

GI SPECIAL 4C9:

**“YOUR HANDS ARE STAINED WITH BLOOD,
YOUR FINGERS WITH GUILT; YOUR LIPS
SPEAK FALSEHOOD, AND YOUR TONGUE
UTTERS DECEIT”**

[The Book of Isaiah]



The Traitor-In-Chief

Never Forget

January 20, 2006, SCOTT RITTER's testimony, taken by RAY McGOVERN,
Bushcommission.org [Excerpt]

Ray McGovern: I know that you were a Marine officer, so I know that we don't have to swear you in. You took an oath, did you not? Can you tell us what that oath was?

Scott Ritter: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies foreign and domestic.

RM: So it was to the Constitution of the United States that you swore an oath to protect and not the commander in chief of the United States?

SR: Correct.

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

Tal Afar Area IED Kills One U.S. Soldier; Four Wounded

3.8.06 Reuters & HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 06-03-08CP

TIKRIT, Iraq: A Task Force Band of Brothers Soldier from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division A was killed and four others wounded on Tuesday when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Tal Afar, the U.S. military said in a statement.

Three of the injured Soldiers were taken to a nearby military hospital. A fourth Soldier was treated and returned to duty.

Clovis Mother Mourns Son Killed In Iraq

**“I Don't Support The War,
Robertson Said.”**

March 8, 2006 By Andy Jackson: Clovis News Journal staff writer

A Clovis mom knew it was possible her son could die in service to his country, but she tried not to think about it.

Brenda Robertson's worst fear was realized Tuesday when she said she learned her eldest son, Army Pfc. Rick Salas Jr., 22, was killed in Iraq. The Humvee vehicle he was driving hit a bomb in the road and flipped, she said.

"I'm hurting. I feel like a part of me is gone," she said.

The mother of five said she wasn't told exactly when her son was killed.

Rick Salas grew up in Lubbock, and married in 2002, building a home in Roswell with his wife, April, and two young children, a 3-year-old daughter and 1-year-old son. He worked in construction before enlisting, but thought joining the Army would bring him exciting travel and enable him to care for his family, Robertson said.

He joined the Army about a year ago, and after basic training was briefly stationed in Germany until being deployed to Iraq in January, she said.

"He had wanted his family to move to Germany with him, but he was told they (Army) would send him pretty quick to Iraq."

Robertson said she kept in e-mail contact with her son while he was in Iraq. "He said he saw awful things. He said he loved me, he missed me, he wanted me to be happy and proud of him. I was very proud of him," she said.

Other servicemen were killed in the blast that took Salas' life, but Robertson said she doesn't know how many. His body won't be brought back to New Mexico until Wednesday, she said.

Department of Defense officials didn't return a call for comment. Salas' father, Rick Salas of Lubbock, declined to comment.

Salas was an outdoorsman who loved playing golf and put his family first, said Robertson who's employed in a work-study program at Clovis Community College.

"Rick registered me for school," she said.

Salas was slotted to come home at the end of March for rest and relaxation, Robertson said, but Saturday she was told her son's return had been delayed until April.

"I don't support the war," Robertson said. "I did at first, but now I think we are overstepping our boundaries. I don't think we should continue to be over there," she said.

"I don't hate the Army," she added. "They're doing what they're told and what they have to do for all of us."

There have been 2,302 casualties in Operation Iraqi Freedom, as of 8 a.m. Tuesday.

Danish Soldier Wounded In Qarnah

March 8 (KUNA)

A Danish soldier was injured Tuesday during an armed clash in Basra province's Qarnah suburb, said Wednesday the Multi-National Force (MNF).

In a press release Wednesday, the MNF said that the soldier was injured during an attack launched against a Danish convoy.

The soldier was transferred to the Danish base for treatment.

Notes From A Lost War:

**U.S. Combat Officers Slap Down
Rumsfeld's' Lies:
No, They're Not "Foreign Fighters"
Yes, They're "Pissed Off Iraqis"
Yes, "They Have An Infinite Supply
Of Replacements"
No, They're Not Just "Sunni"**

Conkle said the term "al-Qaida" is now applied to any fighter in Iraq, regardless of affiliation. "It's kind of like 'Xerox'; it's a ubiquitous term. Anybody who is a terrorist is labeled 'al-Qaida.' (But)they're not foreigners, they're Iraqis."

March 06, 2006 By Greg Grant, Special to the Army Times [Excerpts]

After U.S. special forces troops killed the Palestinian-born terrorist Abu Azzam in September, President Bush hailed the death of the "second-most-wanted al-Qaida leader in Iraq" and said it showed the Iraq insurgency was weakening.

But an Army intelligence officer who tracked al-Qaida fighters in Baghdad said the removal of high-profile insurgent leaders has little effect on the overall insurgency and the terrorist network soon recovered.

"When they got Abu Azzam, we saw a fairly good disruption, for maybe three weeks," Capt. David Conkle said in a December interview.

The resiliency of Iraq's insurgent networks is troubling the U.S. military more than 2½ years after the invasion.

According to figures released by Multi-National Forces-Iraq, 24,470 suspected insurgents were killed or detained in 2004, and 26,500 in 2005. Still, the insurgency remains a potent fighting force; during January, it launched 433 attacks across Iraq.

"We take a lot of people off the streets, but they can regenerate very rapidly," said Army Col. Edward Cardon, who commanded a brigade in Baghdad as part of the 3rd Infantry Division.

