

GI SPECIAL 4B18:



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

**“No One Told Me Why
I'm Putting My Life On
The Line In Samarra,
And You Know Why
They Didn't?”**

“Because There Is No Fucking Reason”

Feb. 15, 2006 By Tom Lasseter, Knight Ridder Newspapers [Excerpts]

SAMARRA, Iraq: The gunfight by the Tigris River was over. It was time to retrieve the bodies.

Staff Sgt. Cortez Powell looked at the shredded jaw of a dead man whom he'd shot in the face when insurgents ambushed an American patrol in a blind of reeds. Powell's M4 assault rifle had jammed, so he'd grabbed the pump-action shotgun that he kept slung over his shoulders and pulled the trigger.

Five other soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division scrambled down, pulled two of the insurgents' bodies from the reeds and dragged them through the mud.

"Strap those motherfuckers to the hood like a deer," said Staff Sgt. James Robinson, 25, of Hughes, Ark.

The soldiers heaved the two bodies onto the hood of a Humvee and tied them down with a cord. The dead insurgents' legs and arms flapped in the air as the Humvee rumbled along.

Iraqi families stood in front of the surrounding houses. They watched the corpses ride by and glared at the American soldiers.

Fifteen months earlier, when the 1st Infantry Division sent some 5,000 Iraqi and U.S. soldiers to retake Samarra from Sunni Muslim insurgents, it was a test of the American occupation's ability not only to pacify but also to rebuild a part of Iraq dominated by the country's minority Sunnis.

More than a year later, American troops still are battling insurgents in Samarra. Bloodshed is destroying the city and driving a wedge between the Iraqis who live there and the U.S. troops who are trying to keep order.

Violence, police corruption and the blurry lines of guerrilla warfare are clouding any hopes of victory.

Soldiers such as Sgt. Powell desperately want to reach out to the community, but they're mired in daily skirmishes.

Residents have fled, and a 7-mile-long, 5-foot-high earthen wall that U.S. soldiers built around the city last August has failed to keep out the insurgents.

Many of the American troops who patrol the city say they don't see much hope for Samarra. Some officers privately worry that the city will fall to insurgents as American troops withdraw.

The dirt wall that the Americans built around Samarra left three checkpoints where residents can enter after they show identification and submit to searches. After the wall went up, the city's population fell from about 200,000 to about 90,000, according to U.S. military officials.

The wall cut insurgent attacks in Samarra roughly in half, to eight to 10 a day. But they're increasing again. Eight roadside bombs exploded in Samarra in October; at least 15 blew up in January.

The city inside the wall has stretches of buildings crushed by bombs and pocked with bullet holes. Bales of concertina wire litter the landscape, along with piles of concrete rubble that once were walls.

"The textbook answer is to build infrastructure," said Capt. Scott Brannon, who commands Bravo Company, which oversees Samarra. "But what happens with the contracts is that we're funding the AIF," or anti-Iraqi forces; the insurgency.

Brannon, a soft-spoken 34-year-old from Boaz, Ala., continued: "Every new unit that comes in has these tribal sheik meetings where all these sheiks say, yeah, we want to help clean up Samarra; and the new unit is dazed and confused and doesn't know who the bad guys are, and by the time they figure it out it's time to leave."

In the middle of town, in an abandoned schoolhouse, Sgt. Powell, 28, of Columbia, Mo., lives with his fellow soldiers from the 2nd platoon of Bravo Company in the 101st Airborne's storied Rakkasan Brigade. Patrol Base Uvanni is named for Army National Guard Sgt. Michael Uvanni of Rome, N.Y., who was killed in the city on Oct. 1, 2004.

A different name is painted in black on the door to the company's tactical operations center: the Alamo.

The 2nd platoon and two others, about 120 men total, are based at the Alamo and at another base on the edge of town. They replaced three companies from the 3rd Infantry Division that had a total of more than 400 soldiers.

"If they ever figure out that we don't have many guys here we'll be in trouble," said 1st Lt. Dennis Call, who commands the 2nd platoon. "If we're out on patrol with just seven guys, like usual, and we take two casualties we'll get messed up."

The lieutenant writes biblical quotes on the walls and bookshelves of his bedroom, which is a closet connected to the operations center in the Alamo schoolhouse. He has a goofy grin, and his sergeants tousle his sandy-brown hair as though he were a favorite uncle.

