spurs, this icon of war.

Spurs that were worn by soldiers on horses; who rode with General Custer and decimated the American Indian population.

Spurs painted with the blood of five major wars of the 20th century, some wars to fight empire and others to promote it.

What would I do with these spurs? I decided to hold on to them. They meant much more than archaic tradition and a turbulent history. Somehow they meant comradeship and friendship. My brothers-in-arms and I had earned them together, and they symbolize a token of deep understanding of a past we will share together, until the day we die.

Today's public thinks that every American soldier fighting in Iraq supports the war and that his/her morale and trust in command is very high.

However, in my experience, this was simply not true.

I encountered dissent on many levels (For one example, see post Free Speech for Soldiers, Sept. 21, 2004 www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com).

Even soldiers who supported the army and loved their job hated being in a conflict they could not understand.

Some soldiers did understand, and were resentful for it.

The morale for the majority of our brigade was relatively low.

I rarely met anyone who wanted to fight in Iraq, and the only ones who truly wanted to stay were the high echelon officers who seemed more concerned about their careers than the overall mission.

Some may wonder where these disgruntled soldiers are. I believe that they are a part of every social fabric of our country.

I've certainly met more angry veterans than I have boastful ones.

Some missing limbs, some missing friends, others missing innocence.

Angry and confused. Cannot find the healthcare they need. Cannot find jobs. Can no longer find a place to fit in our society.

Some of these soldiers are still in the military and fear repercussions of speaking out.

Soldiers who served several missions in Iraq and want no more. Soldiers tied to the war machine with no hope of escape. They wait for their day of freedom, hoping to avoid another stop-loss. They want out before death takes them first.

So many silent voices and whispered stories.

I know one veteran who refuses to talk about his experience because he thinks no one will understand and it won't change anything anyways. Another veteran I know candy-coats his experience so he won't disappoint his conservative family members.

These soldiers are everywhere, but choose to remain silent because they fear ostracism from a war crazed, jingoistic public. The media plays with everyone's mind, convincing everyone that everything is okay as long as you trust in the government's overall plans for victory in Iraq.

But when one asks a veteran for the truth, this optimistic fairy tale of ultimate victory seems a hard pill to swallow.

I am not trying to speak for every soldier and veteran. I know that there are those out there who support the war effort and feel good about being in Iraq.

However, in my experience, I have not met too many who feel this way.

There is a rising tide of antiwar sentiments growing in this country. Fifty-two percent of America now feels it was not worth going to war with Iraq, while fifty-eight percent disapprove of Bush's handling of the war, and now a whopping fifty-three percent actually support a Bush impeachment. (CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll/Zogby Poll. Jan. 6-8, 2006).

One would have to wonder how these polls might look if more and more soldier accounts were brought to the public's attention.

There is a truth that lies buried under the Pentagon propaganda machine and the misinformation provided by corporate media and a dishonest administration, and that truth lies in the experience of combat soldiers.

In the end I know that my experience may have been different, or that maybe I was a very different kind of soldier. But it was the army that molded my contempt for authority and distrust of a feudalistic government that pulls the strings.

Through my army involvement I met others like me who felt much of the same way.

We were dissidents, but never un-American.

On the contrary, we knew the difference between following orders and thinking for ourselves.

Ultimately, there is no difference between love for one's country and the willingness to oppose a government that institutes war, fear and oppression on any level.

There are many soldiers and veterans who share the same feelings as me and others I met along the way.

Some are even in the ranks of the military.

Someday all the soldiers will come home and when they do, their stories and sentiments will follow.

Only then will a better understanding of the truth be known.

**J.D. Englehart
(Former) SPC. 1st Infantry Division
www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com**

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine Dies Of Ramadi Wounds

January 14, 2006 MNF

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: A Marine assigned to 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), died of wounds received from small-arms fire while conducting combat operations against the enemy in Ar Ramadi, Jan 13.

Pendleton Grad Killed By Bomb

1/6/2006 PENDLETON, Ore. (AP)

An Army medic from Pendleton was killed in Iraq this week, one of five soldiers who died in a roadside bombing.

Pfc. Ryan Walker, who turned 25 on Dec. 30, had been in Iraq for a year and was due to come home this year. On Thursday, he was one of five soldiers killed in an attack on their Humvee south of the Iraqi city Karbala.

