

GI SPECIAL 4E9:



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

Bush Approval Rating Falls to New Low; Down 3% In One Week

May 8, 2006 By REUTERS

WASHINGTON: President George W. Bush's approval rating fell to 31 percent in a USA Today/Gallup Poll released on Monday, the lowest recorded in the survey and a drop of three percentage points in a single week.

Bush's approval rating, at 34 percent a week ago, tumbled on declining support from conservatives and Republicans.

The poll found 52 percent of conservatives and 68 percent of Republicans approved of Bush's performance, record lows in both categories.

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

“Mission Accomplished” He Said 5.1.03

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

May 1, 2003	Today	
U.S. Troops Wounded	542	17,469
U.S. Troops Killed	139	2,400

[From: thinkprogress.org]

ONE SOLDIER KILLED NEAR TAL AFAR; ONE WOUNDED

5/8/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-05-08C & SAMEER N. YACOUB, Associated Press Writer

TIKRIT, Iraq: A Soldier from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division was killed and another Soldier was wounded May 7 near Tal Afar.

The Soldiers were assisting Iraqi Security Forces clear a building from which several anti-Iraqi forces were firing at civilians, ISF and Coalition Forces.

President Bush had cited Tal Afar as a success story in U.S. and Iraqi efforts to suppress the insurgency.

IED KILLS SOLDIER SOUTHEAST OF BAGHDAD

06-05-08C

BAGHDAD, Iraq: A Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldier died at approximately 11:10 a.m. today when an improvised-explosive device struck his vehicle during a patrol southeast of Baghdad.

IED Kills Two Maine Guardsmen; Third Badly Burned



Maine Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Dale J. Kelly Jr., of Richmond, Maine, killed May 6, 2006. (AP Photo/Army National Guard)

May 8, 2006 CBS Corporation

An attack on Saturday claimed the lives of two Maine National Guard soldiers, said Maine Governor John Baldacci on Monday.

Sgt. Dale James Kelly Jr. of Richmond, Maine and Sgt. David Michael Veverka of Jamestown, Pennsylvania, both died in the roadside bombing on May 6, 2006.

A third soldier, Pvt. Christopher Fraser, a native of Windsor, Maine, suffered serious injuries and was rushed to Landstuhl, Germany for treatment.

Pa. Soldier Killed, According To Parents

May. 08, 2006 Associated Press, JAMESTOWN, Pa.

A western Pennsylvania soldier was killed by a roadside blast in Iraq, his parents said.

The family of Sgt. David Veverka, 25, of Jamestown, told The Herald newspaper in Sharon that they were awakened by state police and an Army officer at about 2:30 a.m. Sunday.

"They just stood there. I said, 'Please tell me my baby is all right,'" said Carol Polley, Veverka's mother. That is when the Army officer got down on one knee and told her that her son had been killed.

Polley said she and Veverka's stepfather, Jeff Polley, were told that that her son died in military hospital near Baghdad a few hours after the blast that targeted his convoy.

U.S. Defense Department officials said Monday they had no information to release about his death.

Veverka graduated from Jamestown High School in 1998, where he was a standout basketball player. His father and stepmother, Ronald and Judi Veverka, live in Sharon. The Polleys live in West Shenango Township in Crawford County.

Veverka joined the Army to help pay for college and joined the Maine National Guard while studying for his bachelor's degree in wildlife ecology at the University of Maine in Bangor, his family said. His National Guard unit was activated in January and he went to Iraq in mid-March.

"He wasn't afraid, he was excited to go," Carol Polley said. "He said, 'Mom, I'm OK, everything's cool.'"

Ronald Veverka said he never thought about having to deal with his son's death.

"He told us before he left that this was his calling," Veverka said.

Seaford-Area Marine Dies From Wounds Suffered In Fallujah Explosion

05/08/2006 By ANDRE L. TAYLOR, The News Journal

Ralph Palmer knew his nephew, Marine Cpl. Cory L. Palmer, had been injured in an explosion in Iraq on May 1.