Scrawled on a dry-erase board is a verse from Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." "Being in Iraq is like my time in the wilderness," said Call, 31, who's from Albuquerque, N.M.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, Call sprinted through Samarra, sweat pouring down his face, heart pounding.

A rocket-propelled grenade had slammed into the wall of a 2nd platoon observation post, sending chunks of concrete flying into the air and his men diving for cover. Call was chasing one of the insurgents who had fled.

Call and three other soldiers dashed into a house, mud flying from their combat boots, radios squawking. The women inside shrieked. A man moved from a hallway to the living room, almost a shadow in the dimly lit house. Call jerked his M4 assault rifle back and forth, his finger on the trigger.

He ran down an alley, through another house and into the street.

The insurgent was gone.

The soldiers began walking toward a Humvee parked a block away.

Specialist Patrick McHenry sat behind the Humvee's .50-caliber machine gun, scanning the area. He heard a ping, looked up and saw a grenade come flying over a wall.

"Frag," McHenry screamed. "Frag!"

Call glanced at what looked like a piece of fruit rolling toward him and his men. They dashed toward a courtyard. The explosion seemed to stop time for a second. Shrapnel cut into the walls around them.

The soldiers patted their bodies to make sure everything was still there.

McHenry, 23, of Jamestown, Pa., ran up. "It came from right over that ... wall," he reported.

The men ran along the wall and stopped at a metal gate where they could see inside.

"It's an IP (Iraqi police) station!" Call said.

Powell blasted the padlock with his shotgun. The American soldiers screamed at the police inside to drop their weapons.

The police substation was attached to Samarra General Hospital, and the soldiers questioned doctors and policemen alike, swabbing their hands, looking for explosives residue.

There was no sign of the grenade thrower.

The men of the 2nd platoon were furious. Many of them suspected that the police may have been behind the attack.

Distrust of the Iraqi police in Samarra runs deep among U.S. troops.

The Iraqi soldiers in the area are no better, Brannon said.

U.S. military officials suspect that many of them, including a company commander, are on the insurgents' payrolls.

Iraqi soldiers were removed from the city's checkpoints last month after intelligence reports said that the most wanted terrorist in the country, al-Qaida ally Abu Musab al Zarqawi, gave Iraqi soldiers \$7,000 after they let him enter the city to broker an arms deal.

The 101st Airborne plans to hand over the town to the Iraqi police and army by July 1.

Five days after the grenade attack, Lt. Call and his men from the 2nd platoon were planning an afternoon "hearts and minds" foot patrol to hand out soccer balls to local kids.

As Call sat in the schoolhouse, preparing to go out, he heard two loud bursts from the .50-caliber machine gun on the roof.

Specialist Michael Pena, a beefy 21-year-old from Port Isabel, Texas, had opened fire. Boom-boom-boom. Boom-boom-boom.

Call and his men dashed out the front door. Pena had shot an unarmed Iraqi man on the street. The man had walked past the signs that mark the 200-yard "disable zone" that surrounds the Alamo and into the 100-yard "kill zone" around the base. The Army had forced the residents of the block to leave the houses last year to create the security perimeter.

American units in Iraq usually fire warning shots. The Rakkasans don't.

A few days later, Call said his brigade command had told him, "The Rakkasans don't do warning shots." A warning shot in the vernacular of the Rakkasans, Call said, was a bullet that hit one Iraqi man while others could see.

"That's how you warn his buddy, is to pop him in the face with a kill shot?" Call said incredulously. "But what about when his buddy comes back with another guy ... that and the other 15 guys in his family who you've made terrorists?"

Looking at the man splayed on the ground, Call turned to his medic, Specialist Patrick McCreery, and asked, "What the fuck was he doing?"

McCreery didn't answer. The man's internal organs were hanging out of his side, and his blood was pouring across the ground. He was conscious and groaning. His eyelids hung halfway closed.

"What ... did they shoot him with?" McCreery asked, sweat beginning to show on his brow. "Did someone call a ... ambulance?"

The call to prayer was starting at a mosque down the street. The words "Allahu Akbar" - God is great - wafted down from a minaret's speakers.

The man looked up at the sky as he heard the words. He repeated the phrase "Ya Allah. Ya Allah. Ya Allah." Oh God. Oh God. Oh God.

He looked at McCreery and raised his finger toward the house in front of him.

"This my house," he said in broken English.

