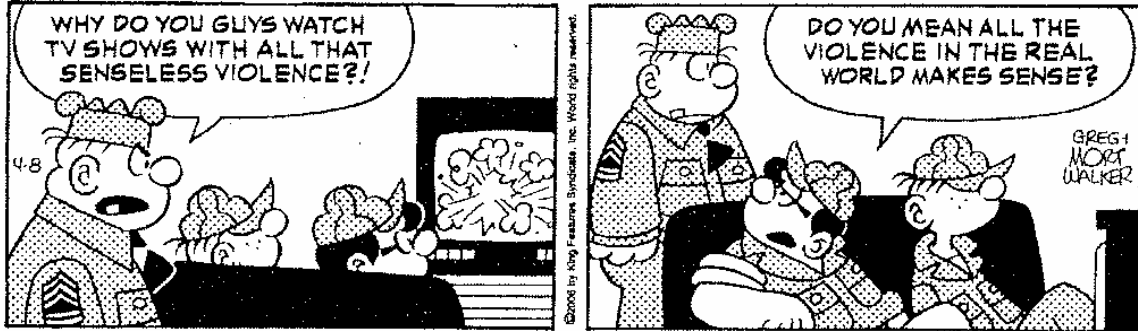


GI SPECIAL 4D1:



IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Pentagon Wants Convoy Troops To Become Suicide Soldiers

3.31.06 Mideast Stars and Stripes

In a change to Army tactics, U.S. soldiers will stand and fight instead of shooting and pressing on when their convoys are attacked on Iraqi roads, according to the Army's Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe, Va.

The change is part of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker's underlying philosophy of a more rigorous response to attacks, a spokesman said.

[Thanks to Schoomaker, now every resistance soldier and every resistance commander in Iraq will know exactly what tactics to adopt to set up even more elaborate and lethal concealed attacks on supply convoys.

[Unless and until Schoomaker personally decides to start going on convoy runs, the best response to this new idiocy is to treat the "change" like dogshit stuck on a boot. Wipe it off. Leave it behind. Having done so, refuse to pay the slightest future attention to it. Do not stop until well away. Survive the latest idiocy from

Rumsfeld's incompetent ass-kissing rat. It's probably Rumsfeld who thought up this insane "change" to begin with.]

Texas Man Killed Near Baghdad



Tech. Sgt. Walter M. Moss Jr., 37, of Houston, was killed in the explosion of an improvised explosive device near Baghdad March 29, 2006. (AP Photo/Moss family)

Sgt. Severely Wounded

March 30, 2006 WYOU

A family member tells WYOU News that 23 year old Army Sergeant Peter Engle of Oval sustained severe injuries to both of his legs in the attack on March 20th.

Two other soldiers that were traveling with him died in the attack. No word on their name.

Engle was sent to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington D.C. were he is in a coma.

Family members also say he will require more surgeries, but they do say he is beginning to respond to familiar voices.

U.S. Base In Kirkuk Mortared: Casualties Not Announced

March 31 (KUNA)

A mortar shell fell on Friday on the headquarters of the multi-national [translation: U.S.] forces in Kirkuk in northern Iraq.

An Iraqi police source gave no details whether the shell caused damage to the building.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION FUTILE EXERCISE BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. army Lt. Craig Giancaterino and soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, search for insurgents in the Al Jazeera Desert of western Iraq, March 27, 2006. **[If they have a good day, they won't find any. That can always be arranged. As one soldier expressed it a couple years ago: "We find if we don't go there, they don't shoot at us." In Vietnam, this was the famous "Search And Evade" or "Avoid."]** (AP)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“Spring Offensive Against Foreign Forces”

30 March 2006 BBC & New York Times, March 31, 2006

Afghan insurgents firing rockets and rifles killed a district chief and three members of his staff as they drove home in eastern Laghman Province, while in the southern province of Helmand a local police commander and his brother were killed when their vehicle was ambushed, officials said.

A man who identified himself as a Taliban spokesman said they had begun a “spring offensive” against foreign forces.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Christopher Piper in his hometown of Marblehead, Massachusetts June 27, 2005. Piper died of wounds suffered earlier in the month serving with the U.S. Special Forces in Afghanistan. REUTERS/Brian Snyder

Sergeant Faces Surgery

March 31, 2006 By Karen Blackledge, The Daily Item

ELIMSPORT: A soldier from Brady Township, near ElimSPORT, Lycoming County, faces additional surgery after suffering head wounds while serving in Iraq.

Army National Guard Sgt. Michael S. Bennett was injured Feb. 15 in Ramadi when a bullet shattered part of his skull.

He is at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., undergoing extensive testing. Accompanying him there were his father, Kenneth, and his grandfather, Marlon. They both live in Montgomery, according to Michael's mother, Mary, also a Montgomery resident.

Michael, who serves with the National Guard, faces surgery the end of May to replace the part of his skull that had been removed.

His wife, Jolie, said he has to travel to the hospital for checkups. "He's all right except for the dizzy spells. He still has not been able to run," she said.

Michael's father was the first to be told of the shooting.

"Nobody could get a hold of me at work. They came to Williamsport to tell me," said Jolie, who works at Brodart.

Following emergency surgery in Iraq, Michael was flown to Germany. He then was flown to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md., and eventually to Walter Reed Hospital.

The 28-year-old has been home for about a month. He was hospitalized for a little more than a week, Jolie said.

She said he has been told he will not be sent back to Iraq. He has re-enlisted for three more years.

Michael, who had worked at Crest Homes in Milton which is where his dad and grandfather also work, has been a National Guard member since graduating from high school in 1996.