"The insurgent networks are complex and diffuse. We can take out the leadership, but it doesn't take long for them to grow new legs."

Iraqi anger about the U.S. occupation helps the insurgents recruit new fighters.

"I went out on an operation, I killed 27 in October," said Lt. Col. Ross Brown, a squadron commander in the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

"All they do is fill their spaces with more people; they have an infinite supply of replacements. We kill a leader or we detain a leader, and there is somebody else in charge. Every time I feel good about killing or detaining this guy, there is somebody else to fill the boots, somebody is standing right behind ready to jump up."

The 2003 decision to disband the Iraqi military freed up trained soldiers, leaders and intelligence gatherers to join the insurgency, Brown said.

"The guy who was in the army and has five kids, who trained in the army for 20 years; this is what he knows," Brown said. "If you pay me \$300 to blow up a Bradley, and I trained my whole life to blow up Bradleys, sooner or later, I'm going to blow up a Bradley."

Conkle said the term "al-Qaida" is now applied to any fighter in Iraq, regardless of affiliation. "It's kind of like 'Xerox'; it's a ubiquitous term. Anybody who is a terrorist is labeled 'al-Qaida.' (But) they're not foreigners, they're Iraqis."

American military officers in Iraq also insist it is simplistic and wrong to portray the insurgency in Iraq as purely a Sunni endeavor. Many attacks on U.S. troops are mounted by Shiite insurgent groups, whose ranks come from Shiite cleric Moqtada al Sadr's Mahdi militia, and other Shiite militias.

The Shiite groups led the development and use of the explosively formed penetrator improvised explosive device, one of the deadliest weapons in the insurgent arsenal, before they shared the know-how with Sunni groups.

The insurgent leadership is composed mostly of former Iraqi military officers, well-educated and affluent, Funk said.

Iraq's high unemployment rate makes it easy to find foot soldiers. In the early morning hours in Baghdad, unemployed workers gather in the streets with the hopes of being chosen for day labor. The insurgent networks draw from the same pool to find men willing to place a roadside bomb or shoot at American patrols.

"These low-level guys, they get pissed off that they can't get a job, their electricity doesn't work and they have sewage in the streets," said Capt. Stephen Capeheart, who commanded a tank company in Baghdad.

"And so they get pissed off, so they go out and attack Americans."

REAL BAD PLACE TO BE: NO MISSION: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. troops cordoned off an area in the New Baghdad district on June 6 and 7 to search for weapons and insurgents. Picture taken June 6, 2005. REUTERS/US Army/Spc. Ben Brody/Handout

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket containing Army Spc. Thomas J. Wilwerth is carried at Calverton National Cemetery in Calverton, N.Y., March 7, 2006. Wilwerth died in Iraq last month when an improvised bomb exploded near a Bradley armored vehicle he was riding. (AP Photo/Ed Betz)

Operation Screw This: “U.S. Soldiers Want Out Of Iraq”

“So I know a lot of soldiers who are really upset...I saw an Onion article, and it said, ‘Troops devise their own exit strategy: Operation Screw This.’ I think that’s funny, but it’s also totally reflective of the mentality of a lot of troops over there now, at least in my opinion.”

March 10, 2006 By Nicole Colson, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

U.S. SOLDIERS want out of Iraq. According to a new Zogby International/Le Moyne College poll of troops currently stationed in Iraq, nearly three out of four think the U.S. should withdraw within a year. Some 30 percent think the U.S. should leave immediately.

“In a way, it surprises me that people were so honest,” Kelly Dougherty, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War who spent about a year in Iraq, said in an interview. “A lot of soldiers are being stop-lossed. They’re being sent back for repeated tours of duty, and their mental and physical health is suffering. Their family life is being completely destroyed, and right now, they see no end in sight.”

As Dougherty commented, "It's hugely demoralizing to, first of all, be sent over repeated times and, second of all, to not know when you're going to be able to get out because your voluntary time has already passed.

"So I know a lot of soldiers who are really upset...I saw an Onion article, and it said, 'Troops devise their own exit strategy: Operation Screw This.' I think that's funny, but it's also totally reflective of the mentality of a lot of troops over there now, at least in my opinion."

Roughly one in five returning soldiers met the military's "risk criteria for a mental health concern," such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression. Nearly one in 10 were diagnosed with PTSD, many after witnessing people being killed or wounded.

Even so, Dougherty and others say the number of vets suffering mental health ailments is almost certainly higher, and "treatment" is difficult to come by.

"[P]eople who I've talked to have seen people, either themselves or their friends, who have asked to get treatment for PTSD or for some kind of emotional problem and have been ridiculed publicly," said Dougherty. "That right there, if that happens to one person in a unit, is a big deterrent to anyone else to seek out help."

Additionally, she said, troops who seek treatment while still active aren't entitled to confidentiality.

"[T]hey'll go back to your command and say, well, 'They said this and this happened, is it true?'" Dougherty said. "And if the command doesn't want to look bad, then they'll say, 'No, they're lying. They don't have PTSD. They just have a personal grudge.'"

That kind of treatment, says Dougherty and other antiwar veterans, proves that despite the Bush administration's rhetoric about "supporting the troops" is hollow.

"I'm really glad this poll came out," Dougherty said, "because we can say that we're in the majority of not only public opinion in the nation, but public opinion in the military."

