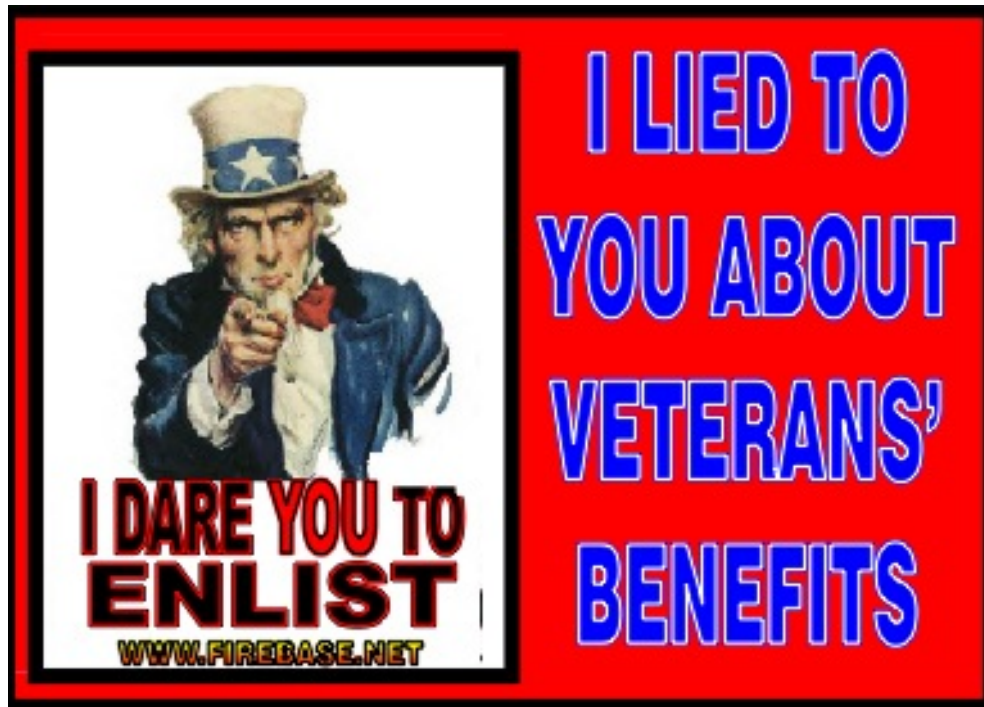


GI SPECIAL 4B27:



[www.firebasenetwork.net]

“His Worst Day Is Better Than Many Soldiers’ Best Days Here In Iraq”

“Mr. Cheney’s worst day in his wealthy life was a day of quail hunting gone bad. His worst day is better than many ... soldiers’ best days ... here in Iraq.”

Feb 25, 2006 Tom Halsted, Veterans For Common Sense [Excerpt]

After the story broke of Vice President Cheney’s accidental shooting of fellow hunter Harry Whittington in Texas, a friend of mine sent me an e-mail he had received from a soldier in Iraq. I quote from it here:

“The image of him falling is something I will never be able to get out of my mind,’ Cheney said. ‘I fired, and there's Harry falling. And it was, I'd have to say, one of the worst days of my life.’

“OK, I can admit that it is traumatic watching someone get shot (we don't have much time to dwell on it here though, as we have to help the shot soldier while we duck for cover ourselves and return fire)....

“As the Vice President of the United States, though, a man who was one of the top players in getting us into this war, he has asked a half million soldiers over the past three years to experience that exact incident. In some cases, multiple times. Lately it has been every other day.

“I have not seen any horror, self remorse, or concern in any interviews showing Cheney talking about soldiers killed in his war.

“I find it sad that he admits the worst day of his life is a day of hunting birds at a game club in rural Texas and someone ends up with superficial gunshot wounds.

“It does not compare very well to the medic who responded to an injured soldier's call for help only to find it was one of his best friends, shot by a sniper. There was nothing the medic could do, the bullet was obviously fatal, and the medic held his friend in his arms while he died and bled onto the medic and a dusty garbage-strewn street in Iraq, 8,000 miles from his family.

“There are hundreds of other bad days like that here in Iraq.

“I can't even quantify a worst day anymore.

“There are 2,300 families who had soldiers in dress greens come to their front doors over the past few years to give the worst news one can get.

“Has Cheney ever had to deliver that news? Maybe we could work at giving Cheney a few days that might make the results of his hunting excursion seem a little less horrible.

“He and Mr. Bush are responsible for all the situations anyway. What better way to take ownership!

“Mr. Cheney's worst day in his wealthy life was a day of quail hunting gone bad. His worst day is better than many soldiers' best days here in Iraq.”

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

FOB MCKENZIE SOLDIER DIES FROM NON-COMBAT RELATED INJURIES

2.27.06 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number:
06-02-02CP

TIKRIT, Iraq: A Task Force Band of Brothers Soldier with the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division died from non-combat related injuries Feb. 24 at Forward Operating Base McKenzie.

Wainwright Soldier Killed, 3 Hurt By IED

February 27, 2006 NediaNews

A Fort Wainwright soldier was killed and three wounded while conducting operations in Iraq, according to U.S. Army Alaska officials Sunday.