Two years ago, he served 10 months in Bosnia.

He is a member of Company B, First Battalion 109th of Williamsport which was deployed to Iraq on June 26. The Montgomery Lioness Club collected money to help with expenses related to his traveling to and from the hospital. People at Brodart collected money to help them, his wife said.

"Everybody has been real supportive," she said.

U.S. Deserter Reports Iraq Atrocities

[Thanks to Z, who writes: Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z]

[Thanks to DG, who sent this in.]

March 30, 2006 By ANDREW DAVIDSON, cnews.canoe.ca

A "trigger-happy" U.S. army squad leader shot the foot off an unarmed Iraqi man and soldiers kicked a severed head around like a soccer ball, a U.S. war deserter told an Immigration and Refugee Board hearing Thursday.

Joshua Key, the first U.S. deserter with combat experience in Iraq to apply for refugee status in Canada, told the board he witnessed numerous atrocities committed by U.S. forces while serving eight months as a combat engineer.

Key, 27, said he was never trained on the Geneva Convention and was told in Iraq by superior officers that the international law guiding humanitarian standards was just a "guideline."

"It's shoot first, ask questions later," Key said of his squad's guiding principles. "Everything's justified."

Key is one of five members of the U.S. armed forces asking for asylum in Canada.

But the Oklahoma native is unique in that he is the only applicant that has combat experience in Iraq, said Key's lawyer, Jeffrey House. The other are seeking asylum in Canada to avoid being sent there, he said.

"He has boots-on-the-ground experience about what the actual conduct of the war in Iraq is," House said outside the hearing.

With visible bags under his eyes, Key told the hearing he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and frequently has nightmares over what he witnessed in Iraq.

He recalled participating in almost nightly raids on homes of suspected insurgents in Ramadi and Fallujah as a member of the 43rd Combat Engineer Company.

He said that while the raids seldom turned up anything of interest, he often saw soldiers ransack the homes and steal jewelry or money, while superior officers looked the other way.

He also said several Iraqis were shot dead, and that they were cases of soldiers "shooting out of fear and inventing reasons afterward."

In Ramadi, Key said he saw the beheaded bodies of four Iraqis beside a shot-up truck and witnessed several members of the Florida National Guard kick a severed head "like a soccer ball."

Key also said he witnessed one of his "trigger happy" platoon's squad sergeants shoot part of an unarmed Iraqi man's foot off in Khaldia, a village between Fallujah and Ramadi. The man was sitting on a chair outside a store and had raised his foot as a sign of disrespect, he said.

Key added he was never questioned about the incident and was not aware of any charges being laid.

Keith Brennenstuhl, the IRB member overseeing the hearing, ruled at an earlier hearing that the board would not consider the legality of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Key also described seeing U.S. soldiers indiscriminately kick and scream at two hooded and naked detainees while escorting them to a grassy area to relieve themselves.

Brennenstuhl asked Key whether he received any interrogation training before dragging detainees out of their homes during raids.

"The only thing we were told was how to keep them quiet," Key said, explaining that soldiers cuffed prisoners' hands behind their backs and put hoods over their heads.

"Could they breathe?" Brennenstuhl asked.

"I guess it wasn't my concern," Key responded, adding that officers said the hoods were designed "to humiliate them."

Key, the father of four young children, told the hearing he joined the army for steady pay and medical coverage for his family. He said he initially went to Iraq as a willing participant because he believed U.S. intelligence claims that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

But Key became disillusioned with the war during his service and decided to abandon his contract with the army during a two-week leave from Iraq in November 2003.

He and his family lived on the run in Philadelphia before crossing the border at Niagara Falls, N.Y., on March 3, 2005. Key now works as a welder in Fort St. John, B.C. He and his wife Brandi have four children between the ages of seven months and six years.

If returned to the United States, Key said he believed the army would "make an example" of him as a way to deter other possible deserters.

Lawyers from all parties will submit their written submissions in the coming weeks before the board rules on Key's application.

80% Of Texas Guards Won't Re-Enlist

3.31.06 San Antonio Express-News

About one-fifth of the 5,900 Texas National Guard troops who have served in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, the Sinai Peninsula, Bosnia and Kosovo have re-enlisted. [One-fifth is 20%. That leaves 80%. Duh.]

“Tens Of Billions” Worth Of Military Equipment Destroyed In Iraq, Afghan Wars

3.31.06 Defense Daily

Senior Army and Marine Corps officials told lawmakers they will need tens of billions of dollars to replace and repair equipment that has been lost, damaged or worn out during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

More War Profiteers Caught Sucking Up Blood Money

3.31.06 Washington Post

Former Air Force procurement official Darleen A. Druyun, convicted last year for showing favoritism to Boeing while negotiating for a job, also manipulated Pentagon rules to benefit Lockheed Martin and another defense contractor, Systems & Electronics Inc. of St. Louis, Mo., according to recent inspector general reports.

Delaware Candidate For Immediate Withdrawal Of All Troops From Iraq



Michael Berg speaks at a demonstration in Parliament Square, London, calling for the end of occupation in Iraq, June 30, 2004. Berg is running a third-party race for the U.S. Congress on a platform seeking a complete withdrawal of American troops. (David Bebbler/Reuters)

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

March 29, 2006 By IAN URBINA, The New York Times [Excerpts]

WILMINGTON, Del.

Michael S. Berg and his son Nick could not have been more different.

Nick Berg, who was pro-Bush and a supporter of the Iraq war, was, in his father's words, a "marine wannabe" and a devoutly religious Jew. Michael Berg has been a pacifist and an atheist most of his life.