Walker was the son of Randy Walker of Pendleton and Louise Walker of Hermiston. Walker's father described the Pendleton High School graduate as a "friendly kid who didn't have an enemy in the world."

The medic earned a Purple Heart in April after being shot in the leg. The East Oregonian said he'd been grazed by a bullet while rushing to help soldiers hit by a car bomb in Baghdad.

According to a listing on Gov. Ted Kulongoski's Web site, 58 members of the military from Oregon or with strong Oregon ties had died in Iraq and Afghanistan before Walker's death. The East Oregonian reported that Walker is the fifth member of the military from Umatilla County to die in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Walker's father served in Vietnam, and his grandfather fought in World War II.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



12.2.05: US Marines in Iraq's western al-Anbar province. (AFP/USMC)

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)

Area Soldier Killed 23 Days Before Wedding: “He Told Her He Wouldn't Be Sent Back To Iraq”

1/02/2006 By Marianne Love Staff Writer, Whittier Daily News

LA PUENTE - Army Spc. Marcelino R. Corniel had just five days left in Baghdad, 13 days before he would arrive stateside and 23 days before saying, "I do."

But the life of the 23-year-old National Guard member from La Puente was cut short Saturday when he was killed in a mortar attack, authorities said.

The death of Corniel, a former Marine assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment in Fullerton, has left a huge whole in their life.

"I don't know what I'm going to do without him," said his mother, Elaine Lopez, 43.

Corniel, whose family members called him Ronnie, served four years as a Marine, went to Iraq and was sent back a second time in September with the Army National Guard.

Lopez said she didn't want her son, a Bassett High School graduate, to re-enlist, but he told her he wouldn't be sent back to Iraq. Family members have agonized over the details of not knowing exactly how Corniel died; they said he always wore full-body protection.

His grandmother, Geraldine Vigil, described her grandson as confident and a born leader who loved guns, protected the women in the family and was a role model. She said he was set to get a bronze star with a "V" for valor for an incident earlier in Iraq, where his actions saved other troops.

Vigil said Corniel loved music. He started a band last year called Crash Ride, which recorded a CD titled "Never Forget," before reenlisting.

Corniel's biological father died when he was young.

His sisters, Kristen Lopez, 16, a junior at Bassett High School and Kimberly Lopez, 14, a freshman at Bassett, said Corniel was the best brother who always included them in everything he did.

The last one to speak with him was his fiancée, Claudia Calderon, 24, of Bellflower.

Calderon said they had set their wedding date.

Fort Leonard Wood Soldier Killed



Jan 8, 2006 AP

A soldier stationed at Fort Leonard Wood is killed while serving in Iraq. It happened the day after Christmas and comes just two years after three other post soldiers were killed during the holidays.

Back in 2003, three post soldiers were killed while serving in Iraq, that happened the day before Christmas. Now two years later, another soldier is killed in Iraq, this time the day after Christmas.

Post officials say 25-year-old Dominic Coles of Jesup, Georgia was killed on Monday by an enemy ambush. The sergeant and other members of the Fifth Engineer Battalion from Fort Leonard Wood were traveling in an armored vehicle.

The soldiers were on patrol in Baghdad when enemy forces began firing small arms at their vehicle and in this case those small arms consisted of rocket propelled grenades and mortars.

Coles was in the gunner's position of that vehicle and survived the first ambush, but was killed instantly during a second ambush when a rocket propelled grenade hit him. Coles and his unit had only been in Iraq for two months and this is the first casualty of the deployment.

No other soldiers were injured in the attack and commanders say they have the utmost confidence that the soldiers were prepared for any attacks.

Coles had been in the army for six years. Private memorial ceremonies are planned both in Iraq and at Fort Leonard Wood.

Fallujah Car Bomb Hits U.S. Patrol: Casualties Not Announced Yet

1.14.06 DPA

In Fallujah, west of Baghdad, a car bomber blew up his car in front of a U.S. patrol on Saturday causing unknown casualties among the American troops, police said.

The police said the troops subsequently opened fire, wounding three bystanders, including a woman.

TROOP NEWS

Vietnam Vet Slaps Down “Troops Got Spit On” Liars And “Support Our Troops” Con Game

It's very likely that there's more dissent from soldiers in Iraq than what we are hearing about, and we need to be supportive of that when we hear that it's happening. *Those are the soldiers that need to be supported.*

January 13, 2006 By April Howard and Benjamin Dangl, Vermont Guardian [Excerpts]

When 600 Vermont national guardsmen and women returned home from the Middle East in December, none of them were spat upon by anti-war protestors.