MORE:

"Until Now, The Troops Were With Him"

March 8, 2006 MARGARET CARLSON, Seattlepi [Excerpt]

Whenever criticized for his policies in Iraq, Bush claimed the troops on the ground were with him, while taking a swipe at the patriotism of critics for undermining the troops.

Indeed, until now, the troops were with him, as you would expect.

If you're risking your life in Iraq and have no choice about it, you believe it's for a worthy cause, or go crazy. If a friend dies, you have to believe it wasn't in vain. It's why there are fewer grieving parents against the war and more who cling to the notion that a child died for a good reason.

Our troops realize that the so-called Iraqi forces fighting alongside them aren't rising to the task at hand. No matter what Bush says, the number of battle-ready Iraqi battalions is somewhere around zero. Even among the Iraqi police and troops who can shoot straight and don't run away when attacked, there are imposters and infiltrators.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE OUTSTANDING NEW ISSUE OF TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

“The Problem, For Those Of Us With Loved Ones In Uniform, Is That Our Soldiers Are Fighting And Dying For A Lie”

Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) said an immediate pullout "would cause more problems for us in America." Does "us" refer to you folks on Capitol Hill?

03 March 2006 By Stacy Bannerman, Truthout Perspective [Excerpt]

The only deals that interest politicians are the ones that will keep them in office. They speak of "phased withdrawals," a gradual drawing-down of forces, which has been tried before.

It didn't work in Vietnam. It's sheer arrogance or stupidity to think it will succeed in Iraq.

Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) said an immediate pullout "would cause more problems for us in America."

Does "us" refer to you folks on Capitol Hill?

What about the nearly 70 percent of Americans who want the troops out of Iraq?

Or do you mean the soldiers who are serving in Iraq, and the families left behind? Because, I assure you, the problem for "us" is not an immediate withdrawal of troops.

The problem, for those of us with loved ones in uniform, is that our soldiers are fighting and dying for a lie.

Senator Joe Biden (D-Del.) recently stated that he thinks: "In 2006, American troops will begin to leave Iraq in large numbers. By the end of the year, I believe we will have redeployed at least 50,000 troops." But Biden, Dean, and far too many other Democrats are remarkably silent about the 80,000 or more troops that would remain in Iraq.

And they're mute when it comes to the 800-plus soldiers who will most likely be killed between now and then, bringing the US body count to around 3,000.

That's playing Russian roulette with our loved ones.

If the Democratic leaders don't play that game with their families, they've got no right to play it with ours.

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.

Air Guardsman Returns Home To Pierre: "His Aircraft Was Shot At Near Baghdad"

Mar. 08, 2006 Associated Press, PIERRE, S.D.

A South Dakota Air National Guard member who was injured in Iraq is back in South Dakota.

Christopher Cox, a member of the 249th Aviation unit in Rapid City, returned to Pierre Tuesday night.

Cox had been recovering in Texas from injuries suffered in August when his aircraft was shot at near Baghdad.

He will receive the purple heart for being injured. Cox is an agricultural pilot and plans to stay in the Guard.

Marine Corps Freak Gets Off On Hunting Down Vietnam War Deserters: Dickless Wonder Loves His Job

"I have a different leadership style than the guys who have had this job. My job is to catch deserters. And that's what I do," Averhart told the newspaper.

3/6/2006 By Bill Nichols, USA TODAY

In the summer of 1965, Marine Cpl. Jerry Texiero quietly disappeared from his California base, plagued by personal demons and a mounting opposition to the Vietnam War. Forty years later, in the summer of 2005, Texiero — now known as Gerome Conti — was taken into custody by police in Tarpon Springs, Fla., after the Marine Corps tracked him down.

Thirty years after the war ended, hundreds of Vietnam-era deserters are still on the loose. Conti's attorneys, Louis Font and Tod Ensign, say the Pentagon, and the Marine Corps in particular, are cracking down on long-term cases in an effort to warn current day troops in Iraq against deserting.

"My view is that the Marines are trying to send a message to people in the ranks today that they, too, will be required to participate in a war, whether they think it's illegal or immoral," Font says.

Marine spokesman Capt. Jay Delarosa says there was nothing unusual about the treatment of Conti.

However, the Marine official in charge of bringing in deserters said after Conti's arrest that his office was being more aggressive.

Chief Warrant Officer James Averhart, who has commanded the Marine Corps Absentee Collection Center since September 2004, told the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times that he had ordered cold cases reopened and that his squad had caught 27 deserters in his first 11 months on the job, a rate he suggested was higher than those of his predecessors. The Corps last month updated that number to 33 cases.

"I have a different leadership style than the guys who have had this job. My job is to catch deserters. And that's what I do," Averhart told the newspaper.

Delarosa said Averhart would not answer questions from USA TODAY. Asked whether the Marine Corps stands by Averhart's comments, Delarosa said, "I wasn't involved in that particular interview with CWO Averhart."

Will Van Sant, who wrote the Times article, says the Marines never contacted him after it appeared.

Special Agent Tom Lorang of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) says most older desertion cases are filed away after an initial investigation is completed, although some are re-examined.

Except for the Marine Corps, military officials say long-term cases normally are closed when deserters voluntarily come back in or are stopped by civilian law officials, not through efforts to track them down.

Recruiting In New York City: "Soldiers Are Being Sent To Do The Wrong Thing, And I Don't Want To Be A Tool For A War I Don't Support"

March 5th, 2006 By KATHLEEN LUCADAMO, DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

The U.S. military is most successful recruiting city students from super-sized high schools with mediocre graduation rates and tight security, a Daily News analysis has found.