But Michael Berg says he and Nick shared a belief in taking a principled stand. It is this belief that Mr. Berg says inspired his Green Party bid for Delaware's only Congressional seat in the wake of Nick's kidnapping and killing in Iraq two years ago.

"Nick stood by what he thought was right," said Mr. Berg, a 61-year-old former teacher who is trying to unseat a seven-term Republican, Michael N. Castle. "I plan on doing the same."

"I'm in this race to win," said Mr. Berg, wearing his standard outfit — jeans and an antiwar T-shirt — while seated in the cafe in downtown Wilmington that he uses for interviews, since his wife forbids members of the news media in their home. "But the larger point is to get more people talking about the war."

In a state where only 621 of 545,000 registered voters are signed up with the Green Party, Mr. Berg said he had raised a little over \$5,000 of the \$250,000 that his campaign director says he needs to be competitive.

As he bicycles across the state giving speeches at schools and churches and holding fund-raising house parties, he says he has found a receptive audience, not just to his call for an immediate withdrawal of all American forces from Iraq but also to the rest of his platform: universal health care, a livable wage and increased spending on education.

"A lot of voters are frustrated by the lack of options beyond the two major parties," Mr. Berg said. "And a lot of these people have not been voting before."

Mr. Berg said that he was originally approached by a representative of the state's Democratic Party to oppose Mr. Castle but that he opted to go with the Greens because "the Democrats have the money to get the message out, but they have the wrong message."

Mr. Berg said that in deference to his family's desire for privacy he initially avoided speaking in public about his son's death. But he soon changed his mind, drawing

attention after telling reporters that his son "died for the sins of George Bush and Donald Rumsfeld."

He has not stopped talking about the war since.

"It is pretty discouraging that there are so many families in the same awful position," he said, adding that since his son's death he has become a close friend of Cindy Sheehan, who lost a son in the war and has become a highly visible war protester.

Mr. Berg concedes that his campaign has put strains on his family. His daughter, Sara, 33, a lawyer in Virginia, has sought answers about her brother's death by filing freedom of information requests with various branches of the government.

"Most of what she has received is useless," Mr. Berg said.

“Get The Heck Out”

April 3, 2006
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

I read the Jan. 9 U.S. Military (Ret.) column on the proposed increase in Tricare enrollment fees for retirees, “Ask yourself if fee increase makes Tricare worth it.”

I am sickened to even imagine the thought.

They are complaining about an influx of retirees in the Tricare program, but yet they want people to spend 20 or more years in the service. What gives?

My husband is a chief warrant officer 3 and has served for 22 years. We are at the point in his career to decide whether to stay a bit longer or retire now.

When stuff like this comes up, I say to him, “Get the heck out.” Why should he/we sacrifice more to have more taken from us in the long run?

Listen up, big government: You cannot keep taking.

Tehdi Batiz
Fort Rucker, Ala.

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.



www.ivaw.net

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

March 31 (Reuters) & By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, AP

In the outskirts of Baghdad, insurgents set off explosives underneath an oil pipeline in the Friday. There were no casualties reported, but crews were still fighting to put out the oil fire in the afternoon, police 1st Lt. Thair Mahmoud said. The pipeline runs from Beiji, north of the capital, to the Dora district in southern Baghdad, he said.

A policeman was killed when guerrillas fired on his patrol in Falluja 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.



Smoke rises from a pipeline explosion March 31, 2006 in Baghdad. Insurgents set off explosives underneath an oil pipeline on the outskirts of Baghdad Friday. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

***Honorable Moments In U.S. Military
History:***

The Ft. Hood Strike:

“The Little Brass Dictators Are Facing A New Kind Of Enlisted Man And They Haven't Figured Out How To Deal With Him”

[This article is posted at The Sir No Sir web site, well worth checking out for a rich collection: <http://sirnosir.com> T]

Vietnam GI, Sept. 1968

The action of 43 black EMs at FT Hood has set a precedent that may well be followed and improved upon by thousands of GIs in the future.

On August 23, the 43 stopped going along with the Brass's game-they refused to be used to put down so-called "civil disturbances" in Chicago during the Democrat Convention.

Now the Brass are trying every trick in the UCMJ, as well as several new ones, to punish the demonstrators. They're afraid millions of other GI's might get the idea they can buck the system and win. But the Army is finding that it's a lot harder to railroad 43 men who hang together than it is to screw them over one at a time, as they usually do.

The demonstrators, many of them decorated Nam returnees, are members of the 1st and 2nd Armored Divisions at Hood.

When they decided the time had come to make a stand, they issued a statement which said: "We won't go to Chicago or any place in the United States to put down a civil disturbance or riot by our black brothers."

The GIs began assembling on post at the intersection of 65th and Central on the evening of the 23rd. The group was orderly and quiet and expanded as the night wore on.

At 2 a.m. MAJ. GEN John Boles, of the 1st AD, tried to talk the men out of staying. When that failed Boles, fearing the solidarity of the group, told the men they could continue demonstrating without repercussions. When asked to put his promise in writing Boles refused, but he raised his right hand and swore to it with his staff as witnesses.

At 5:45 a.m., however, a Colonel tried to break the General's promise. LT COL Edwin Kulo, 1st AD Provost Marshal, appeared and said, "I want you all to go back to your area." A couple of minutes later he added, "I'm asking you to leave now, otherwise the MPs will take you in." Again no direct order was given, only a request and a threat. The men remained solid and unmoving.