In the Vietnam War era, reports of such actions abounded. But are these infamous stories true? Or was the idea of people spitting at vets concocted to damage the anti-Vietnam War movement?

With U.S. public opinion deeply divided over the Iraq War, getting to the bottom of this “spitting image” has again become timely.

Not only did the stories of spitting anti-Vietnam War protestors conflict with sociologist Jerry Lembcke's own experiences as a veteran and member of the anti-war movement in the 1970s, but his investigation did not find any documented cases of veterans being spat upon.

In his book, *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam*, Lembcke argues that the manufactured stories served the Nixon administration as political tools with which to undermine the anti-war movement.

And he contends that bumper stickers saying “Support Our Troops” (rather than the war itself) are a way of de-politicizing the war.

From 1969 to 1970, Lembcke served in the 41st Artillery Group in Vietnam as a Chaplain’s Assistant. Later, he joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War and is currently an associate professor of sociology at Holy Cross College in Massachusetts. His book was published by New York University Press in July 1998.

Vermont Guardian: Who do you think started the spitting myth?

Lembcke: I think the spark was made by the Nixon administration. Commonly, Vice President Spiro Agnew would say in speeches, “Our veterans are being treated badly by the anti-war activists.” Though he never used the exact expression “being spat on,” he sparked people’s imaginations.

The stories appeal to the wounded masculinity of soldiers who came home from Vietnam and had to face the stigma of having fought in America’s first lost war. This sentiment of wounded pride mixed with the stories of hostility that the Nixon administration had been telling people. Together, they formed a kind of urban legend.

VG: How have these stories impacted American public opinion?

Lembcke: In the early 70s, the stories established the message: “We could have won the war in Vietnam if the American people had stayed solidly behind the mission,” and for a while that kept alive the idea that we could go back and re-start the fight. That’s the Hollywood scene of Rambo movies, the go-back-and-do-it-right-this-time movies.

But the myth also gave life to the idea that we could win wars like Vietnam someplace else, sometime in the future, if the American people would just rally around the soldiers and the mission. So, it shouldn’t have been any surprise when, in the months before the Persian Gulf War of 1991, and in the run up to the War in Iraq, stories about spat upon Veterans began to circulate in large numbers.

My interest in the stories was sparked because they were being used to leverage support for the first war in Iraq, and to silence people who were opposing the war.

They produced a narrative that ran “We don’t want to oppose the war in Iraq, lest we do what we did to our soldiers and our vets during the Vietnam War.” It seems to have been pretty persuasive. Since these spitting stories started in ’90, ’91, they have continued percolating through the cultural imagination.

VG: Can you explain your interpretation of the “support the troops” slogan?

Lembcke: The “supporting the troops,” rather than the war itself, slogan is a way of depoliticizing the war.

That was true during the end of the war in Vietnam; people who knew nothing about the war supported the war because they supported the troops.

I think that the policy planners and strategists during Vietnam figured out that you don't muster public opinion first, and then send the troops, no!

You send the troops and then rally the people around the troops.

It's a kind of demagoguery; it erases reason and appeals to peoples' emotions.

VG: What would you say to a person who was against the war, but doesn't want to be unsupportive of soldiers?

Lembcke: I would say that the stories (of mal-treatment of veterans by anti-war activists) are a myth.

After Vietnam, thousands of people came home opposed to the war and thousands of veterans joined the anti-war movement. That is what's forgotten when you believe that anti-war people spat on Vietnam veterans.

In the present context, we need to inform ourselves better about what the soldiers in Iraq really think about the war.

In the case of Vietnam, we didn't hear that much about dissent during the earlier years, and that's probably going to be the case with Iraq, too.

It's very likely that there's more dissent from soldiers in Iraq than what we are hearing about, and we need to be supportive of that when we hear that it's happening. Those are the soldiers that need to be supported.

MORE:

[Excerpt: Military Project Basis Of Agreement]

MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY PROJECT

Do not "support the troops" in the abstract. We focus on support for Armed Forces resistance, giving aid and comfort to those who are against the war: THE MILITARY PROJECT: Contact@militaryproject.org

**Clueless CIA Halfwits Attack
Pakistan:
Slaughter Civilians:**

OOPS: Target Wasn't There

January 14, 2006 DAMADOLA, Pakistan (AP)

Pakistani officials on Saturday angrily condemned a purported CIA airstrike meant to target al-Qaida's No. 2 man, saying he wasn't there and "innocent civilians" were among at least 17 men, women and children killed in a village near the Afghan border.