The soldiers are presumably with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, although the identities or unit of the soldiers have not been released.

In the release, officials said an improvised explosive device detonated near a Stryker vehicle in Mosul on Sunday at 9:35 a.m. Iraq time, 9:35 p.m. Saturday AST. One soldier was listed as very seriously injured and was evacuated to Balad, Iraq. Two other injured soldiers were listed as not seriously injured.

Local Soldier Killed

February 27th, 2006 The Bakersfield Californian

A young Bakersfield soldier was killed in Iraq Sunday morning, according to family and friends.

Clay Farr, a 2003 graduate of Centennial High School, was serving in the Army in Baghdad when he was killed, possibly by a roadside bomb, according to his great-aunt Dee Baccus.

“He was a wonderful young man. He was involved with the sheriff’s Explorers before he went into the service,” Baccus said.

Baccus said Farr was raised by his father, Patrick Farr, and the two were very close. Farr had a fiancé who died in a car accident two years ago, Baccus said.

Roadside Bomb Kills Superior Marine

February 27th, 2006 Jana Hollingsworth, The Daily Telegram

A Superior Marine was killed while serving in Iraq Saturday.

Adam VanAlstine, 21, was struck by a roadside bomb in Ramadi, Iraq, according to his sister, Jennifer VanAlstine.

The 2003 Superior High School graduate is the first Superior resident to die during the Iraqi War.

Immigrant Soldier From Aurora Dies: “His Unit Is Losing A Lot Of People”



CBS4

Feb 27, 2006 Suzanne McCarroll, CBS4, AURORA, Colo.

The family of a Russian immigrant told CBS4 on Monday they were devastated but proud after learning that their only son died in combat in Iraq.

Dimitri Muscat, 21, was in his second tour in Iraq when he was killed. He was only 12 when he arrived in the United States, but his family said he quickly felt at home and wanted to defend the country he loved.

Muscat joined the army when he was only 17 and he was not yet a U.S. citizen when he died.

"He truly loved this place; he just wanted to do his best and he knew he would fit (in)," said Hugh Muscat, Dimitri's step-father.

The family moved from Russia 9 years ago and settled into a home in Aurora.

"We still missed our home, but he was totally committed to this country," said Ekafrina Muscat, his sister. "This is the only place he wanted to be."

Dimitri was the gunner on his unit's tank when he died.

"He was brave," Ksenia Muscat, his mother said. "He said 'I'm trained, I know what I'm doing.'"

In line with Russian tradition, the family covered the mirrors in their home after learning Dimitri had died and bread was placed next to Dimitri's picture.

"A slice of bread is on the top of the glass so he won't be hungry," Ksenia said.

"His unit is losing a lot of people; he is in a very tough place," his step-father said.

"War is not good; people die and that's not good," his mother said.

Dimitri's family said they hope he will be granted citizenship now. They said they have been assured that Dimitri will be buried with full military honors.

'04 GHS Grad Hurt



Danny Perry at boot camp.
Photo by: Special to The Dispatch

February 27, 2006 By Heather Bremner, The Dispatch

A Gilroy native was seriously injured on Wednesday when he was hit by rocket-propelled grenades while on foot patrol with his platoon in Iraq. Army Pfc. Danny Perry, 20,

suffered a severe head injury, facial burns and shrapnel was imbedded down his right side from the explosion.

The 2004 Gilroy High School graduate had minor surgery in Iraq before being transported to a military hospital in Germany. In Germany, nurses sutured wounds in his face, nose, ear, hand and on the right side of his leg. On Friday, he was transported to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

The last time Tim and Linda Perry, who lived in Gilroy for 22 years before moving to Somers, Conn. last March, talked to their son was Monday, when he called to tell them that one of his buddies had been shot. On Wednesday afternoon, the couple received the call.

"We were really shocked when we first heard the news, but he's doing much better," Tim Perry said, over the phone through obvious tears. "The word that we got today is he has woken twice but he's able to use all of his extremities. He moved both arms and both legs and they said that's a great sign. He has a lot of facial damage, which is not going to be easy."

NOTES FROM A LOST WAR:

“The Learning And The Complexity Of How They’re Trying To Kill Us Increases With Every Week,” Officer Says

2.27.06 Defense News

The ability of Iraqi insurgents to evaluate, improve and distribute new tactics is made possible by an organizational structure that allows underground networks to operate autonomously yet swap information.

Each network concentrates its operations in a small geographic area, such as a neighborhood or village, allowing each to focus on a specific American unit and quickly learn its tactics and procedures.