As MPs stood by, some of the men asked to see their lawyers and were refused. Shortly after, an MP Captain yelled 'get 'em" and the MPs attacked, screaming and swinging clubs. Many of the demonstrators were injured as they attempted to protect their heads from the blows. One, a wounded combat vet, demanded medical attention. He had difficulty breathing and his wounds were bothering him seriously. Ten hours later, and only after he began urinating blood, he was finally treated.

The Brass had not covered themselves, even under their own kangaroo code, by issuing any direct orders.

But that screwup didn't seem to bother them.

They singled out 8 of the 43 as leaders and set up general courtsmartial on charges of disobeying a direct order!

The 8 are now attempting to force the Brass to limit their prosecution to special courts-martial. The remaining 34 (one other was not charged) are receiving special courts, many of which have now ended. They are being tried in groups of 6 and 8 at time. The brass are trying to ram through convictions by lying and other tactics. But the heaviest stockade sentence thus far has been 6 months; several have gotten 3 months or acquittals. Of the most recent group, as VGI goes to press, 4 out of 6 were acquitted.

There are several reasons for these "light" sentences (according to the usual standards.)

There are the determination and aggressiveness of the GIs, and the fact that they have a civilian lawyer. The publicity about the case also makes it tough for the Brass to be as heavy-handed as they are when they're dealing quietly with isolated individuals. And there's no doubt that they fear the response of thousands of other GIs at Hood if they hand down extreme sentences.

But the Brass's case is too shabby even for convictions, much less extreme sentences.

Some examples:

Defense attorney Weldon Berry of Houston had the defendants sit in the spectator section at the beginning of the trials. Prosecution witness SGT Walton of the 501st MP Co stated, "I never forget a face," yet he picked out only one of the accused from among the spectators.

High officers were called in to lie about the events. LT COL John J. Cassidy and LT COL John Saalberg testified that they heard COL Kulo give the 43 a direct order to disperse. But the Brass couldn't produce Kulo as a witness.

Strangely enough, GEN Boles never appeared to testify about his promise.

At one trial the defense called CAPT William R. Robbins, former senior aide to GEN Boles. He turned out to be the one officer involved who told it like it was.

Robbins testified that he heard GEN. Boles tell the men that they could stay where they were gathered without fear of punishment, but that he had "advised" or "suggested" that they disperse.

He also said that Boles told the men that if they did not want to go to Chicago, they should not have to go.

But Robbins' testimony didn't matter, of course. It didn't fit the official Brass version that the LT COLs had testified to.

The Army is shook.

FT. Hood is one of several recent events which shows that the little brass dictators are facing a new kind of enlisted man and they haven't figured out how to deal with him.

The general courts of the 8 men who were singled out are yet to come. But the events thus far are themselves a victory for EMs everywhere.

If the trend continues-and thousands of GIs can make it continue, the Brass will be unable to force GIs to fight in countries and cities, in wars that no one voted for and no one benefits from, except for the hawk corporations and their politicians.

The information for this article has been gathered by the staff of Fatigue Press, an underground sheet put out by GIs at Hood and from the staff of the "Oleo Strut," a coffeehouse run by GIs and sympathetic civilians in Killeen.

People Have Every Right To Resist Having Their Country Invaded And Occupied.

If you ask U.S. soldiers why Iraqis are resisting the occupation, many have a much clearer picture than the one we get in the U.S. media. "If someone invaded Texas, we'd do the same thing," observed one soldier, Lt. Col. Kim Keslung.

March 31, 2006 Interview, Socialist Worker

ANTHONY ARNOVE is the co-editor with Howard Zinn of Voices of a People's History, an editorial board member of the International Socialist Review and a long-time contributor to Socialist Worker.

Here, he discusses the themes of his new book Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal, published by the New Press and available at bookstores now.

THE THIRD anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq just passed. Has the U.S. liberated Iraq?

IRAQ HAS not been liberated. It has been subjected to a colonial occupation that is tearing the country apart and making life hell for the vast majority of Iraqis.

Conservatively, since the invasion, there have been at least 98,000 “excess” Iraqi deaths, according to the highly respected medical journal *The Lancet*. This study, it is important to note, excluded the deaths of Iraqis in Falluja, the area of the most intense U.S. attacks.

And it's not just deaths. It's the torture of hundreds of Iraqis, if not thousands. It's the more than 14,000 people who are still being detained--many held for more than a year, or in some cases more than two years, without any due process.

It's the people whose homes are raided, the people who have been humiliated and harassed, the women afraid to leave their homes, the parents afraid to send their children to school, the people who have less power even than under United Nations sanctions prior to the invasion, less access to safe drinking water.

If you look back over this occupation, at each six-month marker, the situation is worse. You think it can't get worse, but it does. And it will continue to get worse if the United States stays.

WHAT ARE the real interests of the U.S. government in maintaining the occupation?

IRAQ IS of strategic value to the U.S. government for two reasons: oil and geography.

Iraq has the world's second-largest oil reserves and sits in a region with two-thirds of global oil reserves, as well as increasingly important natural gas resources.

The United States has been committed for decades to controlling Middle Eastern oil. That strategic commitment has increased in recent years, as supplies have declined and oil has become more and more expensive to extract from the earth (Iraq, by contrast, still has some of the highest grade and cheapest oil to extract in the world).

Key economic and political--and potential military--rivals to the United States actually import far more of their energy from the Middle East than the United States does. Washington is determined to prevent China and India and other countries from becoming “peer competitors,” as they are called in U.S. national security documents.

In other words, the United States wants to be the country best able to use oil as a weapon against other countries.