Doctors told AP at least 17 people died, including women and children, but residents put the death toll at more than 30.

Thousands of tribesmen staged protests and a mob set fire to the office of a U.S.-backed aid agency as Pakistan's people and government showed increasing frustration over a recent series of suspected U.S. attacks along the frontier that appear aimed at Islamic militants.

The Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying it protested to U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker over the "loss of innocent civilian lives."

Neither addressed the target of the airstrike. But two senior Pakistani security officials confirmed to AP that al-Zawahri was the intended victim and said Pakistan's assessment was that the CIA acted on incorrect information.

More than 8,000 tribesmen chanting "God is great!" took to the streets of a town near Damadola to castigate the attack.

Sahibzada Haroon ur Rashid, a local lawmaker from a hardline Islamic party, called it "open terrorism." [No shit.]

In Damadola, villagers said all the dead were local people and denied harboring al-Zawahri or any other Islamic extremists in the ethnic Pashtun hamlet about four miles from the border with Afghanistan.

"I don't know him. He was not at my home. No foreigner was at my home when the planes came and dropped bombs," said Shah Zaman, whose house was one of those destroyed in the attack.

The strike left three homes hundreds of yards apart in ruins. People in the area said the blasts could be felt miles away.

\$29 Million And No Rifle

Letters To The Editor
December 26, 2005
Army Times

The article "Expand small-arms search, Army told" (Nov. 21) puzzled me.

The first question that comes to mind is why does the Defense Department feel the need for a new weapon? Second, how in the world do you spend \$29 million researching a rifle?

The XM8 shoots 5.56mm ammunition, so any unit and any rifle range could handle it.

I think the researchers should have just sent a couple of the test rifles to a rifle range and let some soldiers shoot them, give a written report of pros and cons, and then made up their minds.

Twenty-nine million dollars to test a rifle that's not going to be used now.

You see dollar amounts all the time in the paper when talking about relief for other countries, hurricane victims, etc. It really makes you wonder if all that money is going to good use.

Spc. Charles Kelly
Coleman Barracks, Germany

Military Officers Condemn Bush Regime Trials

13 January 2006 By Jane Sutton, Reuters, Guantánamo Bay US Navel Base, Cuba

US military officers ordered to defend accused war criminals at Guantánamo base in Cuba have joined the outcry of activists assailing the court system for human rights violations.

"It was horrific to sit there and watch this happen," said Army Maj. Tom Fleener, who represented a Yemeni prisoner in pretrial hearings at Guantánamo this week.

"We live in a country where we've spent a couple hundred years putting together a good system of justice where people have rights to counsel (of their choosing), people have rights to confront accusers, people have rights to evidence," Fleener told journalists.

"None of that stuff is present in these hearings."

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Charles Swift, who represents another Yemeni prisoner, has asked the Supreme Court to rule that US President George W. Bush lacked authority to create the new court system rather than try the prisoners under existing civilian or military law.

Same Old Same Old



World War I photo postcard.

[Thanks to John Gingerich, Veterans For Peace, who sent this from his own collection.]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

14 01, 2006 Bahrain News Agency & DPA & Reuters

An insurgent sniper shot a policeman in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, killing him immediately Saturday, police said.

The police said Ahmed Thanun was killed by a sniper at 10:00 am while standing at the gate of his house.

BAGHDAD - A roadside bomb killed two policemen when it blew up next to a police patrol in eastern Baghdad, police said.

The bomb went off near a transport station in Al-Masjhtal neighbourhood.

Four policemen were wounded.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Fifteen Years Of War, And Who's Better Off? Ask Cindy Sheehan And Most Any Other Mother Who Has Lost A Child To War

To: GI Special
Date: 1.14.06
Subject: 15 Years Of War

By Ron Jacobs

[Ron Jacobs writes frequently and well for a variety of publications opposed to the war in Iraq.]

"I've told the American people before that this will not be another Vietnam, and I repeat this here tonight.... I'm hopeful that this fighting will not go on for long and that casualties will be held to an absolute minimum.

"This is an historic moment. We have in this past year made great progress in ending the long era of conflict and cold war. We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order..."