McCreery reached down. With his hands cupped, he shoved the man's organs back into his body and held them in place as Call unwrapped a bandage to put around the hole.

"He's fading, he's fading," McCreery shouted.

Looking into the dying man's eyes, the medic said, "Haji, haji, look at me," using the honorific title reserved for older Muslim men who presumably have gone on Hajj, pilgrimage, to Mecca.

"Why? Why?" asked the man, his eyes beginning to close.

"Haji, I don't know," said McCreery, sweat pouring down his face.

An Iraqi ambulance pulled up and the Humvees followed. They followed the man to the hospital they'd raided a few days earlier. The soldiers filed in and watched as the man died.

Call said nothing. McCreery, a 35-year-old former foundry worker from Levering, Mich., walked toward a wall, alone. He looked at the dead man for a moment and wiped tears from his eyes.

A few days later, Call's commander asked him to take pictures of the entrails left by the man Pena had shot, identified as Wissam Abbas, age 31, to document that Abbas was inside the sign warning of deadly force.

McHenry, who was driving, told him, "There's not going to be much left, sir. The dogs will have eaten all of it."

Pena was up on the schoolhouse roof manning the same .50-caliber machine gun. He didn't say a word about the man he'd killed. As he stared at a patch of earth in front of him, at Samarra and its wreckage, he couldn't contain his frustration.

"No one told me why I'm putting my life on the line in Samarra, and you know why they didn't?" Pena asked. "Because there is no fucking reason."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Roadside Bomb Kills MND-B Soldier

February 18, 2006 By BUSHRA JUHI (AP) & MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE-IRAQ
COMBINED PRESS INFORMATION CENTER Release A060218a

BAGHDAD , Iraq: A Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldier was killed Feb. 18 at approximately 8 a.m. when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in eastern Baghdad.

The attack happened near the Shaab soccer stadium, and the area was cordoned off by U.S. and Iraqi forces. An American helicopter landed at the scene to take the victim away.

Three MPs Wounded By IED

February 17, 2006 Robert Johnson, Fort Leonard Wood Guidon

Three soldiers from the 463rd Military Police Company were injured by an improvised explosive device in Iraq on Tuesday.

The soldiers, who had deployed from Fort Leonard Wood in January, were on convoy escort duty when the explosion struck their vehicle about 6:30 p.m. Baghdad time, said Army officials.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



US soldiers prepare to erect a checkpoint during a patrol in al Karrada neighborhood in Baghdad. (AFP/Yuri Cortez)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Sleepwalking To Disaster In The Mountains Of The Hindu Kush.

Feb. 16 By GARETH HARDING, UPI Chief European Correspondent [Excerpts]

BRUSSELS, Feb. 16 (UPI)

Has NATO, the world's most powerful military alliance that saw off the Soviet threat and brought two Balkan wars to an end, bitten off more than it can chew in trying to pacify lawless Afghanistan?

Despite strenuous denials from alliance chiefs, a growing number of military experts believe the bloc is sleepwalking to disaster in the mountains of the Hindu Kush.

"It was always a gamble to make Afghanistan the symbol of a reinvigorated Atlantic alliance," writes Michael Clarke, professor of defense studies at King's College, London, in a recent issue of Time Magazine. "The country is far from the immediate interests of most European states.

Over the last 150 years, soldiers from many nations have left their bones on its bleak mountainsides.

This grim picture of Afghanistan over four years after the United States military swept the Taliban from power is confirmed by the European Union's special envoy to Kabul, Francesc Vendrell.

Speaking to reporters last month, the senior diplomat said the political situation in the country was still shaky while the Taliban insurgency continued in the south, that 100,000 people were linked to illegal armed groups, that corruption was still rife and that the police force, 90 percent of whom are illiterate, is in urgent need of reform.

The security situation in the country is also worsening by the day.

The Independent newspaper, in a Feb. 14 article entitled "Into the valley of death: UK troops head into Afghan war zone," describes it thus: "Suicide bombings and firefights, Western troops under attack, sectarian clashes between Shia and Sunni, foreigners taken hostage ... This is not Iraq but Afghanistan."

Cataloging the recent surge of killings that had struck the war-torn state, the paper pointed out that the insurgency in Afghanistan had, for first time ever, claimed more lives in the previous seven days than the one in Iraq.

It is into this theater of violence that NATO troops will enter over the coming months. The 26-member alliance has already been running the International Security Assistance Force since 2003.