"Every day after the accident, I hoped that everything would be alright," he said.

Shortly after midnight on Sunday, however, he learned in a phone call from his brother that the young Marine had died from his injuries while on a flight from Germany to San Antonio.

"I wasn't expecting to hear that news," he said.

As the news spread Monday afternoon and evening, residents across Seaford joined him in mourning. The city's flags are flying at half-staff, at the request of Mayor Edward H. Butler Jr.

Cpl. Palmer was injured in a Humvee explosion near Fallujah about 9:20 p.m., Baghdad time, on May 1, according to a family member.

When Marine officials contacted the injured soldier's parents, Charles and Danna Palmer, they told them that he was injured and would be taken to a hospital in Germany, then to a medical center in San Antonio, Ralph Palmer said.

Once in the air, however, Cpl. Palmer experienced complications from his injuries, Ralph Palmer said, which forced an emergency landing in Nova Scotia.

As Charles and Danna Palmer anxiously waited in San Antonio for their son to land, they learned that he had died en route.

"It was just his time to go, I guess," Ralph Palmer said.

IED Hits U.S. Convoy In Baghdad: Casualties Not Announced

5.8.06 (CNN)

At noon, a roadside bomb exploded near a U.S. military convoy in Baghdad. One military vehicle was damaged and a number of Iraqi civilians were wounded.

IED Hits U.S. Convoy Near Najaf: Casualties Not Announced

May 8, 2006 SAMEER N. YACOUB, Associated Press Writer

A roadside bomb exploded near a U.S. convoy on a road between Najaf and Karbala, two of the country's most sacred cities for religious Shiites. Witnesses reported casualties.

**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)

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT A CROOKED POLITICIAN WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE, SO HE WILL LOOK GOOD.

That is not a good enough reason.



U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Angel Samano, of Rowland Heights, California, patrolling in Karmah April 23, 2006. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two Italian Soldiers Killed, Four Wounded By IED Near Kabul

5.6.06 Wall St. Journal

TWO Italian soldiers were killed by an IED near Kabul as they raced to help Afghan police who were under attack. Four were wounded.

The Great Afghan Reconstruction Fraud Rolls On: Troops Die So Bush Buddy War Profiteers Can Scoop Up Millions For Doing Nothing

"As with the demise of Enron, the future of Afghanistan is one in which the 'get rich quick' class at the top will escape with their bounty, while the poor who were encouraged to invest heavily in 'reconstruction' and promised prosperity will be left to live in the rubble."

May 6, 2006 By William Fisher, Asia Times Online Ltd.

NEW YORK: "Contractors in Afghanistan are making big money for bad work." That is the conclusion reached in a new report from CorpWatch written by an Afghan-American journalist who returned to her native country to examine the progress of reconstruction.

"The Bush administration touts the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan as a success story," the report said, but claimed that reconstruction has been "bungled" by "many of the same politically connected corporations which are doing similar work in Iraq", receiving "massive open-ended contracts" without competitive bidding or with limited competition.

"These companies are pocketing millions, and leaving behind a people increasingly frustrated and angry with the results," the report said.

Foreign contractors "make as much as US\$1,000 a day, while the Afghans they employ make \$5 per day," the report charged.

Examples cited in the report by author Fariba Nawa included a highway that began crumbling before it was finished; a school with a collapsed roof; a clinic with

faulty plumbing; a farmers' cooperative that farmers can't use; Afghan police and military that, after training, are incapable of providing the most basic security.

Nawa said such examples abounded in the country.

She wrote, "Near Kabul city in the village of Qalai Qazi, Afghanistan, stands a new, bright-yellow health clinic built by American contractor The Louis Berger Group.

The clinic was meant to function as a sterling example of American engineering, and to serve as a model for 81 clinics Berger was hired to build, in addition to roads, dams, schools and other infrastructure, in exchange for the \$665 million in American aid money the company has so far received in federal contracts.