Washington elites understand that hegemony in the Middle East is essential for global hegemony. So now that the U.S. government is in Iraq and has made all these claims about how Iraq would become part of a broad democratic transition in the Middle East, the credibility of the United States as an imperial power is at stake.

The ability of the United States to intervene politically, economically and militarily in the affairs of other countries around the world depends on the legitimacy of its power.

For years after the U.S. defeat in the Vietnam War, the imperial might of the United States was constrained. Washington war planners have been trying to remove those barriers, but they now risk creating an "Iraq syndrome." So they have a lot on the line, and have a tremendous amount at stake in "winning" the war in Iraq.

THE MAINSTREAM media constantly refer to Iraqis who oppose the occupation as "terrorists" or "Saddam loyalists" or "religious fanatics." What are the actual reasons for the resistance?

PEOPLE HAVE every right to resist having their country illegally invaded and occupied. To resist having their cities wrapped in barbed wire and put under curfew. To resist having their homes raided, having racist graffiti scrawled on their homes, being arrested and tortured for the crime of being Iraqi.

If you ask U.S. soldiers why Iraqis are resisting the occupation, many have a much clearer picture than the one we get in the U.S. media. "If someone invaded Texas, we'd do the same thing," observed one soldier, Lt. Col. Kim Keslung.

Iraqis have a long history of resisting colonial occupation, so it really should come as no surprise that they should be opposing another foreign power claiming to be their liberators.

THE U.S. has stoked sectarian conflict in Iraq as part of a "divide-and-rule" strategy. Is Iraq headed toward a civil war?

THE LONGER the U.S. occupation of Iraq continues, the greater the chances are that Iraq will have a civil war. There is nothing inevitable about this, but we certainly can't rule it out.

Shia and Sunni have lived side by side in Iraq, worked together and intermarried for decades, with nothing remotely like the sectarian conflict we now see breaking out in Iraq. The more than 12 years of United Nations sanctions, driven by the United States, and the 2003 invasion and occupation have badly undermined secular and nationalist currents in Iraq, and fueled sectarian and reactionary religious groups.

After years of arming the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, the United States now is arming Kurdish and Shia militias that have carried out murderous attacks on Sunnis, provoking reprisal attacks. The new government set up by the United States is based on sectarian and ethnic principles, further encouraging the conditions that could lead to civil war.

But the main conflict in Iraq today remains the one between pro-occupation and anti-occupation forces, not between Sunni and Shia, as the establishment media would have us think.

Most Iraqis remain strongly opposed to the occupation. And the main source of violence today remains the U.S., UK, and allied international occupation forces.

SOME PEOPLE say that the U.S. shouldn't withdraw immediately because this would cause more violence and instability, and ultimately make things worse for ordinary Iraqis. What's the case for immediate withdrawal?

THE INVASION of Iraq has made the world a far more unstable and dangerous place.

It has been disastrous for the Iraqi people and has needlessly claimed the lives of more than 2,300 U.S. soldiers--disproportionately young men from small towns across this country with little economic opportunity. And it has increased the likelihood of civil war.

But the United States has no right to be in Iraq in the first place. The war was sold to a skeptical public through a series of lies--about weapons of mass destruction, al-Qaeda's links to Iraq and so on--that were meant to justify denying Iraq's sovereignty. None of those claims was true.

But now we have a new set of lies. Once the big lies about al-Qaeda and WMD were exposed, the Bush administration found a new mantra: We are bringing democracy to Iraq. We are rebuilding Iraq. We are preventing civil war.

We have seen a revival of the white-man's-burden argument that was used to justify the British, French and earlier colonial empires. This is the idea that we have to "bring democracy" to backward peoples to civilize them.

But the occupation is the opposite of genuine democracy and self-determination for the Iraqi people. This colonial occupation, like earlier ones in history, uses democracy only as a pretext, while actually working to deny Iraqis a genuine role in determining their own future.

<p>If there were genuine democracy--if it were up to Iraqis--the first thing that would happen is that the United States and its international coalition partners would be forced to leave Iraq.</p>

The second thing is that Iraqi oil would be renationalized.

Poll after poll has shown that the vast majority of Iraqis want the occupation to end immediately, and that they see U.S. and coalition troops as occupiers not liberators.

In a Gallup poll conducted not too long after the invasion, in fact, only 1 percent of Iraqis said they thought the aim of the U.S. invasion was to "bring democracy" and 5 percent thought it was to "help the Iraqi people." That's about the same number of African Americans in the United States--2 percent--who approve of the job President Bush is doing.

When asked the real reasons for the invasion, most Iraqis felt the reasons had to do with oil and a reordering of the Middle East to further entrench U.S. and Israeli interests. And in that view, they are certainly right.

The United States didn't invade Iraq because of WMD or human rights or democracy, but because it saw an opportunity after 9/11 to gain further control over the oil-rich Middle East, and to extend its hegemony in the region and thereby the world.

EVEN THOUGH public opinion has shifted decisively against the war, the antiwar movement hasn't grown in numbers or confidence. What needs to be done to move forward?

AN ENORMOUS gap exists between the level of antiwar sentiment and the degree to which that sentiment has been organized into protest--especially the kind of protest that could have an impact on the people in Washington who are prosecuting this war.

The antiwar movement has made a series of missteps--the biggest of which was throwing so much of its energy into trying to elect a pro-war candidate, John Kerry, in the last presidential election.

The Democrats are not an antiwar party and are not going to be the standard-bearers of the anti-occupation message. They are as committed to winning the war in Iraq as the Republicans are. They have only tactical differences over how best to do it.