The move will boost the number of NATO soldiers from 9,000 to 15,000 and bring alliance troops into the direct firing range of insurgents. "By the end of this year, ISAF's footprint will cover 75 percent of the country whose security is, at best, precarious and, by most accounts, rapidly deteriorating," believes Clarke.

NATO has 16,000 troops in Kosovo, a statelet less than one third the size of Belgium that has not been at war for seven years, and, at present, only 9,000 soldiers in Afghanistan; a country the size of Texas.

TROOP NEWS

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



The body of Marine Jonathan Spears at the Pensacola Airport in Pensacola, Fla., Oct. 29, 2005. Spears was killed in the line of duty in Iraq. (AP Photo/Mari Darr-Welch)

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)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

186 Attacks On Iraqi Oil Installations Last Year: “Devastating Impact”

2.18.06 AP

The insurgency has had a devastating impact on Iraq's economy, with the oil industry suffering \$6.25 billion in losses in 2005 as a result of sabotage to infrastructure and lost export revenues, Oil Ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said Saturday.

There were 186 attacks on Iraqi oil installations last year, during which insurgents killed 47 oil engineers, technicians and workers, as well as 100 police protecting pipelines and other oil facilities, Jihad said.

Most of the sabotage took place in the northern oil installations, preventing Iraq from exporting around 400,000 barrels a day from its northern oil fields via the Turkish port of Ceyhan.

Assorted Resistance Action

18 February 2006 Radio Free Euro, By BUSHRA JUHI (AP) & Reuters & By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

Four Iraqi policemen were killed when a roadside bomb exploded near a fuel tanker on an eastern Baghdad highway, police said.

An Iraqi police major was assassinated by drive-by rebels in the insurgent stronghold of Al-Ramadi, west of Baghdad.

The police chief of Baghdad's Karradah neighborhood, Brig. Abdul-Karim Maryoush, escaped unharmed from a roadside bomb that targeted his convoy. Two policemen were killed and one was wounded in the attack in Karradah, police Maj. Abbas Mohammed said.

Three policemen were killed and three wounded when a roadside bomb struck their patrol in eastern Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Declared Bill Ehrhart, a marine in Vietnam:

“In grade school we learned about the redcoats, the nasty British soldiers that tried to stifle our freedom.... Subconsciously, but not very subconsciously, I began increasingly to have the feeling that I was a redcoat. I think it was one of the most staggering realizations of my life.”

I Ask You

December 02, 2005 Sgt Zachary Scott-Singley, misoldierthoughts.blogspot.com/

I Ask You

Are you proud of me Mother?

I am a soldier.

Are you proud of me Father?

I have killed.

To my country I ask you, are you proud of me?

These hands of mine know how to destroy and leave my mess for others to pick up. At times I feel that the only thing I have left behind me is a path of broken pieces. Perhaps that is my legacy, to shatter what others (including myself) hold dear.

You know the best part? The sorrow and pity I feel afterwards. Isn't it ridiculous? You would think that I would be the last one to cry for the casualties I have helped cause.

I am still alive and like all living things, with each breath I come closer to death. I walk this path alone and I fuck if I know where it leads...

East Timor And The Resistance Movements In The Portuguese Army

We had, quite extensively, studied the decade long African wars Portugal fought in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. These had not only ground down the Portuguese armies, but had induced resistance amongst Black soldiers in the American army in Germany and Italy when these learned about American and NATO support for the Portuguese and, later, that they might be shipped to Africa to support the South African army's attack against Angola. (1, ps 32-36).

February 18, 2006 By Max Watts

I have recently read another of the numerous books published in Australia about East Timor (2). Within its limits (the author David Scott is a Melbourne-based, "middle-class", politically "middle-of-the-road", Overseas Aid activist, concentrating on the 1974-1979 period of the Timorese struggle and its Australian and international mostly United Nations aspects) I found it very good, very informative.

But once again I was struck by the almost total absence of what I believe an important aspect of the Timorese struggle: any analysis, indeed any mention, of the conflicts inside RITA, the Resistance Movements in the Portuguese Army, their effects on Portuguese military policies and, thus, on the East Timorese Revolution.

These struggles, particularly during the 19 Revolutionary Months in Portugal between 25 April 1974 and 25 November 1975, obviously affected events in Timor.