"The problem is, this 'model' clinic was falling apart: the ceiling had rotted away in patches; the plumbing, when it worked, leaked and shuddered; the chimney, made of flimsy metal, threatened to set the roof on fire; the sinks had no running water; and the place smelled of sewage," the report said.

The US-led reconstruction effort has directed substantial resources toward eradicating illicit poppy growing. It awarded a contract worth \$120 million over four years to train opium growers in the cultivation of alternative crops.

One part of the program "instructed farmers in Parwan to grow more vegetables, and promised to find buyers for them both within the country and beyond. The farmers, who normally planted beans and lentils, grew green vegetables as encouraged. But instead of profiting, they lost money. Vegetables flooded the market and drove the price down," the report said.

In another part of the same program, the report said, it was determined that Afghan farmers, who make up about 80% of the working population, needed canals and irrigation systems and the means to get their product to domestic markets more efficiently, to minimize crop loss and to re-establish their access to the international market.

The contractor's solution was to build irrigation canals. But the report pointed out that poppies need very little water or fertilizer to thrive. The result, the report said, was that opium-poppy growers used the water in the canals to grow even more poppies.

The report said the US hired a number of public relations companies to put a positive face on the reconstruction effort. One of them was the Washington-based Rendon Group, which the report said had "close ties to the Bush administration". The Pentagon has awarded Rendon more than \$56 million in contracts since September 11, 2001, "as part of a coordinated effort to disseminate positive press about America and its military in the developing world".

The report said Rendon was also granted a contract in 2004 to train staff at President Hamid Karzai's office in the art of public relations, and "later received another hefty grant of \$3.9 million from the Pentagon to develop a counter-narcotics campaign with the Afghan Interior Ministry - despite objections from Karzai and the State Department".

The report charged that the contracting system used by international donors was broken. It said the US Agency for International Development (USAID) "gives contracts to American companies (and the World Bank and IMF give contracts to companies from their donor countries) who take huge chunks off the top and hire layers and layers of subcontractors who take their cuts, leaving only enough for sub-par construction".

"Quality assurance is minimal; contractors know well they can swoop in, put a new coat of paint on a rickety building, and submit their bill, with rarely a question asked. The result is collapsing hospitals, clinics and schools, rutted and dangerous new highways, a 'modernized' agricultural system that has actually left some farmers worse off than before, and emboldened militias and warlords who are more able to unleash violence on the people of Afghanistan."

Afghans, the report said, "are losing their faith in the development experts whose job is to reconstruct and rebuild their country ...

"What the people see is a handful of foreign companies setting priorities for reconstruction that make the companies wealthy, yet are sometimes absurdly contrary to what is necessary."

Meanwhile, the report said, "The security situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, directly threatening ongoing reconstruction. Some of the fighting is simply the result of deep frustration and distrust among Afghans who no longer believe the international community is looking out for their best interests."

The "deliberate use of warlords and militias in reconstruction efforts has only lent them more credibility and power, further undermining the elected government and fueling a Taliban-led insurgency that continues to gain power".

Professor Beau Grosscup of California State University at Chico agreed. He said, "This report confirms that Afghanistan has been 'Enron-ized' by the Bush administration.

"As with the demise of Enron, the future of Afghanistan is one in which the 'get rich quick' class at the top will escape with their bounty, while the poor who were encouraged to invest heavily in 'reconstruction' and promised prosperity will be left to live in the rubble."

TROOP NEWS

Hawaiian Senate Wants Their Troops Out Of Iraq

9 April 2006 By David Swanson, Scoop.co.nz

The Hawaii State Senate has passed a resolution "CALLING UPON THE GOVERNOR OF HAWAII TO TAKE STEPS TO WITHDRAW THE HAWAII ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS FROM IRAQ."