"A lot of kids here prefer military over college because their parents can't pay for college," said Vallin Hickson, a senior at Pelham Prep, one of five schools housed in Columbus High.

"The military is not recruiting the bottom of the barrel by any means. They are targeting the working class," said Charles Morose, sociologist and military expert at Northwestern University.

New York City and other urban areas aren't always the best recruiting grounds, experts said.

The military has thrived in rural areas with depressed economies where young people have limited job or college prospects, according to the National Priorities Panel, a research group that analyzed recruiting data by zip code and high school.

But recruiters also said students who have spent four years being scrutinized by school cops may be better able to adjust to the military's strict rules.

"They are 17 years old, being yelled at by security officers and going through metal detectors," [Recruiter] Loyola said. "Those security officers treat those students worse than our drill sergeants would."

Joining the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines has never been an option for David Lombardo, a 17-year-old from Ditmas Park, Brooklyn.

"Soldiers are being sent to do the wrong thing, and I don't want to be a tool for a war I don't support," said Lombardo, a senior at Brooklyn Technical High School.

Lombardo completed a federal opt-out form in November, prohibiting his school from sending his name and contact information to military recruiters.

"I don't feel comfortable with recruiters having my information with no say about it," he said.

Lombardo is waiting to hear back from several universities but hopes to attend Colby College in Maine in the fall.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The Resistance At Work: Professionals Soldiers “Reconning The Target To Determine Patterns And Make Sure They Get It Right”

March 06, 2006 By Greg Grant, Special to the Army Times [Excerpts]

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

“This fight changes every day,” said Army Capt. Stephen Capeheart, an intelligence officer with the 3rd Infantry Division. “The enemy will change itself within 48 hours.”

The insurgents “take note of our patrols and shift their operations where we’re not as visible on a continuous basis,” said Sgt. Maj. Christopher Gilpin of the 3rd ID.

“Once they see our snipers or detect a presence, they move to another area and then wait and wait and wait until we’re not around and then infiltrate back in. They’re very patient.”

Those cells also shadow future assassination victims, such as Iraqi army and police officers.

“The cell will sometimes spend weeks reconning the target to determine patterns and make sure they get it right,” Conkle said.

“We’ve even had reports that they’re taxi drivers; they pick up the Iraqi security force guy and take him to his house so they know where he lives.”

IEDs are built at factories in small villages that ring Baghdad and smuggled into the city, where a few large suppliers sell them to insurgent networks.

Insurgents “have a system in place where they store their munitions in hidden caches until they’re ready to bring them into the city,” Crombe said.

The IED cell that places and detonates the bomb includes a lookout, a triggerman and an emplacer.

The emplacer is one of the most valued members, because experience is required to produce the maximum casualties and damage.

This cell also often has a rifleman with an AK47.

“When the triggerman detonates the IED and gunners (in U.S. Humvees) swivel in to track them, the cell’s rifleman fires a few rounds to distract the gunners,” Conkle said.

Assorted Resistance Action

March 8 (AP) & Evening Echo & Reuters & Mail & Guardian & By KIRK SEMPLE, New York Times

A bomb hidden under a parked car near the University of Technology exploded as police from the interior minister's protection force were driving through central Baghdad, killing two officers and injuring another two, police major Abbas Mohammed Salman said.

In Al Kasra, a concealed bomb detonated as a police convoy drove by, killing four police officers and wounding one of their colleagues and four civilians, according to a police recruit interviewed at the scene. The blast destroyed two police vehicles and three civilian cars.

Two policemen were killed and six civilians and two policemen wounded when a roadside bomb went off near a police patrol in central Baghdad, police said.

A third bomb hit a police patrol in the northern Bab al-Muadam area, killing two officers and injuring four others, said police captain Muhanand al-Bahadili.

A blast hit Iraq's Southern Oil Company headquarters in Basra on Wednesday, damaging one of its buildings, but operations were not affected, a source in the company said.

The source said a mortar bomb hit the fuel section in the company.

Another source in the company said the blast was caused by a small bomb planted outside the office of the director of the fuel section, but he was not hurt.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**We swore an oath "against all enemies, both foreign and domestic." WHAT are we required to do when more than 80% of elected officials ARE domestic enemies?
3.8.06 Steve Senzig, County Chairman, Miami Dade Veterans Party Via firebase-chat**

**“They Have Lost The Opportunity To Leave
Iraq With Any Honor But, They Still Have The
Opportunity To Leave”**

From: C
To: GI Special
Sent: March 08, 2006
Subject: RE: GI Special 4C7: Fuck What The Troops Want

Response to the latest G.I. Special Report:

Some acting officials are collaborators in the crimes against the Iraqi people, but some may not be. Some officials openly supported the massive theft and murder of innocent

Iraqis, considering it a worthy price to line their pocket books; while other officials claim they were helpless against the ensuing onslaught, but never supported it.

The ones who claimed helplessness might at this time be questionable, but there is indeed little question about those who openly admitted their part in these crimes. Most of them are widely known, and their fate is already sealed.

Regardless of the rhetoric, everyone knows full well that the invasion of Iraq was an historic blunder, to say the very least. The idea of "liberating Iraqi resources" is now just a spoof on itself, with all laughter having long gone dead.