Sometimes their effects seem to have been direct, almost immediate, sometimes they appeared with delays, due to the (then much greater than today) "Tyranny of distance". At least one important delay seems due to the limited understanding of many participants, activists, observers, of the issues involved, the victory of left or right-wing forces (3).

Perhaps today, thirty years later, when the Portuguese Revolution(s) of 1974/1975 have become a distant memory, when many, indeed most, of the Timorese participants in Fretilin have died, often in the subsequent struggles for their independence, an analysis of the coherence, the contacts between Timorese and Portuguese revolutionaries, the failures, has become a difficult, forcibly incompletable, exercise.

Perhaps, however, this brief attempt may awake interest in others, to continue, deepen, such a study.

Max Watts, 10 February 2006

Points raised during a first discussion of my initial paper with Kris Lasslett are now included in the footnotes.

Furthermore, although author David Scott analyses the nefast, hypocritical, indeed eventually murderous, stance of Gough Whitlam (otherwise a "darling of the Left") towards the people of East Timor, both during and after his Prime Ministership, one specific aspect of Whitlam's policy has rarely been noted:

Whitlam, before, during 1975 and thereafter, knew very well that only nine years before the Indonesian dictatorship had murdered one (or maybe only half?) a million men, women, and children, dubbed, once dead, Communists.

Whitlam knew very well that Suharto considered the East Timorese government, Fretilin, "infected with communism."

That (US president) Ford, American politician Kissinger, would accept, indeed applaud, killing (all?) the Timorese Communists, sure. Whitlam also?

Max Watts 18 February 2006

THE RESISTANCE INSIDE THE PORTUGUESE ARMY:

In the early and mid-1970's, when we first researched, wrote about, and to a small extent participated in, the Portuguese "Revolution of the Carnations" we knew almost nothing about East Timor.

We had, quite extensively, studied the decade long African wars Portugal fought in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. These had not only ground down the Portuguese armies, but had induced resistance amongst Black soldiers in the American army in Germany and Italy when these learned about American and NATO support for the Portuguese and, later, that they might be shipped to Africa to support the South African army's attack against Angola. (1, ps 32-36).

However, to the best of our knowledge East Timor had remained "quiet" under the Salazar/Caetano dictatorship. Timor seemed to have had no direct military input into the events in Portugal. It was the unwinnable African wars which led to the first, April 25 1974, "MFA/AFM Captain's" successful, unbloody, coup, the revolution which overthrew the fifty year old fascist dictatorship.

In his Chronology of Events David Scott simply notes that in 1974 a "New Portuguese Government declares self-determination for Portuguese colonies" (2). He does not note how such a new government came about, i.e. through a Left-wing anti-fascist uprising of young Captains and Majors, organised in a clandestine MFA (Armed Forces Movement).

1/ Later Scott lists four fronts of the Timorese struggle:

1.1/ The Falintil: (Armed Forces for the Liberation of East Timor);

1.2/ the clandestine movement of the Timorese under Indonesian occupation;

1.3/ International Diplomacy (above all at the United Nations); and

1.4/ the "Solidarity Movement" in such countries as Australia, the USA, and Great Britain, countries otherwise supporting the Indonesian attack financially and militarily.

Yes. But there is no mention of the conflicts within the Portuguese Military, and their effect on the struggles inside the "colonies", including, if indirectly, also East Timor:

2/ In our analysis of Portuguese RITA we note several, quite distinct, phases:

2.1/ From 25 April 1974 a coalition of "MFA" Captains and General-President Spínola governed together. Direct Political repression in Portugal (and, by implication, in East Timor) ceased.

However, the initial coup had only passively involved the rank and file soldiers. As an MFA leader (Captain Matos Gomes) told us: "We simply told our soldiers we were going on maneuvers. They, then, would obey our, any, orders." It was only later that (so an activist soldier) "we learned we were going to make an antifascist revolution." "We were delighted but surprised, or surprised and delighted."

With the end of the Caetano dictatorship it now became possible to form legal political parties. In Portugal, and in far away East Timor. Including the UDT (Timorese Democratic Union) and the ASDT (Association of Timorese Social Democrats), which soon became FRETILIN.

2.2/ On 28 September 1974 General Spínola made the first (of several attempts) to end the revolution and "restore order". He failed completely and was forced into abrupt retirement. It was only now the (further left) new Portuguese government fully accepted the coming independence of its colonies, including East Timor (4C).