After Iraq, Hawaii National Guard Troops Quitting Wholesale

5.7.06 Honolulu Advertiser

Following a difficult deployment to Iraq ["difficult" means getting maimed and killed for Bush's Imperial bullshit], the Hawaii Army National Guard is working to overcome an expected 20 percent to 40 percent exodus from its ranks, a rate double its usual attrition.

***It's Magic!* Sailors, Airmen Turned Into Infantry**

5.8.06 USA Today

The Navy and Air Force are training their sailors and airmen for war duty far from the seas or skies: jobs typically performed by a strained Army in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Navy and Air Force personnel are replacing Army soldiers to carry out such duties as guarding convoys, patrolling bases and watching for homemade bombs, the top killer of U.S. troops in Iraq.

The Navy also is running a prison in Iraq, patrolling rivers and helping to clear and search buildings.

General Chiarelli Makes A Complete Fool Of Himself

5.8.06 Washington Times

A senior U.S. general flew to Iraq's vast desert frontier with Iran and vowed to stop what he said was the smuggling of bomb materials from Iran that is wreaking havoc among American troops.

Landing by helicopter under the gun sights of Iranian border guards perched on a watchtower across the frontier, Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the No. 2 U.S. general in Iraq,

said U.S. and Iraqi forces securing the border will do "all we can" to stop roadside bombs.

[Everybody with an IQ greater than that of a lump of shit knows by now that Iraq had such an abundance of weapons and munitions of all kinds scattered from one end of the country to the other, including everything needed for your handy home IED kit, that it would take years to find and destroy it all. And this silly fool is babbling about Iran.

[The idea that materials have to be smuggled in from Iran makes about as much sense as looking for people smuggling sand in from Iran. And while Chiarelli stands there with his dick in his hand, posing for the press, and trying to pretend he's not just one more useless piece of shit wearing a general's uniform, back in the real world, which he obviously knows nothing about, troops keep on dying.

[OK, yeah, to be fair, he probably knows it's a lot of bullshit too, but whining about Iran is very fashionable now back in Washington. So, to give him the benefit of the doubt, he's not brain dead, he's just an despicable opportunist kissing ass for his next promotion. That's what generals do to occupy their time. T]

Marines Escorting Body Of Fallen Comrade Are Stripped Of Dress Blue Coats, Harassed At Airport By "Security" Scumbags

May 05, 2006 By Gidget Fuentes, Marine Times staff writer

It wasn't the city of "brotherly love" for a trio of Marine noncommissioned officers escorting the body of a fallen Marine through the Philadelphia airport.

Each decked in their blue dress uniforms, the three enlisted Marines made their way through a security checkpoint at the Philadelphia International Airport about noon on May 3 when they were pulled aside by security workers with the federal Transportation Safety Administration.

The Marines, a sergeant and two corporals, were escorting the body of Sgt. Lea R. Mills from Dover Air Force Base, Del., to his family in Gulfport, Miss. Mills, who was married and lived in Oceanside with his wife, was killed in Iraq on April 28 by a roadside bomb. He was one of three leathernecks killed that day in Iraq's Anbar province.

They were brothers-in-arms. Like Mills, the Marine escorts are members of the Camp Pendleton-based 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion.

The trio had to go through the terminal's security in order to reach their flight that would take them to Houston and make sure that Mills' body was properly placed on the airplane. While their uniforms likely would trigger the metal detector, they had figured they would be able to zip through the screening process and get on with their business.

"Wearing the blues, the metal detector is going to go off," said Sgt. John Stock, a mechanic, who was accompanied by Cpls. Aaron Bigalk and Jason Schadeburg.

But as the Marines went through the initial screener in their dress blues, they were stopped by several TSA agents. Each was told to remove their dress uniform blouse, belt and black dress shoes, which were scanned by the detector, as the agents scanned them with hand-held detecting wands.

"They had me take off my shoes and ran them through the screening," Stock said, speaking by phone May 5 from Gulfport, where the men are helping with Mills' family and funeral support. "We all got searched."