Can there be even one decent person left to deny the reality; that every attempt to build an honest relationship with the Iraqi people has been fully squandered by the American government for at least the last ten to fifteen years. The American government has had countless opportunities to help the Iraqi people over the last decade alone and has piddled away every last opportunity with their ulterior motives, selfish agenda, and general thoughtlessness; showing the world just exactly how corrupt our culture has become.

The invasion commanders are now trapped between foolish Bush regime rhetoric, and the increasing awareness that they are on a collision course with catastrophe.

They are now realizing that God has every right to hold them accountable for their crimes on Earth, even before he punishes them in the afterlife. They now know that with every innocent Iraqi maimed or murdered, that they are actually destroying the very pillars upon which America rests.

And when the moment of accountability finally does reach them, whether it be in the here or the hereafter; at that very moment there will be no one willing to make excuses for them. They are coming to understand that unlike the Nazis of the past, that there will be no South America to escape to if they continue to betray their own people, and collapse what our forefathers have bled for.

So, I suppose they could persist in their ways a little while longer, and that would truly be a shame however, let us not give their threats any more attention than they deserve.

They have lost the opportunity to leave Iraq with any honor but, they still have the opportunity to leave.

If our criminals and terrorists continue their futile attack on the Iraqi people, I am sure they will find the revolution to be far less merciful than the current state of justice awaiting them.

Solidarity,
C

“Why Do You Westerners Always Want Civil War?”

You know, I was at the funeral of a Sunni and asked his brother, you know, he'd been murdered, probably by Shi'ites, I think, I asked his brother if there was going to be a civil war and he said look, I'm married to a Shi'ite. You want me to kill my wife? Why do you westerners always want civil war?

03/06/06 ABC Australia Reporter: Eleanor Hall interviewing Robert Fisk [Excerpts]

ROBERT FISK: Well, it's perfect proof that somebody wants a civil war.

Um, but the problem for me is that the narrative is that the Shi'ites are being attacked by the Sunnis and their mosques are being blown up and now the Shi'ites are attacking the Sunni mosques and the Shi'ites and the Sunnis are going to fight each other.

I think that's far too simple a version of events.

There's never been a civil war in Iraq. Sunnis and Shi'ites, despite the fact that the Sunnis as a minority have always effectively ruled Iraq, have never had this sectarian instinct. It's not a sectarian society, it's a tribal society. People are intermarried.

You know, I was at the funeral of a Sunni and asked his brother, you know, he'd been murdered, probably by Shi'ites, I think, I asked his brother if there was going to be a civil war and he said look, I'm married to a Shi'ite. You want me to kill my wife? Why do you westerners always want civil war?

The first people to mention civil war were the occupation authorities. The Iraqis were not.

ELEANOR HALL: But the Iraqis are now. I mean, Al-Jaafari's talking about civil war.

ROBERT FISK: They're not talking about civil war, they're talking about being frightened of who's doing the bombing. But, you see, we still don't know who's doing the bombings. How many names have we been given of the suicide bombers? Two out of, what, 320 suicide bombings now. Where do they come from, these people?

I mean, we keep hearing about kidnaps. In every case they were kidnapped by people, quote, "wearing police uniforms," unquote. There's a police station on the airport road, it was overrun and all the policemen executed by men wearing, quote, "army uniforms," unquote.

Now, we used to have this phenomenon in Algeria, when I was covering the Islamist government war there, and it took a while before we realised that they were policemen and they were soldiers.

In other words, they were being paid by the authorities.

There's not a huge wardrobe factory in Fallujah with, you know, 8,000 policemen's uniforms, waiting for the next suicide bomber. It's not like that. What we've got is death squads, and some of them are clearly working for government institutions within Baghdad.

ELEANOR HALL: So you're saying there are death squads, there's chaos, but it's not civil war?

ROBERT FISK: Well, it's certainly chaos, and it's certainly death squads. But I don't regard this as a civil war at the moment. As I said, somebody wants a civil war. I mean, if you really try hard and you kill enough people you may be able to produce this.

ELEANOR HALL: So somebody wants a civil war?

ROBERT FISK: Yes.

ELEANOR HALL: You must have some clues about who.

ROBERT FISK: I don't have. I have suspicions, I don't have clues. I spend a lot of time, when I'm in Baghdad, trying to find out who this is and what this is. Clearly, the Interior Ministry have been torturing people to death, and clearly the Interior Ministry have people who do operate death squads.

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

IN MEMORIAM:

Michael E. DiRoma

[His computer work made the development of GI Special possible. T]

March 5, 2006

RIT student killed in crash

Steve Orr, Staff writer, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

A Rochester Institute of Technology student headed home for spring break was killed Friday when he lost control of his car on an Orange County expressway ramp.

Two other RIT students riding with Michael E. Diroma, 21, were injured.

"The sad thing of all this is this was finals week at RIT. They had finished their finals on Thursday and were heading home when this accident happened," said RIT spokesman Robert Finnerty.

The accident occurred about 4:25 a.m. Friday.

Diroma, from Manhattan, was a fourth-year software engineering student at RIT and a member of the Society of Software Engineers there.

He earned a small measure of media attention last year as co-founder of a group that uses the Internet to pull together loosely organized games, such as capture the flag and pillow fights, that attract hundreds of people to parks and other public settings.

"The only point is to have fun," Diroma was quoted as saying in a November story in the Los Angeles Times. "If we don't organize it, who will?"