--George Herbert Walker Bush on January 16, 1991 announcing the attack on Iraq

Fifteen years have passed since Bush the Elder first attacked the nation of Iraq.

Just remembering that evening recalls the fear and foreboding those first US bombs brought with them.

No matter how you look at it, Washington is no closer to conquering Iraq than they were on January 16, 1991.

Yet, its armies march onward into a hell of their own making. And they are taking the rest of us with them, whether we acknowledge it or not.

Is Iraq a better place? Although the answer to this question depends on where one sits, I will only say that a country being torn apart by war is rarely better off than when it is at peace.

I hope that there will be others writing about the progress or the lack thereof in that shattered country fifteen years on, but that is not my purpose here. I won't delve into the meaning of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths since that January evening.

I don't live in Iraq. I live in the United States. So, I'm going to take a look at the US homeland fifteen years after the first wholesale invasion of Iraq by Washington's forces.

How are the people living in this country faring? Are we better off? Are we a freer people?

As I said before, the answers to this question depend on where one sits. Given that, let me say that I sit in the US South and I work for a living that pays less than \$10.00 an hour. My situation is not uncommon. In fact, it seems to be the standard. That said, let's take a look at this new world order and what it means for people in my economic situation.

A Quick Survey

What follows is by no means a complete look at the past fifteen years in the United States. Nor is it a complete appraisal of the war(s) and their effects on US residents. Indeed, this is barely a wade in the waters of history.

No discussion of the war's effects can ignore the toll in human lives, which continues to grow daily.

The number of US military dead in Iraq since that January 1991 attack stands (as of January 11, 2005) at 2563. This figure does not include those men and women who died from war-related illnesses after they returned home. As any reader of the news must know, those numbers include victims of Depleted Uranium poisoning, war related mental and emotional illness, and other unattributed maladies.

If we were to include the military casualties incurred in the war in Afghanistan, the number of deaths rises to 2822.

Although there is no direct connection between the US war in Afghanistan and the one in Iraq in many people's minds, there is a link between the two in the minds of the warmakers and the Islamic fundamentalist fighters. Indeed, according to statements attributed to Osama bin Laden and his cohorts, one of the primary reasons for the attacks on New York and Virginia in 2001 was the stationing of US forces on sacred Muslim lands.

For those with a short recall function, let me remind you that those forces were originally stationed there during the buildup to George the Elder's Desert Storm slaughter.

Which brings us to civilian casualties. If we are to include the deaths of US residents attributed to Bin Laden and his forces, then we must include the casualties of 9-11 and those of every other attack attributed to Bin Laden.

In addition, the deaths of US mercenaries must be included (even though their classification as civilians can be easily challenged). The approximate number for those deaths is 301. Of course, there are others that we will never know about. When one adds the number of journalists killed in these two wars (more than 100), the total number of non-Iraqi and non-Afghani dead hovers near 10,000.

If we subtract the deaths of 9-11 and other non-Iraq terror attacks, that number is still near 3000. None of these dismal numbers even began to contemplate the numbers of Iraqi and Afghani deaths, which range from a low of 100,000 to a million or more (remember, this is since January 1991 and includes deaths from war, sanctions and the occupation).

Numbers never do the dead justice. Ask Cindy Sheehan and most any other mother who has lost a child to war.

Back to the United States.

How else can we measure our situation fifteen years after George W. Bush's daddy announced the first US bombing of Baghdad? Are the US people better off? How do their bank books look? After all, isn't that what life's about in our capitalist paradise?

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (1), the personal savings rate is now negative, the personal savings rate is around 1 percent, which is well below the 7 percent rate that existed for the previous three decades. This means that many more US residents are just a couple of paychecks away from living on the street.

The most obvious culprit for the low personal savings rate is easy to find: the incredible rise in energy costs: a rise that is tied to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Other factors include the continuing rise in medical costs as even Medicare heads toward privatization and fewer residents have medical insurance.

What about those gasoline prices? Well, from the time that Saddam Hussein sent his troops into Kuwait in August 1990 until the US attacked Baghdad in January 1991, gasoline prices rose an average of 32 cents per gallon in the US. This means that they hovered right around \$1.20 per gallon in January 1991. Now, as we all know, gas prices range from \$2.00 per gallon up to near \$3.00 per gallon. Meanwhile, crude prices are hovering around sixty dollars a barrel on the exchange.