A number of antiwar groups are now repeating the mistake they made with Kerry by focusing their energies on the mid-term congressional elections. That strategy is one major reason we didn't have a national coordinated demonstration on the third anniversary of the occupation, which was a serious mistake.

The antiwar movement has also downplayed politics, to its detriment, thinking somehow that we'll reach a mythical, nonexistent "Middle America" if we drain our movement of any political content.

But you can't explain what is happening in Iraq, in the Middle East, or in the broader "war on terror," without talking about politics.

You need politics to be able to counter all the arguments about why we can't pull the troops out of Iraq.

And you can't build an effective antiwar movement in this country without challenging the anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia that have been used to sell this war.

But there are real signs that we can turn the tide. On their own, people are turning against the war and getting to the point where they want to take action.

While the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have now cost more than \$300 billion and the Pentagon's annual budget is more than \$400 billion, budgets for early childhood education programs, health care, day care, libraries and basic social services are being slashed drastically around the country.

We need to involve larger numbers of people facing budget cuts, attacks on their jobs and unions, and violations of their civil liberties, as well as more and more soldiers and

veterans, and family and friends of those in the military, to demand all foreign troops in Iraq be brought home now.

Unions and city councils have passed resolutions against the occupation that can serve as models for raising the issue of the war and occupation in our workplaces and communities.

Recruitment for the military is down, especially among African Americans, which shows that counter-recruitment efforts are beginning to have an impact. This also explains why there have been such intense attacks on counter-recruitment activities of groups like the Campus Antiwar Network.

People's views on the war in Iraq, like during Vietnam, are correlated strongly to race and class. The less money you earn, the more likely you are to oppose the war. Seventy-nine percent of African Americans think the war in Iraq was a mistake.

Millions of people sympathize with the aims of the antiwar movement, but have not yet been mobilized for actions.

We need to find ways to involve these wider audiences in our movement, and to connect local actions with coordinated national actions that can help people to overcome the pervasive sense of isolation and atomization that so many feel.

So we really need to fight on many fronts: supporting counter-recruitment, confronting government and military officials about the human costs of this war and the lies they use to justify it, exposing war profiteers, **encouraging and protecting soldiers who speak out and who resist their orders or service**, working with veterans groups and military families' groups.

We can end this war.

The future of the world, not just Iraq, depends on it.

Immigrants From South And Central America "Are More Educated Than Your Average North-American Educated Middle Class Mall Shopper"

From: Ed Pearl
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2006

March 29, 2006, From: Anna Kunin [Excerpt]

People do not leave their homes, countries and villages where their families have thousands of years of roots to brave a journey fraught with danger and hardship with

only the clothes on their back, only to arrive in a country where they face a questionable future; where they are confronted daily with racism and the message that they are not wanted, out of a love of adventure.

They are here because they have been forced into such miserable poverty due to the neo-liberal policies imposed by our government that they cannot survive in their homes. They are forced to leave or they will die. It's as simple as that.

Everybody should make it a point to see the film "Wetback", which gives a glimpse into what that journey is like for so many; where immigrants from South and Central America knowingly face loss of life and limbs trying to board a freight train known as the train of death which will move them through Mexico to the north.

People don't want to leave their homes, their family, their life, to suffer and do backbreaking work; nobody does.

You wouldn't, I don't.

So why does so much of this discussion center around the idea of hordes and masses converging on us to use our hard earned resources....as if this is the only motivation?

Another thing that is a glaring issue ...and even more irritating when it is espoused from the so called liberal-left, is this paternalistic and condescending idea that "these people" are less educated than the workers here.

In fact, if people would bother to learn Spanish, and talk to your gardeners, your housekeepers, the maintenance guy at your office, you would discover that the majority of "these people" are highly educated, can quote the great poets Borges and Neruda, understand world history, are trained in critical thinking, have homes full of books and children that read them, and in short, are more educated than your average North-American educated middle class mall shopper.

Anna Kunkin

Comment: T

The price of labor tends to fall to its average cost of production.

With global commerce moving at great speed, and travel costs reduced to a minimum, the protection of the wages of U.S. workers afforded by distance has been eliminated in those commercial activities where things are made to be sold.

Therefore, as a general tendency, the price of labor in the United States will fall to the average world labor price, determined by the cost of the production and education of the labor to be employed.

That is inevitable, provided one assumes the continued existence of the mode of production and appropriation we call capitalism.

The United States can't survive without imported labor: it represents the entry of the world labor price average into the productive system, and that system must have it to survive.

The American worker can't survive with imported labor driving wages ever lower. U.S. real (adjusted for inflation) wages peaked in 1972, according to Federal Reserve statistics. They have been in decline ever since.

It would appear that the system of production and appropriation known as capitalism has itself has become malignant.

Perhaps it is time to dispense with it.

Between equal rights, force decides, as Marx once put it.

Your Deluxe Empire: An Owner's Manual

March 28, 2006 by Julian Jackson, Antiwar.com

Thank you, U.S. citizens and taxpayers, for your wise purchase of the latest, top-of-the-range Mark 99 Empire, the latest in a long line of highly expensive, unsuccessful, and impermanent empire products.

If you take care of your empire, it will give you many months/years/decades/centuries of hegemony, and will be the envy of lesser imperialists.

However, all our empires are built from a multiplicity of incompatible components by underpaid and undermotivated imperial citizens ("slaves" in Marks 1-32), so bits continually break or fall off.

Constant military maintenance and endless diplomatic efforts will be necessary.