News of his death was posted on the group's Web site, www.NYGames.net.

"He had contagious energy. Mike didn't necessarily run around much during the games. To him, it was kind of all about having fun and watching other people having fun," said Alexander Yellen, a friend of Diroma's in Manhattan who now helps organize the games.

State Police said the fatal accident occurred as Diroma was driving on a ramp leading from Route 17 onto Interstate 84 near Middletown. His vehicle went out of control and careened onto I-84 in the path of oncoming traffic.

A tractor-trailer attempted to avoid the car but could not, and struck Diroma's vehicle broadside, said Sgt. Antonio Mercado in New Hampton, Orange County.

He said the exit ramps from Route 17 curve sharply, surprising drivers who don't know the road. "We get a lot of accidents out there," he said.

The two other RIT students were taken to a Middletown hospital with injuries that appeared not to be life-threatening. Finnerty identified them as Cameron Bosnic, a second-year student in computer engineering, and Robert Songer, a third-year student in software engineering.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

“It Seems That Palestinians Have Somehow Taken Democracy A Little Too Far”

March 3, 2006 Ramzy Baroud, Uruknet.info [Excerpts]

Hamas, not knowingly, perhaps, has abruptly deprived Washington of its last card in a Middle East foreign policy game, which was already in tatters.

Delivering democracy was, until Hamas' political rise, Washington's strongest, albeit murkiest pretext to justify its military presence in the Middle East.

Other pretexts also proved to be a sham; weapons of mass destruction and all. Even the war on terror logic was turned upside-down, as post-Saddam Iraq became a terror magnet, a term liberally used by US policy makers.

Nothing was left but the good old democracy pretence, which worked well, until Palestinians cast their vote on that critical day late January.

The majority voted for Hamas, not because of its Islamic agenda, but because of its uncompromising anti-corruption platform, its stance on Palestinian rights and the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. Those who understand the intricacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict must have also decoded the vote as a strong rejection of the US government's dubious role in the conflict and in abetting Israel's defiance of international law.

According to the deliberately ambiguous terminology of pro-Israeli fan clubs in Washington, the Palestinian vote reflected an emphatically "anti-American," stance, a most dishonest title indeed.

Chances are, US foreign policy pundits will carry on with their democracy media parade. However, as we have already seen, the democracy rhetoric will begin to erode, losing its tangible associations and relegating almost exclusively to rosy and indefinable assertions.

In short: 'Think Again: Middle East Democracy', as an article title in Foreign Policy sums it up. The authors suggested, and rightly so, that the "US wants democracy in the Middle East, to a point."

However, it seems that Palestinians have somehow taken democracy a little too far.

Indeed, the Bush administration finds itself in a greater political mess than thought possible. Weaseling its way out of its 'commitment' to democracy in the Middle East is easier said than done.

Every other pretext to justify US imprudence in terms of foreign policy and unconditional financial and military backing of Israel, no longer the 'only democracy in the Middle East,' have long been exploited if not exhausted altogether. Until an alternative policy is devised; chances are a new US doctrine dealing with unfavorable democracy outcomes in the Middle East is currently being concocted; the US and Israel will resort to every form of bullying, intimidation and pressure to completely sideline the relevance of the new Palestinian government, or to 'oust' Hamas, as a joint plot, one recently leaked by US media.

The hope is to discredit, then overthrow a Hamas-led government without having to overhaul its entire democracy 'project', whose demise would be much more consequential than the removal of a movement branded terrorist.

Only time and more media leaked plots will reveal what is to transpire. However, the early signs; that of Israel's intention to starve Palestinians through sanctions, coupled with unequalled enthusiasm among US lawmakers to punish Palestinians for electing Hamas; makes the coming Israeli and US foreign policy course even more predictable.

While Israel sees little harm in making Palestinians a 'whole lot thinner' as a result of its economic sanctions policy, the US' rash response in chastising Palestinians will likely scar US credibility, or whatever remains of it.

“We Love Democracy, Providing The Muslim Nations Elect The People We Want”

03/06/06 ABC Australia Reporter: Eleanor Hall interviewing Robert Fisk [Excerpts]

ELEANOR HALL: Now, the victory for Hamas, in the Palestinian elections, how closely is the West's reaction to this being watched in the Arab world?

ROBERT FISK: With its usual cynicism, yes.

It's the same old story: we demand democracy, we demand they have freedom to vote, and they vote for the wrong people, so we try to destroy the government that's been freely elected. We love democracy, providing the Muslim nations elect the people we want.

I mean, we keep hearing the Israelis will not deal with Hamas. The Israelis created Hamas. When the PLO were in Beirut, and the Israelis wanted to counteract the PLO, they urged Hamas to set up more mosques and social institutions in Gaza.

Even after Oslo a senior Israeli officer, and this was reported on the front page of The Jerusalem Post, held official talks with Hamas officials in Jerusalem. Israel won't deal with Hamas. This is just a facade of narrative, for us, the press.

There is a narrative being set down for us where there will not be negotiations, but there can be any time the Israelis want, and if they find it in their interest, they will.

ELEANOR HALL: And yet you're in no doubt that Hamas, or certain members of Hamas, are terrorists?

ROBERT FISK: Look, I don't use the word terrorist about anybody. This has become a semantically meaningless word.

Look, there are people in the Hamas movement who support the murder of innocent people, yes, of course there are.