Note: Operasi Komodo, the secret plan by the extreme right-wing Indonesian government to annexe East Timor (freed by the left-moving Portuguese) was finalised on 14 October 1974.

In the following months Portuguese soldiers, privates and NCO's, inspired by their Captains' example, begin meeting in their barracks, electing their own delegates, writing, publishing, reading: "GI Papers".

2.3/ On March 11 1975 a second, more determined, attempt is made by the right-wing generals to cancel the revolution. This too collapses utterly, when the paratroopers from Tancos air force base, supported by aircraft and helicopters, in the middle of their attack on the RALIS 1 Barracks near Lisbon, break off their advance and fraternise with the Left-wing soldiers.

From this point on the Portuguese revolution takes a decided left-ward turn and seriously considers socialising the means of production, the land, banks...

From a political view-point, Fretilin could, for the time being, count on support from many elements in the Metropole.

2.4/ But by (Northern) summer 1975 the MFA Captains, afraid of their own successes, split. After 25 August 1975 a Center-right coalition took over the MFA, and the Portuguese government.

In East Timor, on 27 August the Portuguese governor and command withdraws from Dili to the island of Atauro.

It would be interesting to discover whether this decision was influenced by events in Lisbon? To what extent did this withdrawal leave the East Timorese Fretilin alone, without any serious Portuguese support in their upcoming struggle with the (ferociously anti-communist) Indonesians ?

In principle, the rightward swing of the MFA Officer movement should, of itself, have ended the Portuguese revolution. However, a quite unexpected development quickly occurred:

2.5/ The Rank and File Portuguese soldiers, Drafted Privates and career NCO's, who till then had followed the previous left-ward course of their MFA Officers, now became "independent". Initially, their chief demand had been to get out of Africa, end the colonial wars, and, for the conscripts also, to get out of the Army.

But now there was a complete turnaround: In early September 1975 in many regiments thruout the country these now independent soldiers formed a new organisation, the SUV, Soldadod Unidos Vencerao, Soldiers United Will Win.

When the new right-wing government closed their barracks the soldiers forcibly reopened and occupied them. In numerous confrontations with the establishment, the SUV soldiers won multiple decisions, held the country for another three months on a left-ward course.

They were so effective that even on 7 December the Indonesian dictator Suharto would tell US President Ford that "FRETILIN REPRESENTS FORMER

(PORTUGUESE) SOLDIERS. THEY ARE INFECTED THE SAME AS IS THE PORTUGUESE ARMY – WITH COMMUNISM." (3)

Alas... Suharto was living in the past.

2.6/ On 25 November 1975 newly created right-wing Commando corps, reinforced by pro-colonialist "African" soldiers, taking advantage of the lack of experience, poor coordination of the often just 19 year old SUV soldiers, had attacked the SUV barracks and defeated each unit separately. Thousands of Portuguese soldiers and airmen were disarmed and discharged, their units dissolved. Hundreds were jailed.

SUV ceased to exist. The Portuguese revolution was, now, definitely over.

Fretilin had to face and soon fight the Indonesian invaders, their Australian and American government supporters, alone.

(1) Cortright, David and Watts, Max: Left Face: Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies; Greenwood Press, NY, USA; 1991; ISBN 0-313-27626-9

(2) Scott, David: Last Flight out of Dili: Memoirs of an accidental activist in the Triumph of East Timor; Pluto Press Australia, North Melbourne, Vic., Australia, 2005. ISBN 1 864503 376 2.

(3) Suharto: in US Department of State: Report of meeting 7 December 1975, Jakarta Embassy to Department of State, Washington, para 52,

(4) Lasslett, Kris: EDIT NOTES/DISCUSSION: KL *italics*; mw **bold**

(4A) I think the effect RITA had on East Timor needs to be brought out in more concise detail. The article certainly establishes what happened inside the Portuguese army.

However, I am not sure from my reading I understand the DIRECT effect it has had on E Timor

(I realize more research needs to be done. However, are there any preliminary connections that can be established).

For example, Suharto mentions the revolutionary elements of the Portuguese army were spreading communism into E Timor. Did they?

MW: from Suharto's viewpoint, yes. That didn't have to be very far left to qualify!

Was there any such interaction between the Portuguese RITA and orgs like Fretilin i.e. any acts of international solidarity between elements of the colonialist army and those in the E Timor resistance?