Fortunately for most US residents, the winter has been relatively mild. This has kept heating costs down, but anecdotal evidence suggests that people are still spending more for heating fuel than they were last winter even though they are using less.

In other words, the cost of heating has risen exponentially.

Of course, these phenomenon have helped one sector of the US population, albeit a very small one; small but well-represented in the halls of power: the energy

industry. As has been noted over and over, the corporations involved in this industry, specifically the big oil companies, had higher profits last year than any company has ever had in the history of modern capitalism.

What about civil liberties and other political freedoms residents of the US have come to expect as their right? Has the "new world order" that was unsheathed by Bush the Elder, polished by Bill Clinton and given a martial luster by the younger Bush made the nation a freer place? In a word, NO!

It's not just the illegal spying undertaken by George W. Bush, nor is it the CIA renditions begun under Clinton and continued to today. It's not just the military courts set up in the wake of 9-11 or the torture cells run by US forces around the world. It's not just the PATRIOT Act.

Indeed, it's the fawning over police by all three administrations and the accompanying denial of human and civil rights undertaken by Congress during this period that has turned the United States into a shadow of its perception of itself as written into the Bill of Rights.

There's a reason those amendments were written: even back in the 1780s there were men that wanted to control freedom of movement and speech and enhance the abilities of the police and army in their endeavors to control the populace.

Now, the people in the US are facing another of history's periodical clampdowns. Whether this clampdown is undertaken in the name of some illusory "war on drugs" or the equally illusory "war on terrorism," the reality is that the individual in the US is more under the eyes of those in power than an any other point in history.

Cops have arrested peaceful protesters without warning at protests against war and global capitalism. Personal information ranging from grocery store purchases to library transactions to travel plans are available to almost any law enforcement agency that wants them.

Furthermore, the ordinary citizen has no idea if or when their information has been "reviewed", nor do they know what agency has "reviewed" it.

Indeed, certain investigations can not even be revealed by the company or agency providing the information without the individuals divulging that information being guilty of an illegal act.

As I hint at above, this most recent clampdown didn't begin with the PATRIOT Act (Samuel Adams has got to love that name!). Its legal genesis can be traced directly to the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. In fact, it was this bill that first empowered the government to activate "alien terrorist removal procedures" without having to give even a nod to due process.

Furthermore, this act enabled the government to accuse, try, and deport non-citizens without ever appearing in court. In fact, this law allows the government to avoid even informing the accused that an investigation or "trial" took place.

It is but a short trip from these parameters to Gitmo and the torture directives of Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney. It was this law that set the stage for the PATRIOT Act's attack on the Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure. It relaxed electronic surveillance laws, expanded the government's ability to spy on groups or organizations the government suspects of terrorism; and it gave the president sweeping powers to selectively target domestic groups, and arbitrarily criminalize activities he or she determines a threat to national security.

The quick (and upon further thought, the most accurate) appraisal of the last fifteen years is simple.

The US is wasting its resources on a war that benefits very few of its own citizens and not too many other people in the world either. The war itself is creating greater problems than it was supposed to solve, despite Washington's protests to the contrary.

It is always important when thinking about matters such as these to follow the money. When this method is used, it's quite apparent why the people of Iraq have been under attack by Washington's armies (and those other armies complicit in the destruction).

In 1991, the defense budget stood at around 300 billion dollars.

The 2005 Defense Budget hovered near a half-trillion dollars (with around \$75 billion of that earmarked for weapons procurement).

That figure doesn't even include so-called emergency appropriations for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, nor does it include monies spent by the Department of Homeland Security.

The top ten US war contractors have seen the monetary value of their contracts increase an average of more than fifty percent just in the past five years. Put that percentage rate alongside the profits of the oil companies. These past fifteen years have been good for somebody. Real good.

The bad news is that they aren't finished.

Most of the folks who run this country, no matter which major party they claim to belong to, think that they can win their various wars and start new ones, continue to privatize the government for the benefit of their friends (Social Security is next, mark my words), spy on and jail people at will, and then tell us that they're doing it for our own good.

One party might wave a stick while the other holds a carrot in front of our nose, but the brutal reality is that both are riding the same horse into the ground, and that horse is this country we live in.

Isn't it time that both of these riders got thrown off their high horse?