I'm not trying to make equivalences here, but when you have an Israeli air force officer, as we did at one occasion in Gaza, who bombs a block of apartments, knowing that he will kill innocent children, as well as a man who is believed to be behind suicide bombings, what is that man?

What goes on in his brain too?

[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

THE CORNERED RAT “Only 18 Percent Of The Public Has A Favorable View”



3/07/2006 By Richard Morin, The Washington Post

These must be sobering days for Vice President Dick Cheney as he reflects on recent events from his secret Fortress of Solitude.

The latest CBS News poll found that only 18 percent of the public has a favorable view of Cheney.

How bad is a rating of 18 percent? According to a quick review of polling archives, it arguably makes Cheney:

Less popular than former football star O.J. Simpson was after his arrest and trial for murdering his estranged wife and her companion. Three in 10, 29 percent, of all Americans had a favorable view of Simpson in an October 1995 Gallup poll.

Less popular with Americans than Joseph Stalin is with Russians. In 2003, fully 20 percent said Stalin, blamed for millions of deaths in the former Soviet Union during the 1930s and 1940s, was a "wise and humane" leader. Thirty-one percent also said they wouldn't object if Uncle Joe came back to rule again, according to surveys conducted by Russian pollsters.

Far less popular than former New Jersey Gov. James McGreevey days after he announced in August 2004 that he had engaged in an extramarital affair with a man and would resign. His job approval rating bumped from 43 to 45 percent.



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

FIRST DICK CHENEY JOKES ARRIVE IN IRAQ

Pentagon Hopes Merriment Will Unite Sunnis, Shiites

March 7, 2006 The Borowitz Report

Weeks after Vice President Dick Cheney's hunting accident became the staple of television comedians' monologues, the Pentagon today dispatched the first shipment of Dick Cheney hunting jokes to Iraq.

With sectarian violence in Iraq continuing to rise, the Pentagon hopes that laughter over the Vice President's hunting mishap will serve to unite Sunnis and Shiites and bring the country back from the brink of civil war.

"For weeks, Americans of every stripe have laughed about Dick Cheney shooting his friend in the face," Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said at a Pentagon briefing today. "We are hopeful that by laughing at Dick Cheney together, both Sunnis and Shiites will find common ground."

The Cheney jokes were culled from late-night television, translated into Arabic, and then printed on flyers which were airdropped over the war-torn nation in the early hours of the morning, Secretary Rumsfeld said.

He added that if the Dick Cheney jokes take root in Iraq, he could envision a scenario in which Dick Cheney jokes flourish across the entire Middle East.

Elsewhere, President Bush acknowledged today that the U.S. had not yet found Osama bin Laden, but added, "On the positive side, we continue to arrest Cindy Sheehan."

Guantanamo Bay: Ugly As It Gets

March 1, 2006 By Thomas P. Sullivan, Chicago Tribune

"Tantamount to torture" is how an inspection committee of the International Committee of the Red Cross recently described detention practices at Guantanamo Bay.

More than 400 men have been detained for more than four years in virtual solitary confinement at the military detention center in Cuba. The prisoners, whom the U.S. government has denominated "enemy combatants," are foreign citizens taken into custody from various countries.

The Bush administration has fought tooth and nail to prevent these "detainees" from being given an opportunity to appear before a court to challenge the basis for the government's classifying them as combatants. They just languish in Gitmo.

The writ of habeas corpus is enshrined in our Constitution: "The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in case of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it."

It is the traditional method used to require prosecutors to explain to a judge the basis for imprisoning those suspected of committing crimes.

In an astounding surrender to executive power, Congress recently passed a bill purporting to repeal the prisoners' right to file habeas petitions and substituted a procedure that leaves the prisoners at the whim and caprice of military tribunals. Translation: continued indefinite incarceration.

I recently traveled to Guantanamo to interview a client, a man from Saudi Arabia. He is in his 30s, married, father of several children, who has been incarcerated since late 2001. An interpreter who speaks Arabic accompanied me. I am serving without charge. Armed soldiers searched us and escorted us to and from a small cubicle.

One of my client's legs was shackled to the floor.

Many of the cells, more appropriately described as cages,-were made from shipping containers, 6-by-9-feet, with a raised cement slab and mattress for a bed, a metal floor, a toilet and a wash basin. That's it.

Heat and rain enter freely, often making it alternately extremely hot or cold.

The walls are mesh or undulating horizontal bars, causing damage to prisoners' eyesight. Prisoners see and converse only with detainees in cells adjacent or directly across from their cells.

Prison guards escort them individually to a shower twice a week and to exercise twice a week in an enclosure consisting of a cement floor about 15 yards square surrounded by a chain-link fence.

They have no access to radio, TV, magazines, newspapers or telephone.

Reading materials are sparse:-everything sent, including letters from families, is screened, a process that often takes many months. The lunch I saw served appeared hardly fit to eat.

Many prisoners are suffering physically and mentally from isolation, lack of proper food, medical care and exercise. Some have been driven to hunger strikes and attempts at suicide.

In times of national stress our commitment to due process is most severely tested.

The temptation to adopt autocratic measures springs to the fore, made all the more palatable when the perceived enemy is a foreigner who speaks in a strange tongue and adheres to unfamiliar religious and cultural traditions.

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor once reminded us that "it is in those times that we must preserve our commitment at home to the principles for which we fight abroad."

We should promptly bring an end to this national disgrace.