"The enemy adjusts to us and they are about a week behind," says Lt. Col. Ross Brown, squadron commander in the Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, "so each week I change and modify our tactics, because the learning and the complexity of how they're trying to kill us increases with every week."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**OCCUPATION PRISONERS REBEL;
SEIZE PRISON:
[REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE]
[BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW]**



A U.S. soldier keeps watch on the top of an armored vehicle outside the Policharki Prison in Kabul Feb. 27, 2006. Security forces with tanks and heavy guns surrounded Kabul's main prison Monday, as authorities sought to resume negotiations with prisoners who rebelled and seized the prison, but warned they could use force. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

Occupation Prisoners Kept In Wire Cages

February 27, 2006 Associated Press, KABUL, Afghanistan

The U.S. military on Sunday defended its detention of about 500 inmates at its main base in Afghanistan, saying they are treated humanely and provided the “best possible living conditions.”

The New York Times on Sunday reported that inmates are held by the dozen in wire cages at the Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, some for as long as two or three years without access to lawyers or the chance to hear the allegations against them.

TROOP NEWS

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



David (R), Anne (C) and Katie Larson look on as pall bearers carry the body of their son and brother Lance Corporal Nicholas Larson, 19, to grave side services in Wheaton, Illinois, November 18, 2004. Larson, a Marine, was killed as U.S. forces pushed toward Falluja on November 9, 2004. Larson is one of six Illinois servicemen killed in one week. REUTERS/John Gress

Bush Regime Pressuring Japan To Ignore Law And Keep Officers In Iraq

2.27.06 Japan Times

The United States has asked Japan to consider transferring senior officers to Basra, after the Ground Self-Defense Force pulls out of Samawah.

Japan has remained reluctant to comply, in part because working in such teams is not included in the special law that allowed the GSDF to go to Iraq.

Pentagon Rewards Bush Buddies For Ripping Off Billions:

Army Paying Halliburton Costs Disputed By Audit

2.27.06 New York Times

The Army has decided to reimburse a Halliburton subsidiary for nearly all of its disputed costs on a \$2.41 billion no-bid contract to deliver fuel and repair oil equipment in Iraq, even though the Pentagon's own auditors had identified more than \$250 million in charges as potentially excessive or unjustified.

The contract has been the subject of intense scrutiny after disclosures in 2003 that it had been awarded without competitive bidding.

That produced criticism from Congressional Democrats and others that the company had benefited from its connection with Dick Cheney, who was Halliburton's chief executive before becoming vice president.

Later that year auditors began focusing on the fuel deliveries under the contract, finding that the fuel transportation costs that the company was charging the Army were in some cases nearly triple what others were charging to do the same job.

Figures provided by the Pentagon audit agency on thousands of military contracts over the past three years show how far the Halliburton decision lies outside the norm. In 2003, the agency's figures show, the military withheld an average of 66.4 percent of what the auditors had recommended, while in 2004 the figure was 75.2 percent and in 2005 it was 56.4 percent.

One of Halliburton's most persistent critics, Representative Henry A. Waxman, a California Democrat who is the ranking minority member of the House Committee on Government Reform, said in a written statement about the Army's decision, "Halliburton gouged the taxpayer, government auditors caught the company red-handed, yet the Pentagon ignored the auditors and paid Halliburton hundreds of millions of dollars and a huge bonus."

Rick Barton, co-director of the postconflict reconstruction project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said despite the difficulties of doing business in a war zone, the low rate of recovery on such huge and widely disputed charges was hard to understand.

"To think that it's near zero is ridiculous when you're talking these kinds of numbers," he said.

Mr. Barton, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that with the relatively small penalties paid by the company for falling short in its performance in Iraq, it was hard to see what the Army's scrutiny of the company's practices had amounted to in the end.

"When they say, 'We questioned their business model or their business decisions,' well, yeah, so what?" Mr. Barton said. "You questioned it but there was no result."

Pentagon Gives In and Pays Halliburton Disputed Claims



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

Col. Ronald J. Johnson: The Wind Up Toy That Speaks

From: RegimeChanger
To: GI Special
Sent: February 27, 2006
Subject: Marines are Coming articles will freak you out!
Via Alma aka stellamojo

I've pasted two articles below, one recent one in the Virginian Pilot and one written in April of 2004 from WV University News and Information Source. It's as if the Pilot simply regurgitated the older article, or this Col. Johnson is simply reciting the same lines everywhere he goes.

Col. Johnson was quoted as saying this in the Pilot: "Time is our enemy, we have a lot to accomplish before we deploy, and Norfolk is where we're going to get much of it done," he said.

Col. Johnson was quoted as saying this in the WVU Paper: "Time is our enemy, we have a lot to accomplish before we deploy, and West Virginia is where we're going to get much of it done."

Col. Johnson said this about Hampton Roads in the Pilot:

"Hampton Roads provides us plenty of maneuver room and tremendous training opportunities," according to a statement from the unit's commander, Col. Ronald J. Johnson.

And Col. Johnson said this about Morgantown in the WVU Paper: Johnson called the area ideally suited to the MEU's needs. "Camp Dawson provides us plenty of maneuver room and tremendous training opportunities,"

Now, either the Pilot has committed plagiarism OR Col. Johnson sure has memorized his lines very well.

Read it for yourself below. It's just a tad freaky to me.

By LOUIS HANSEN, The Virginian-Pilot, **February 3, 2006** [Excerpt]

NORFOLK - Nearly 2,100 Marines and sailors from Camp Lejeune are coming to patrol the rivers, skies and streets of Hampton Roads to prepare for combat in Iraq.