You will notice a hopper in the top labeled "Money In": this is where a continuous stream of cash is essential to keep your empire functioning.

On the certified environmentally unfriendly fascia, built of freshly logged rainforest hardwoods from a special environmental protection area, you will see the Front Bonus Panel, which resembles a fruit machine: here in the drawer marked "Loot," you will – from time to time – find a payout of all sorts of wonderful goodies: gold, gems, vital resources, finished luxury goods, nubile females (nubile males were an option for our ancient Greek customers, regrettably no longer purchasing from us), and a wide variety of the other prizes our discerning customers demand.

Warranty

Your empire is customized and ruggedized specially for you. It is unique.

However, because of supply difficulties, empires being a specialty product only for the wealthiest and most confident of nations, your empire was partially constructed from pieces belonging to other empires, including our award-winning, since-discontinued Mark 92 British Empire, as well as the French, German, Ottoman, Russian, and Japanese empires.

Thus, no warranty is offered.

All sales are final, and your empire is nonreturnable.

You may find you can exchange parts with other empires; however, the usual practice is for bits to remove themselves, declaring independence ("seceding"), or for one empire to be gobbled up by another up-and-coming empire.

As stated in your specifications, the "Soft Power" switch has been permanently configured to the off position. This will result in increased wear and tear on your empire, as you will have to resort to military force more often than others with similar products, which have the option of using concessions and diplomacy.

Most empires keep their owners fully occupied for a long time – our first continent-spanning product, the Mark 5 Roman kept going for hundreds of years, and the Mark 5b Byzantine continued for several hundred years more after some of its main components were gone.

However, users these days are far less diligent with their empires. Indeed, the Romans' descendants broke the Mark 88 Italian Colonial Empire (1936-47) through careless handling.

The key factor is liquid fuel: besides money, empires need a constant supply of fresh blood.

Neglect this, and it's like forgetting to put oil in your vehicle: the whole thing seizes up pretty quickly.

Fortunately, empires can run on any kind of blood, supplied by (a) their own citizens, (b) foreign mercenaries (or "contractors"), and of course (c) what we call the "conquerees"; many successful empires try to limit the waste of (a) by substituting (b) and (c).

This will prolong the life span of your empire, but it is more difficult a balancing act than it might seem at first. Once you start an empire, it's difficult to stop shedding blood without getting out of the game entirely.

Helpful Hints To Keep Your Empire Going

Terminology note: we use the term "Friction Events" to delineate those occurrences that upset the smooth running of your empire.

We deplore the use of the words terrorism, war, rebellion, and insurrection.

Indeed one J. Christ, whom Empire Mark 5 labeled an insurgent, is today generally regarded as a larger-than-life figure; ironically, he later became the inspiration for our highly successful Portuguese and Spanish models, as well as the multi-part Crusades series ("You can't just do one Crusade, you gotta pop the whole lot!").

You can expect Friction Events: these can be internal (rebellions, strikes, and passive resistance) or external (attacks on your empire, either overtly or covertly, by single nations or groups of them, particularly if you are the top empire at any one time).

The latter require what is called "Balance of Power Strategy," which gave our European customers centuries of dedicated play. (Please note: both France and Germany complained that after pouring millions of people into the top hopper, all they won was Alsace-Lorraine several times.)

As always, we listen to our customers: by increasing the playing area, we are trying to avoid duplication (Balkans excluded).

Note that the new prize Iraq is in no way the same as Mesopotamia (1914-1932), won and lost by the British in an earlier edition. The spelling is quite different.

Most parts of your empire should not stain your conscience, but if you are of a sensitive disposition, please try it out in a non-staining area of your personality as we cannot be held responsible for any morality problems caused by lack of imperial callousness and xenophobia.

Getting Out Of Your Empire

All empires come to an end. Some finish abruptly, leaving impressive, enigmatic ruins (e.g., Mark 29, the Mayans), some are crushed militarily, some just implode, and others run down slowly as they deplete their resources.

Empires are as addictive as Pringles or heroin: once you are in imperial mode, you cannot give up. Nor can your empire remain stationary; it can only expand or contract.

This makes ceasing very difficult. Although one of our best customers (the French) did manage to stop quite quickly in their Mark 62 (1797-1815) after their "invincible" army was defeated and their emperor sent to St. Helena, after a short break of less than half a century they were at it again. The British claim that they had the best disengagement post-1945, but they had to pour a lot of other peoples' blood into the hopper (e.g., 1 million Indians during the partition of their country in 1947).

The Russians (another excellent customer) had their game taken off them in 1989, but couldn't keep away and are now considered up and running again (they also like to play with the "Soft Power" switched off for a more challenging game).

Our longest-running model, the Mark 3 Chinese, is still in play; however, the reserved Chinese style of empire-building is too gradualist to attract the attention of any but the most discerning of imperialism fans – though some experts do consider them to be the empire to watch in coming years (someone has to be the last man standing).

Finally, thank you for bringing civilization to whomever with your unique combination of civilizing weapons.

We value your patronage and hope you will purchase the upgrades to your existing kit. Coming soon: Iran – the ME Extension Pack – more of the same lies, with added bloodshed. Product recall: Product No. 46, the Holy Roman Empire, has been withdrawn from circulation now it has been established that it was neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire; we apologize for any inconvenience caused.