**Unfair Students Call Clinton “War Criminal”
He Just Did What The UN Had Approved**

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: **SOMEONE AIN'T AFRAID TO CALL THE DEMOCRATS WHAT THEY ARE. ABOUT TIME.**]

Mar 6 AP

Two Pace University students were questioned by Secret Service officers after they heckled former President Clinton during a speech at the school, a university spokesman said.

The hecklers shouted "war criminal" when Clinton answered a law student's question about the value of working for peace, Pace spokesman Christopher T. Cory said.

The two students were asked to leave by local police, then were questioned by the Secret Service and released, Cory said. Their identities were not released.

[Come on, give the guy a break. Just because he enforced the sanctions on Iraq that killed Iraqis by the hundreds of thousands, does that make him a "war criminal?" Hey, the UN give its' official approval for doing it. And who hasn't heard some of those "anti-war" folks whining for the UN to take over in Iraq? Gee, maybe that's a good idea. The UN sanctions killed more Iraqis that the whole U.S. army has managed to do since the invasion. And the UN sanctions were much quieter about doing it too.]

More Idiot Spies At Work

Mar, 01, 2006 By John Lasker, Wired.com (by way of Tom Condit tomcondit@igc.org)

For more than a year, Bruce Gagnon strongly suspected he and his family were being spied on, but he didn't have any evidence, and he didn't know who might be behind it.

An Air Force veteran, Gagnon is one of the most prominent activists in the world concerned with space weapons. He directs the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space from a small office in Maine.

Still, he was caught off guard when the American Civil Liberties Union called and told him it had uncovered court documents revealing that NASA and the U.S. Air Force were secretly monitoring him.

"We're a small organization with meager resources," said Gagnon. "They feel threatened by us? That tells us something." [Indeed. It tells us the proximate distance heads are up asses.]

Target Of Illegal Spying:

“In The United States, On April 5, 2005, I Deviated From The Party Line When I Joined A Protest Against Military Recruitment”



UC Santa Cruz Student Konstancy Hordynski

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

Statement By Konstancy Hordynski, Target of Illegal Spying, ACLU.org

Abusive domestic surveillance is nothing new. Today, it's common (or, unfortunately, perhaps not so common) knowledge that many in the anti-war community of the 1960's, not to mention prominent civil rights leaders such as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., had their lives disrupted, and on occasion shattered, by programs such as COINTELPRO, which targeted them based not on what they'd done, but what they believed.

As the child of parents who escaped Eastern Bloc Poland, I knew these types of government activities were commonplace elsewhere. My parents told me many a story where figures in the resistance, and even some family friends, were monitored and "disciplined" by the regime.

Poland's country-wide martial law of the 1980's, in Polish, literally, the state of war, declared open surveillance season on every communication or activity. Any perceived deviation from the party line, be it breaking curfew or protesting the Communists, was grounds for the severest sanction. And it all started with unchecked surveillance.

In the United States, on April 5, 2005, I deviated from the party line when I joined a protest against military recruitment.

I didn't protest with Students Against War to be threatening, or to be un-American, or to waste anyone's time. I protested because it was a way I could stand up for what I believed was right. I knew that my actions were protected by the Constitution.

Yet the government believes that the peaceful protest in which I took part is a "credible threat." When lawfully standing up for my beliefs, standing up for what I think is right and just, is a "threat" to the government, something is wrong.

We're not in a Cold War anymore. This isn't martial law. We like to think that maybe we learned something from the past; that when governments spy on their own citizens without due cause, both our security and our civil liberties suffer. Obviously, we were wrong.

When I learned our constitutionally protected advocacy was included on a Pentagon list of monitored events, I was taken aback. I was disappointed that this country had strayed so far from its ideals, from the values of freedom, dissent and hearty public debate on which it was founded. I was saddened that the Constitution could be so easily ignored.

I'm not ashamed to say I was a little angry too. Our right to criticize what we believe are misguided government policies must always be protected, especially in a time of national crisis or war. And this fueled my determination to stay a lawful dissenter. Standing up for what is right can never be wrong.

Indeed, what could be more healthy for the "national security" than a nation of thinking, conscientious, engaged citizens?

But, I'm hopeful. If we're being monitored, at least we're being heard.

In Poland, the gathering oppression that my parents left behind was the sign of a regime crumbling under widespread public disapproval and internal dissent.

I am hopeful that today too, revelations of unlawful spying will prompt us to demand a government that once again values dissent and respects the Constitution as the defender of a secure nation that really lives its ideals.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

“Pakistani Nation Wants Head Of Bush!”

March 3, 2006 BY MUNIR AHMAD ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan: Anti-U.S. protests erupted across Pakistan on Friday, with crowds burning American flags, chanting "Death to Bush" and scuffling with police shortly before the U.S. president was to arrive for a two-day visit.

In Chaman, a southwestern town on the Afghan border, between 4,000 and 5,000 people protested peacefully, according to an estimate by an Associated Press reporter. They shouted, "Go Back Bush! Bush, Dog!" and "God is Great!"

About 300 university students rallied in Islamabad, burning an effigy of Bush. Some carried signs that said, "Go back, go back big Satan Bush."

Javed Rahman, one of the protesters, said, "We are protesting against the coming of Bush because we hate him. He is the killer of so many innocent people, so many innocent Muslims."

About 1,000 also rallied in the southern city of Karachi, the country's largest city. They torched U.S. flags and chanted, "Pakistani nation wants head of Bush!"

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