The Marine Corps announced Thursday that its North Carolina-based 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit will sharpen its skills. firing weapons, reacting to ambushes and countering roadside bombs, from Feb. 27 to March 12 in local cities.

"Hampton Roads provides us plenty of maneuver room and tremendous training opportunities," according to a statement from the unit's commander, Col. Ronald J. Johnson.

"Time is our enemy, we have a lot to accomplish before we deploy, and Norfolk is where we're going to get much of it done," he said.

The expeditionary unit served in the Iraqi province of Babil for seven months, returning in February 2005. It is slated to deploy again this spring.

"We have unfinished business over there, and we expect that's where we'll be needed most," Johnson said. "But we'll be ready for anything."

24th MEU to begin urban-combat training in West Virginia

04/30/2004 WV University News and Information [Excerpts]

CONTACT: Capt. David Nevers; mobile: 910-376-2238) At Camp Dawson, W.V.

304-791-4556/4389

Nearly 1,700 Marines and sailors of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit will leave here for West Virginia this weekend, beginning three weeks of intense training in preparation for the unit's deployment this summer.

The Marines will operate out of Camp Dawson, home of the West Virginia Army National Guard, and conduct urban-combat training in and around nearby Morgantown until May 19. Long a key part of a MEU's predeployment workups, Training in an Urban Environment, or TRUE, represents for the 24th MEU its premier training event.

"This is my main effort," said Col. Ronald J. Johnson, a native of Duxbury, Mass., and commander of the 2,200-strong MEU. "Time is our enemy, we have a lot to accomplish before we deploy, and West Virginia is where we're going to get much of it done."

Johnson called the area ideally suited to the MEU's needs.

"Camp Dawson provides us plenty of maneuver room and tremendous training opportunities," he said. What's more, "the staff there and the leadership of the communities nearby couldn't be more supportive. These people are patriots who have welcomed the chance to help us get ready to go."

For more information on the mission, organization, history and current status of the 24th MEU, visit the unit's website at <http://www.24meu.usmc.mil>.

If interested in covering the unit's training in West Virginia, please contact Capt. David Nevers at neversde@24meu.usmc.mil or at the numbers listed above.

Bush Policies Are Weakening National Guard, Governors Say

February 27, 2006 New York Times

Governors of both parties said that Bush administration policies were stripping the National Guard of equipment and personnel needed to respond to hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, forest fires and other emergencies.

Tens of thousands of National Guard members have been sent to Iraq, along with much of the equipment needed to deal with natural disasters and terrorist threats in the United States, the governors said at the winter meeting of the National Governors Association in Washington.

NYT Sues Pentagon Over Domestic Spying

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: INNER RULING CLASS BICKERING ESCALATES AS IRAQ OCCUPATION GOES ROUND AND ROUND THE TOILET, EVER CLOSER TO THE BOTTOM...]

2.27.06 Reuters

The New York Times sued the U.S. Defense Department on Monday demanding that it hand over documents about the National Security Agency's domestic spying program.

The Times wants a list of documents including all internal memos and e-mails about the program of monitoring phone calls without court approval. It also seeks the names of the people or groups identified by it.

Congressional Hogs Grab Free Military Plane Rides: Cost Of Their Flights Unreported

2.27.06 Houston Chronicle

While lawmakers bedeviled by a lobbying scandal wrestle over whether to ban private groups from paying for congressional travel, the federal government continues to spend untold sums every year shuttling members of Congress around the world on official trips.

But the largest price tag is one that will never be known: the cost of transporting the lawmakers on planes owned by the U.S. military. The trip disclosures that lawmakers must file omit the cost of military transport, and the military itself does not track the total amount spent.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraqis Call Resistance Troops “Patriots” and “Freedom Fighters”

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

February 26, 2006 By Lisa Burgess and Jeff Schogol, Stars and Stripes

Insurgent attacks in Iraq reached a postwar high in the four months preceding Jan. 20, according to an Iraq progress report issued Friday by the Pentagon.

Speaking to Pentagon reporters Friday, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs said that the survey's conclusions "were not good," but that "loving us is not what it's about."

Significant percentages of Iraqis responding to a U.S. government poll lauded individuals attacking "multinational forces" as "patriots" and "freedom fighters."

[W]hen asked to describe the individuals attacking coalition forces, 88 percent of Iraqis in the mostly Sunni areas of Tikrit and Baqouba called them either "freedom fighters" or "patriots."

Even in the more mixed Sunni-Shiite areas of Baghdad and Kirkuk, about 53 percent of Iraqis polled chose either the patriot or freedom fighter characterization.

Iraqi Sunnis Rebuild Destroyed Shiite Shrine

February 26, 2006 By Mazen Ghazi and Nada Omran, IOL Correspondents, IslamOnline.net

In a gesture of goodwill, Iraqi Sunnis in the northern city of Samarra are working tirelessly to rebuild the Golden Mosque, one of the holiest Shiite shrines which was devastated in an odious explosion last week.