1. US Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Personal Saving Rate," 21 December 2005. See, also, Maurice Obstfeld and Kenneth Rogoff, "Global Current Account Imbalances and Exchange Rate Adjustments," 17 May 2005.

“When UFPJ Didn't Denounce Kerry, It Didn't Fulfill Its 1st Duty” “Peace Movements Must Expose Candidates Allied To War Criminals”

[These are short excerpts from a much longer article offering political criticisms of both UFPJ and The Workers World Party.

January 10, 2006 By LENNI BRENNER, CounterPunch

You focused on their Yugoslavian stupidities. They've committed domestic grotesqueries as well.

WWP [Workers World Party] supported Black Democrat David Dinkins for Mayor of New York. However NY's 10/17/89 Newsday ran a piece by Jim Zogby of the Arab American Institute, about a Dinkins' campaign meeting: "Arab-Americans were told that they could not develop a support group for the campaign, could not organize a fundraiser that would be attended by Dinkins and could not be visibly associated with the candidate. The reason given was that it might cost Dinkins Jewish votes."

Calling for votes for a Tammany ethno-religious panderer, because Dinkins was Black, was witless.

But UFPJ national coordinator Leslie Cagan also "worked on his first mayoral campaign."

She & WWP were trying to show how pro-Black they are.

UFPJ takes no electoral positions.

Some member organizations are non-profits barred from endorsements. And this avoids fights over candidates.

But do we agree that most UFPJ marchers past the 2004 Republican convention voted for Kerry?

He declared his intention to get out of Iraq by 2008, AKA committing 4 more years of murder. And the Democratic opera star never stopped singing about his political love for Ariel Sharon.

When UFPJ didn't denounce Kerry, it didn't fulfill its 1st duty: Peace movements must expose candidates allied to war criminals.

Lyndon Johnson was the 1964 'lesser evil.' In 1968 they got "clean for Gene" McCarthy, or backed Bobby Kennedy. Unknown to them, Bobby wiretapped Martin Luther King.

When McCarthy lost in the primaries & Kennedy was assassinated, they raced to the November polls to vote for Hubert Humphrey, Johnson's murderous VP. (McCarthy endorsed him & evolved into a 'Reagan Democrat.')

These awesome minds fell for George McGovern in 1972.

After years of war he wasn't for immediate withdrawal.

[The comment about McGovern could have been written about the 2005 Nader campaign. Nader also was opposed to the immediate withdrawal of U.S. Imperial troops from Iraq, explaining in a loathsome 2005 speech before the Council On Foreign Relations that his plan to delay withdrawal would destroy the Iraqi resistance. T]

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



(Photo: THE CHILDREN OF IRAQ)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign" and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any changes being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab 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? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

The Great Iraq Troop Training Fiasco Rolls On

The Iraqis' logistics system is a widely seen as a shambles, and, despite pledges from senior officials that training for a logistics corps is underway, there is little optimism that Iraq's Ministry of Defense can fix the problem. Disdain for the Ministry of Defense was nearly universal among U.S. troops who have dealt with it.

December 26, 2005 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times [Excerpts]

There was Sgt. Noah, the tough, squared-away Iraqi soldier who had no problem giving orders to anyone, including journalists.

And there was the nameless, smiling Iraqi private with his shopping bag, walking from house to house on patrol, snagging whatever he chose as if the farming village was his own private market.

This is the Iraqi army in the autumn of 2005 — more tactically proficient, more ready for battle, but uneven in quality, plagued by its utter lack of internal logistics support and by the threat of creeping lawlessness in a force the United States is depending upon to impose law and order.

The Iraqis' logistics system is a widely seen as a shambles, and, despite pledges from senior officials that training for a logistics corps is underway, there is little optimism that Iraq's Ministry of Defense can fix the problem. Disdain for the Ministry of Defense was nearly universal among U.S. troops who have dealt with it.

Iraqi troops may all too often participate in the kinds of lawlessness the U.S. military is depending on them to prevent.

Marines on duty near the Syrian border reported Iraqi soldiers shaking down civilians at traffic checkpoints, and even stealing money from the corpse of an insurgent in one case.

A transition team member in the Baghdad area, an Army captain who asked not to be identified because of the issue's sensitivity, declared that his Iraqi troops had been ready for weeks to patrol their own battle space, a key step in an Iraqi unit's development.

"I have no problem ... fighting alongside these guys," he said.

In contrast, the captain had nothing but scorn for the Ministry of Defense.