MW: I think we must break this down into different time-periods:

Before 25 April 1974, under the dictatorship, whatever contacts were established between "leftist" elements in E Timor and the Portuguese military would have been clandestine, leaving few permanent traces (except in the memory of participants, how many (Timorese) surviving?)

During the subsequent events in Portugal, there was considerable interaction between some MFA Officers (Captains) stationed in E Timor and various Timorese Groups, certainly including Fretilin. An important question is to what extent this affected events in/after August 1975, when the MFA majority shifted to the right.

Some Timorese students returned during these 19 months (before?) from Portugal, with considerable "baggage" from the then flourishing leftist student movements, sometimes Maoist.

Note: the critical periods, both during the UDT/Fretilin fighting in August 1975, and above all in the weeks before the Indonesian invasion (October-December 1975) coincided with the defeat of the Left elements (it is a mistake to call them globally "Communist") inside the Portuguese RITA. I doubt that right then the Portuguese Officers and/or soldiers would have been able to actively support the Timorese, but of course individuals would have been politicised and may have tried "to do what they could."

(4B) In PNG we saw certain Kiaps side with the locals. One Kiap was charged with sedition. He committed suicide. Others just had their record stamped: "never to be promoted."

MW: The entire history of Australian RITA (KIAPs as officers linked to the Military?) has been consistently shuffled into the memory hole!

Note that in 1973-75 the Oz Officers (and regular army NCO's, National Service Draftees were gone) were certainly affected by "Vietnam".

In 1973 a captain wrote to R Hawke, then ACTU head, describing an incipient Soldiers/Officer Union. He was roundly discouraged by that Hawke. I have no idea whether Kiaps participated in that effort. ArFFA (Armed Forces Federation of Australia, a quasi-union organisation) was still around last time I looked, publishing a ? Quarterly: Viewpoint.

(4C) KL EDIT NOTE: Why did they accept this. How did the material interests of this new left government differ from the previous ruling junta (or was this all superstructure?).

MW: Schematically: Pre April 1975 the Portuguese Dictatorship represented a "Flag Imperialism" which attempted to maintain complete domination of its African colonies, assuming that any switch towards Dollar Imperialism would result in the loss of its privileged position.

General Spinoza and his backers realised that this "total maintenance" had become, after 14 years National Liberation Struggles, impossible and attempted to move to some compromise with Dollar Imperialism.

The Captains/Majors of the MFA, "left intellectuals," hoped for some Lusitanian "Commonwealth", with .. their left sides... freedom, love, justice, cooperation, maybe even a bit of Socialism.

By August 1975 they were unable to "control events" and, scared, switched to right. Unfortunately for their ideals, the South African Apartheid Regime would not play ball and, with (right-wing) US support attacked Angola and Mozambique.

SUV was too busy fighting for its survival as a soldier organisation, linked to left/anarchist/etc. groups in Portugal, to play a big role in "colonial" affairs. Returning dispossessed "colons," extremely angry with the left, provided manpower for November 1975 takeovers.

For more by Max Watts: LEFT FACE, Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies, By DAVID CORTRIGHT AND MAX WATTS; Contributions in Military Studies, Number 107; GREENWOOD PRESS, New York • Westport, Connecticut • London

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.

Some Formulas:

By Raja Chemayel February 18, 2006 Anti-Allawi group

Judaism + Imperialism = Zionism

Judaism + Judaism = Judaism

Judaism + colonialism = Israel

Judaism + Apartheid = Israel

Judaism + political-honesty = Anti-Israel-Judaism

Christianity + Imperialism = Crusaders (and later the colonialism)

Christianity + Christianity = Christianity

Christianity + Zionism = un-christian-idiocy

Christianity + **ignorance** = Christian-zionists

Raja Chemayel

18,02,06

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

Received:

Those Cartoons (From C.)

From: JM
To: GI Special
Sent: February 18, 2006
Subject: Those cartoons: From C.

Well explained C.

A lot of people think the cartoons are an expression of freedom as opposed to censorship.

They fail to see them as an insult, of the type that isn't tolerated in normal society.

The media is expected to know where to draw the line so as to avoid slander or giving great offence. I noted the paper, that published them, had previously refused some cartoons about Jesus.

Also the editor responsible was sent on extended leave when he offered to publish cartoons about the holocaust.

Looked at in this light the offensive cartoons may be seen as a symbol of Islamophobia and condemnation should come from all people opposed to racism and discrimination.

J

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

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/, <http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>,
<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/gispecial,
http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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