"The initiative came soon after the explosion in solidarity with our Shiite brothers," Abu Oqba Al-Samarrai told IslamOnline.net Monday, February 27, after collecting golden pieces of the mosque's destroyed dome.

He said people of different age groups have volunteered to remove the rubble in a love demonstration.

"Elderly, women, children and men of Samarra rush to the tomb to remove the debris, using shovels and manual carriages," he explained.

Women provided food and water to exhausted men after a long day of hard work to get the job done as soon as possible.

"The men chant in unison Islamic songs to kill time," Samarrai said.

Chairman of the Sunni Waqfs Ahmad Abdul Ghaffor Al-Samarrai has declared that his body will donate two billion Iraqi dinars (\$1,350 million) to reconstruct the shrine.

Assorted Resistance Action

02/27/06 AP & (KUNA) & By Mussab Al-Khairalla and Lutfi Abu Oun, (Reuters)

Two Iraqi soldiers were wounded in an ambush Monday in Mahmoudiya, about 20 miles south of the capital, officials said.

Insurgents set ablaze an oil pipeline in Safra, police said. According to the source, firemen battled the blazes.

Southeast of Baghdad, an insurgent ambush killed eight police and wounded six. Police commandos said they killed five suspected insurgents and captured 25 in an evening battle southeast of the city.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“The Use Of Military Force Against Iran Is Now Out Of The Question” [And So Is Impeachment]

February 26, 2006 Tomdispatch [Excerpts]

Tomdispatch Interview:

*Mark Danner on Bush's State of Exception. Danner is now an expert on the torture practices of the U.S. military, the CIA, and the Bush administration (and his primer on the subject, *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib and the War on Terror*, is a must for any bookshelf). A professor at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, his cup of tea seems to be dicey American foreign-policy situations.*

Danner:

I should add that, in my view, the era of neocon leadership is clearly coming to an end. The impression that they were ever entirely in control is wrong in any event and the vanguard of the neocons has obviously been blunted by the great failure of Iraq, because their assumption of preponderant American power turned out not to be true.

Napoleon had this wonderful line that you can do anything with a bayonet except sit on it. Military power is good for blowing things up; it's good for destroying things. It's not good for building a new order. It takes a great deal more power, skill, and patience to construct an enduring order in Iraq. The United States doesn't have sufficient power; it doesn't have the skill; and we know it doesn't have the patience.

One part of the Axis of Evil has been occupied, you can think of it as the part of the Axis that has sacrificed itself to make way for the greater freedom (freedom from attack, freedom perhaps to build nuclear weapons) of North Korea and Iran.

Although I think the U.S. has dealt with Iran rather cleverly in the last few months, they're playing a very weak hand.

After all, the use of military force against Iran is now out of the question in large part because of the disaster next door in Iraq and the way Iran's hand has been strengthened by that disaster.

TD: Here's my hesitation: If these people are pushed to the wall, I could construct a scenario for you, I believe, in which Iran, crazy as it might seem, could be hit.

Danner: The difference we have on this just has to do with how willing we are to imagine the utter irrationality of the administration.

When I look at Iran now, the upside of a military strike of a kind that they could do, with aerial bombardment, and the downside of such a step seems obviously to be so wildly out of proportion, I can't believe even they would take that step.

Could the administration unravel?

The notion many people on the left are putting forward about a move toward impeachment: it's hard for me to imagine that.

First of all, we're coming to a point in the political calendar where Democrats, as at the time of Iran-Contra, are not going to want impeachment to get in the way of retaking the White House in 2008. Democrats also saw what impeachment did to the Republican Party in 1998.

For the first time in memory in an off-year election in a President's second term, the Republicans lost seats, leading, as you'll remember, to the abrupt fall of Newt Gingrich.

“It's Just Not True That The Population Has Swung To The Right”

“A Huge Gap Between Public Opinion And Public Policy”

February 26, 2006 by Noam Chomsky, ZNet [Excerpt]

Woman: Since we are in the business of torture, and the country has swung very far to the right, what are the realistic chances of getting a fair trial for the five?

Noam Chomsky: Well, first of all it is not really true that the country has swung far to the right.

Though the press systematically refuses to report it, there are extensive public opinion studies taken in the United States. We know a great deal about public opinion, and I can give you some detail if you like.

But what the studies shows, consistently, is that both political parties and the media are far to the right of the public on issue after issue, on a host of issues.

To give one example, the Federal Budget came out yesterday and today. Well there hasn't been time yet for a study of public attitude towards this budget, but it's about the same as the budget that came out a year ago, February 2005.

Right after that the most prestigious institute that studies public opinion in the world, based in the University of Maryland, carried out a study of what people thought the budget ought to be, okay.

And it was very striking. It was the exact inverse of the budget.

Where federal spending was going up, the public wanted to go down: military spending, supplemental for Iraq and Afghanistan; where spending was going down, the public wanted to go up: social spending, health, education, veteran's benefits, renewable energy, support of the United Nations peacekeeping missions, on and on.