"We get no gas, no vehicles. The entire supply system is just broke," he said.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionist Troops Defending Freedom Use Attack Dogs On 85 Year Old

1.13.06 IMEMC & Agencies

The Maan News Agency reported that one woman of Kafr Ad Deek village, near Salfit city, in the West Bank, was injured after military dogs attacked and bit her while the soldiers were conducting military searches of homes.

The agency stated that soldiers broke into the home of Slaha Shihada, 85, and searched it; during the search, military dogs attacked the woman and bit her in several parts of her body causing moderate injuries.

Shihada was transferred to Rafidia Hospital in Nablus.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Enemy Agents Spied On California Counter-Recruitment Protest: “This Is The War At Home”

14 January 2006 By SARAH KERSHAW, Santa Cruz Journal

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. - The protest was carefully orchestrated, planned for weeks by Students Against War during Friday evening meetings in a small classroom on the University of California campus here.

So when the military recruiters arrived for the job fair, held in an old dining hall last April 5 - a now fateful day for a scandalized university - the students had their two-way radios in position, their cyclists checking the traffic as hundreds of demonstrators marched up the hilly roads of this campus on the Central Coast and a dozen moles stationed inside the building, reporting by cellphone to the growing crowd outside.

"Racist, sexist, antigay," the demonstrators recalled shouting. "Hey, recruiters, go away!"

Fast forward: The students had left campus for their winter vacation in mid-December when a report by MSNBC said the April protest had appeared on what the network said was a database from a Pentagon surveillance program.

The protest was listed as a "credible threat," to what is not clear to people around here, and was the only campus action among scores of other antimilitary demonstrations to receive the designation.

Over the winter break, Josh Sonnenfeld, 20, a member of Students Against War, or SAW, put out the alert. "Urgent: Pentagon's been spying on SAW, and thousands of other groups," said his e-mail message to the 50 or so students in the group.

Several members spent the rest of their break in a swirl of strategy sessions by telephone and e-mail, and in interviews with the news media.

Students in the group said they were not entirely surprised to learn that the federal government might be spying on them.

"On the one hand, I was surprised that we made the list because generally we don't get the recognition we deserve," Mr. Sonnenfeld said. "On the other hand, it doesn't surprise me because our own university has been spying on us since our group was founded. This nation has a history of spying on political dissenters."

"This is the war at home," said Jennifer Low, 20, a member of the antiwar group. "So many of us were so discouraged and demoralized by the war, a lot of us said this is the way we can stop it."

California lawmakers have demanded an explanation from the government. Representative Sam Farr, a Democrat whose district includes Santa Cruz, was one of several who sent letters to the Bush administration. "This is a joke," Mr. Farr said in an interview. "There is a protest du jour at Santa Cruz."

"Santa Cruz is not a terrorist town," he added. "It's an activist town. It's essentially Berkeley on the coast."

"I had multiple reactions," said Faye J. Crosby, a professor of social psychology and chairwoman of the Academic Senate.

"One reaction was, 'Gosh, I wonder if we're doing something right?'" Professor Crosby said. "Another reaction was it's a waste of taxpayer money. What are we a threat to?"

Bush Visits New Orleans Rich On Way To Get \$4 Million From Florida Rich: Babbles More Bullshit

13 January 2006 By Elizabeth Bumiller, The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 12: President Bush made his first trip here in three months on Thursday and declared that New Orleans was "a heck of a place to bring your family" and that it had "some of the greatest food in the world and some wonderful fun."

Mr. Bush spent his brief visit in a meeting with political and business leaders on the edge of the Garden District, the grand neighborhood largely untouched by the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina, and saw little devastation.

He did not go into the city's hardest-hit areas or to Jackson Square, where several hundred girls from the Academy of the Sacred Heart staged a protest demanding stronger levees.

"It may be hard for you to see, but from when I first came here to today, New Orleans is reminding me of the city I used to come to visit," the president told the **local leaders** at the Convention and Visitors Bureau, an independent group set up to attract business and tourism to the city.

From New Orleans, Mr. Bush traveled to Waveland and Bay St. Louis in Mississippi, where he viewed destruction along the Gulf Coast. He then headed for Palm Beach, Fla., for a closed-door \$4 million fund-raiser for the Republican

National Committee and Republican candidates at the home of Dwight Schar, a homebuilder and a co-owner of the Washington Redskins.

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.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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