OCCUPATION REPORT

2003: Sowing The Wind 2006: Reaping The Whirlwind



A former Iraqi soldier argues with U.S. soldiers during a protest June 2, 2003 in Baghdad. The protesters, former Iraqi soldiers and army officers, were demanding their wages for the past three months and urged the U.S. not to dissolve the Iraqi Army. (AP Photo/Bullit Marquez)

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

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

Bush To Iraqis: Time To Get A Government

[Thanks to DG, who sent this in. He writes: What kind of paternalistic bullshit? You can't have it both ways. "I respect your right to govern... but I'm gonna tell you WHAT to do, WHEN to do it, and HOW it should be done." The US doesn't want Iraqis to run their own lives. If so, then why have they ignored this demand for the last three years?]

Mar. 29, 2006 DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON: President Bush expressed frustration Wednesday that Iraqis have so far failed to form a unity government, but he said withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq too early would damage U.S. security.

"I want the Iraqi people to hear I've got great confidence in their capacity to self-govern," Bush said.

"I also want the Iraqi people to hear, it's about time you get a unity government going. "In other words, Americans understand you're newcomers to the political arena. But pretty soon it's time to shut her down and get governing."

***Poor Little George:*
Iraq Leaders Won't Even Open His
Letter;
Refuse To Meet With His
Messenger Boy**

March 31, 2006 SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press Writer

A letter from President Bush to Iraq's supreme Shiite spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, was hand-delivered earlier this week but sits unread and untranslated in his office, according to a key al-Sistani aide.

The aide - who has never allowed use of his name in news reports, citing al-Sistani's refusal to make any public statements himself - told The Associated Press Tuesday that the ayatollah laid the letter aside because of increasing "unhappiness" over what senior Shiite leaders see as American meddling in Iraqi attempts to form their first, permanent post-invasion government.

The aide said the person who delivered the Bush letter - he would not identify the messenger by name or nationality - said it carried Bush's thanks to al-Sistani for calling for calm among his followers in preventing the outbreak of civil war after a Shiite shrine was bombed late last month.

The messenger also was said to have explained that the letter reinforced the American position that Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari should not be given a second term. Al-Sistani has not publicly taken sides in the dispute but rather has called for Shiite unity.

The al-Sistani aide said Shiite displeasure with U.S. involvement was so deep that dignitaries in the holy city of Najaf refused to meet Khalilzad on Wednesday during ceremonies commemorating the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

But on Saturday, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad carried a similar letter from Bush to a meeting with Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the largest Shiite political organization, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

The al-Sistani aide said Shiite displeasure with U.S. involvement was so deep that dignitaries in the holy city of Najaf refused to meet Khalilzad on Wednesday during ceremonies commemorating the death of the Prophet Muhammad. The Afghan-born Khalilzad is a Sunni Muslim.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Conservative Candidate Caught
Faking Photo:
He Said It Was His Visit To Iraq;
It Was Shopping Street In Turkey**

[Thanks to Mark S, who sent this in. He writes: "Thomas, I didn't see this story on your most recent post: You are a hero in the minds of many . . . keep hammering!"

[Reply: The real heroes are the members of the armed forces, veterans, and military family members, and the civilians, who are reaching out to today to make contact with anti-war troops. GI Special records what people do: those who act make everything else possible, including GI Special.]

March 30, 2006 Carla Marinucci, San Francisco Chronicle Political Writer [Excerpts]

A leading conservative California congressional candidate who has made support for the war in Iraq a central issue acknowledged Wednesday that a campaign Web site photo -- billed as a peaceful street scene taken during his recent trip to Baghdad -- was actually photographed in Turkey.

Howard Kaloogian, the former GOP assemblyman running for the seat vacated by disgraced 50th Congressional District Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, said using the photo was "a stupid mistake" and acknowledged in an interview Wednesday that it was brought to his attention recently by bloggers and activists on the left.

The campaign posted the photo from Kaloogian's July trip to Iraq, a mission dubbed the "Truth Tour" and organized to "tell the American people about the accomplishments (troops) are making in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the fight against terrorism," according to the tax-exempt group Move America Forward, a conservative grassroots organization Kaloogian helped found.

The caption read that "we took this photo of downtown Baghdad while we were in Iraq" which is "much more calm and stable than what many people believe it to be. But, each day the news media finds any violence occurring in the country and screams and shouts about it -- in part because many journalists are opposed to the U.S. effort to fight terrorism."

But bloggers on the popular liberal Daily Kos Web site revealed the photo depicted a street scene in Turkey.

With two weeks until the April 11 special election to replace Cunningham in the San Diego County congressional district, Kaloogian's mistake may be the latest cautionary tale about the unforgiving transparency of political campaigns in the Internet age.

"It's a warning," says Barbara O'Connor, professor of political communication at Cal State Sacramento. "These campaign sites are fair game for anyone -- and if you put it up, you better be prepared to defend it. ... And that's as it should be."

The candidate said he hadn't recognized the error because "the military asked us to use our discretion and put things on the Internet that were nondescriptive ... (because) if we posted something that was easily identifiable, it could be a target." **[And the dog ate my homework.]**

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

Received:

THE WMD DVD IS NOW AVAILABLE

From: Danny Schechter
To: GI Special
Sent: March 31, 2006

Danny Schechter, News Dissector
Editor, Mediachannel.org
GLOBALVISION
575 8th Avenue
New York, New York 10018
212 246-0202x3006

THE WMD DVD IS NOW AVAILABLE

To buy a copy visit
[Http://www.wmdthefilm.com](http://www.wmdthefilm.com)

To see " The Making and Mission of WMD"
visit: <http://www.hi-movie.com/wmd>

VISIT "DISSECTORVILLE"
Danny Schechter's work and times
<http://www.newsdissector.org/dissectorville>

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)

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.