Furthermore, they were an overwhelming majority; and the scale of cutback and rises.... increases the public wanted, were enormous.

Well, in a democratic society, one of the things you want to know is what your neighbor thinks. I mean if each person says "look, I am some kind of a lunatic, everything I read is something else," you are not going to get a functioning democracy. So we, therefore, want to know what happened to this information.

I am willing to bet that almost none of you saw it. The reason is it was not published in a single newspaper in the United States, at least a single newspaper that's accessed by the standard database. Well, okay, so people don't know about it.

I suspect the same is true of this budget. And you'll probably have the same study and the same suppression.

So it just isn't true, I mean there is case after case like this, it's just not true that the population has swung to the right.

The government has, the parties have, the media have, the public hasn't.

If there are delegations at the Boston Globe day after day saying why don't you publish some of this stuff, then chances are it'll get published.

It's the same elsewhere.

If there is public engagement and involvement, things change, otherwise, they don't.

They'll keep drifting to the right, and the public will be somewhere else, with a huge gap between public opinion and public policy.

It's startling, in fact, when you look at it.

Honoring Marine Corps General David M. Shoup: “Shoup Added Intelligence As Well As Nobility To The Crusade To Stop The War”

On May 14, 1966, he spoke out at Pierce College in California. "I don't think the whole of Southeast Asia...is worth the life or limb of a single American" (and) I believe that if we had and would keep our dirty bloody dollar crooked fingers out of the business of these nations so full of depressed exploited people, they will arrive at a solution of their own design and want, that they fight and work for."

February 22, 2005 by Murray Polner, Lew Rockwell.com [Excerpt]

While civilian control of the professional military is an essential element of American democracy, Army generals Matthew Ridgeway, James Gavin and Robert L. Hughes, Marine Generals Hugh Hester and Samuel G. Griffith, Rear Admiral Arnold True and

Marine colonels William Carson and James A. Donovan did criticize aspects of the Vietnam War.

They weren't doves or anti-war libertarians but all recognized that the military intervention in an Asian civil war had been a ghastly blunder. My own hunch is that once they're out of uniform and safe from bureaucratic or political vendettas, even more generals and colonels will be just as critical about the colossal blunder the Cheney-Bush-Rumsfeld trinity and their neocon propagandists have created in Iraq and now threaten to repeat against Iran.

All this by way of introduction to General David M. Shoup, Commandant of the Marine Corps during part of the Vietnam era.

Howard Jablon's *David Shoup: A Warrior Against War* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), an all-too-brief, intelligently written and sympathetic portrait of Shoup, tries to explain why a Marine lifer and recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for his role in WWII's savage battle of Tarawa, became a fearless critic of the war in Southeast Asia. Jablon, incidentally, teaches history at Purdue University North Central.

So why should a marine who served in China in the twenties question his country's motives in chaotic and war torn China?

His two tours there led him to read and think extensively about what he was doing and why the U.S. was involved. He came away blaming the missionaries, businessmen and politicians who, to further their own interests, agitated for U.S. military participation in a conflict that had little or nothing to do with American national interests.

In short, it was the U.S. involving itself once again in an economically driven imperial adventure, much as it had against Mexico in the 19th Century, Spain and the Philippines at the turn of the 20th Century, Haiti and Nicaragua time and again, Iran and Guatemala in the early fifties, and Chile, Central America and the Caribbean during the Reagan era.

Shoup was certainly no pacifist, but his China experiences ultimately helped lead him to question American strategy.

In 1961, before American combat units arrived in force in Southeast Asia, Kennedy administration hawks and its sycophants in the mass media sought to present Laos, yes, impotent, impoverished, landlocked, rural, Laos, as a crucial link in the cold war against the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia.

After some military hawks proposed using nuclear bombs Shoup objected. "Whoever even thought that nuclear weapons should be used in Laos was very misinformed about what a proper target for a nuclear weapon consisted of," he said, "because in all the analysis that I remember, there was never any target presented."

After he retired, Shoup became a public dissenter.

On May 14, 1966, he spoke out at Pierce College in California. "I don't think the whole of Southeast Asia...is worth the life or limb of a single American" (and) I

believe that if we had and would keep our dirty bloody dollar crooked fingers out of the business of these nations so full of depressed exploited people, they will arrive at a solution of their own design and want, that they fight and work for."

In the April 1969 issue of Atlantic Monthly ("The New American Militarism") he and fellow marine Colonel Donovan denounced the way the U.S. conducted its foreign policy. Later, in a foreword to Donovan's book Militarism U.S.A., Shoup emphasized, quite rightly, as the Iraq morass has proven, that "there are limits of U.S. power and our capabilities to police the world."

Of course he had his critics, especially among erstwhile military friends and the pro-war crowd in the White House and in Washington's political circles.

"Shoup," writes Jablon, "paid dearly for his dissent. He was alienated from the Corps he loved."

Still, he had his defenders, such as Senators Stuart Symington and William Fulbright.

Naturally, LBJ and Nixon were appalled by his views and Jablon reports that they put J. Edgar Hoover on his trail, the better to add to the vast number of Americans spied upon because of their political opposition to the war.

"Praised or feared," Jablon concludes in his engrossing portrait of this intriguing marine who has been undeservedly forgotten, "Shoup added intelligence as well as nobility to the crusade to stop the war."

It will be interesting to see if any of today's senior military officers (as opposed to the bellicose neocon civilians and careerist military bureaucrats inside the Pentagon) will have anything to say one day about what went wrong and why in Iraq and in the future wars now being dreamed up in Washington's hawkish circles.

“The Drawdown Of U.S. Troops And Plans For The ‘Iraqification’ Of The Occupation Is Aimed At Keeping Iraq Under Washington's Control”

February 25, 2006 By LEE SUSTAR, Socialist Worker 2.27.06 [Excerpt] Lee Sustar is a regular contributor to CounterPunch and the Socialist Worker.

The drawdown of U.S. troops and plans for the "Iraqification" of the occupation is aimed at keeping Iraq under Washington's control, at a more acceptable military, political and economic cost.

That's the argument of Edward Luttwak, a veteran player in the U.S. foreign policy establishment and a cheerleader for the U.S.-NATO war over Kosovo in 1999. Luttwak caused a stir among his peers with his article last autumn in Foreign Affairs, entitled, "Iraq: The Logic of Disengagement," a play on Howard Zinn's famous book Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal.

"U.S. military operations in Iraq could...be reduced without adverse consequence," Luttwak wrote. "The most prudent option would be an orderly disengagement of U.S. troops carefully coordinated with all forces, both official and militia. Some U.S. forces might remain indefinitely, as long as both the United States and the Iraqi government desired, to stabilize the country and dissuade foreign intrusions."

To Luttwak, reducing troop levels in Iraq doesn't mean a U.S. retreat from the Middle East, but a consolidation of Washington's domination of the region as a whole. That's why he argued in a recent opinion piece that in the event of a U.S. attack on Iran, ethnic minorities in that country "might welcome the humiliation of their oppressors" in the Persian ruling class.

This is a replay of the prediction that U.S. troops would be greeted as "liberators" in Iraq, updated for Iran, and is just as nonsensical.

If the same lies used to justify the Iraq war are being recycled to prepare for military strikes on Iran, it's because the entire aim of U.S. imperialism since the September 11, 2001 attacks has been to lock in Washington's dominance of the Middle East, Central Asia and the oil resources to be found there.

The U.S. simply can't admit defeat and pull out of Iraq. If it is losing its grip, it must try to get a better hold, and widening the war under the banner of stopping "radical Islam" is as good excuse as any.

There is a precedent for the U.S. widening a losing war: the "secret" U.S. invasion and bombings of Cambodia and Laos in 1970 to try to turn the tide in Vietnam.

As Noam Chomsky wrote then, "[T]he American policy of 'anti-Communism,' to be more precise, the effort to prevent the development of indigenous movements that might extricate their societies from the integrated world system dominated by American capital, draws the American government, step by fateful step, into an endless war against the people of Asia, and, as an inevitable concomitant, toward harsh repression and defiance of law at home."

Substitute "radical Islam" for "communism" and "Middle East" for "Asia," and the analysis applies just as well today.

Washington's war drums over Iran aren't merely an election-year distraction or diplomatic maneuver. They're an urgent warning that the antiwar movement in the U.S. needs to broaden its perspective to include opposition to the entire U.S. imperialist project in the Middle East.

MORE:

“Please Don't Hang By Your Lip Waiting For This ‘Peaceful’ Move”

February 22, 2006 By Frank Scott, Anti-Allawi-group
Subject: Democrats may unite on plan to pull troops

Please don't hang by your lip waiting for this "peaceful" move: note the key words:

"...to begin a quick withdrawal of US troops and install them elsewhere in the region, where they could respond to emergencies in Iraq and help fight terrorism in other countries..."

The rapist will vacate your daughter's bedroom, but hang around the kitchen, in case she shows up for breakfast wearing provocative lingerie...

We really need to be far more critical of these wretched bastards in the present, or we are likely to pay a dreadful price in the future...

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

How Convenient For Imperial Politicians: “Religious Battles” Could “Undermine” Plan To Brings Troops Home

2.27.06 USA Today

Iraq's intensified religious battles could undermine the Bush administration's plan for cutting the number of U.S. troops there, experts say, especially if negotiations in Baghdad fail to produce a national unity government.

“These Groups Wore Black Clothes Like The Mahdi Army To Make The People Say That The Shiites Kidnapped And Killed Them”

February 28, 2006 By Ellen Knickmeyer and Bassam Sebti, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpt]

Grisly attacks and other sectarian violence unleashed by last week's bombing of a Shiite shrine have killed more than 1,300 Iraqis, making the past few days the deadliest of the war outside of major U.S. offensives, according to Baghdad's main morgue. The toll was more than three times higher than the figure previously reported by the U.S. military and the news media.

In the Shiite holy city of Najaf, aides to Sadr denied any role in the killings.

"These groups wore black clothes like the Mahdi Army to make the people say that the Shiites kidnapped and killed them," said Riyadh al-Nouri, a close aide to Sadr.

Sahib al-Amiri, another close aide, said: "Some political party accused (Sadr's political party) and the Mahdi Army because they considered us as competitive to them. So they recruited criminals to kill Shiites and Sunnis."

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Oil Companies Get \$7 Billion Bush Handout: Vets, Elderly To Get \$7 Billion Cuts In Health Care

February 24, 2006 By Alan Maass, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

OIL COMPANIES like ExxonMobil are raking in record profits, larger by themselves than the gross domestic product of whole countries.

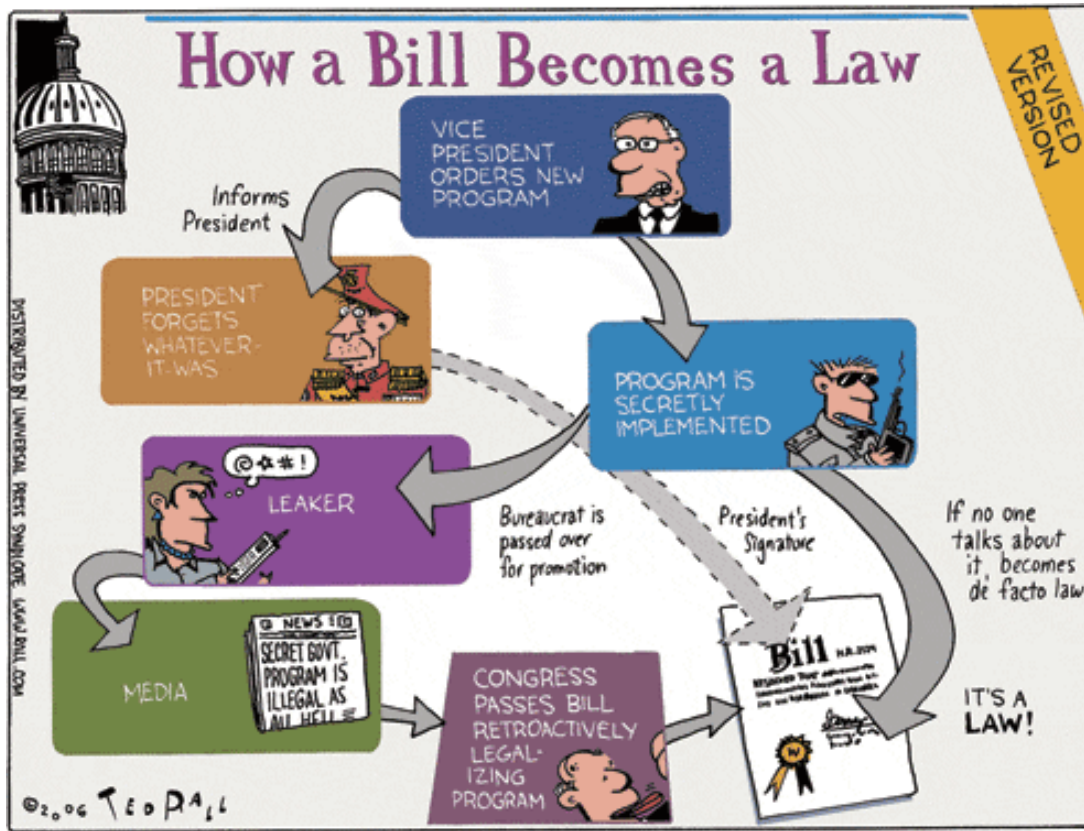
But that hasn't stopped the oil bosses from looking to the U.S. government for a corporate welfare handout. And they're about to get away with billions more.

According to a report in the New York Times, the companies will get to pump about \$65 billion in oil and natural gas from federal territory over the next five years, without paying any royalties to the government.

The figures come from projections buried in the Bush administration's budget plan for the Interior Department.

According to the White House's own statistics, the royalties should add up to more than \$7 billion between this year and 2011, enough to cover most of the administration's planned cuts in veterans services, or almost half of spending reductions in the Medicaid health program for the poor.

Instead, the money will line the pockets of the oil companies, even while oil prices are expected to remain above \$50 a barrel.



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

Younger Workers Getting Poorer

February 27, 2006 By Mark Trumbull, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

In the race to get ahead economically, America's young workers are falling behind.

A new survey shows that median incomes fell for householders under 45, even as they rose for older ones, between 2001 and 2004.

Income fell 8 percent, adjusted for inflation, for those under 35 and 9 percent for those aged 35 to 44.

The median income for men under age 44 was significantly lower in 1997 than in 1970, after adjusting for inflation, according to a long-term analysis by the Census Bureau in the late 1990s. For those over 45, incomes barely held their own during that period.

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)

GET THE MESSAGE?



Demonstration against the U.S. occupation of Iraq in Karachi, Pakistan, Feb 24, 2006. (AP Photo/Shakil Adil)



Pakistani Muslims burn United States and Israeli flags in Karachi, Pakistan, Feb. 22, 2006. (AP Photo/Shakil Adil)

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.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>,

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

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