Then they were taken to a nearby room, where TSA workers patted them down.

At one point, Stock's shoes disappeared, leaving him to frantically search for them and retrieve them from a TSA agent. Separated from their belongings, which included the flag that they bore that would drape Mills' casket for the rest of the journey home, they worried about getting to the gate in time to ensure his safe placement in the airplane.

Time, it seemed like a half-hour, clicked by. "I was like, hey, we need to be on the tarmac," Stock recalled. "It just took longer than it should have had to take."

The agents said nothing to explain why all three were singled out for additional search and the Marines didn't protest. "We were just trying to get there as quick as we could," he added.

In all, it was a humiliating experience that left them angry.

"They could probably tell that I was pissed off," said Stock, who noted that he's never encountered that kind of search when going through airport security in uniform.

"I understand if I was in civilian clothes. But with what we were wearing and what we were doing ... ," he said, noting that "we had the flag with us."

A call into TSA's public affairs office in the D.C. area was not returned as of press time.

British Army Had To Use Mercenaries To Find Soldiers' Bodies:

“We Are Potentially Facing Disaster”

Collins said that British forces had long since "abandoned" Basra and the rescue team had to be led to the scene by private security firms to recover the bodies. Once there, they had no equipment to tackle the flames and had to borrow fire extinguishers from the security firms.

May 8, 2006 LONDON (AP)

A former British army colonel said Monday that the fatal crash of a British military helicopter in Iraq was a "double tragedy" because it highlighted the military's lack of resources in fighting the insurgency.

Col. Tim Collins, speaking at the Oxford Union, said British troops in Iraq were in danger, and that the British government faced the "clear choice" of either giving them adequate body armor and other resources or withdrawing them from Iraq.

The helicopter crashed Saturday in the southern city of Basra on Saturday, killing the five-member British crew. Apparently downed by a missile or rocket, it hit a two-story house. A crowd of Iraqis cheered and threw stones at British forces who raced to the scene to seal off the area.

Collins said that British forces had long since "abandoned" Basra and the rescue team had to be led to the scene by private security firms to recover the bodies.

Once there, they had no equipment to tackle the flames and had to borrow fire extinguishers from the security firms.

"They are doing an amazing job with no resources," he said. "But we have already, in terms of our mission, failed in southern Iraq and we are potentially facing disaster.

"There is now a very clear choice: Either reinforce and give them body armor and fire extinguishers or accept that we have failed and for the sake of those servicemen and other people around them, get them out."

Company Uses Prison Slave Labor for \$100 Million Military Contract

February 2006 Prison Legal News

The prison and military industrial complexes have collided, with a private military contractor poised to make millions off the sweaty backs of prisoners.

Pennsylvania-based Woolrich Inc. plans to use the labor of federal prisoners to fulfill two multi-million-dollar contracts with the Defense Department, according to an October 2, 2005, article in The Patriot-News.

In April 2005 the company was awarded a 5-year contract worth between \$68 million and \$100 million, to manufacture approximately 75,000 pair of Army pants annually. Woolrich was awarded a second contract in July 2005 for between 5,000 and 25,000 cold-weather jackets per year for air crews. That contract was valued at between \$4 million and \$19 million.

The pants and jackets will be manufactured by federal prisoners earning between \$0.23 and \$1.15 an hour.

Given the low profit margin involved, the company could not be competitive if it paid a wage comparable to that in the community, lamented Woolrich president Roswell Brayton Jr.

And because products for the military must be totally American made, Woolrich was unable to use its overseas sweatshops. Prison slave labor was the next logical step.

Federal prisoners in Atlanta, Georgia, and Beaumont, Texas, are already sewing army combat pants for Woolrich. By the end of 2005, Woolrich sewing operations will commence at prisons in Big Sandy, Kentucky, Yazoo City, Mississippi, and a fifth, as yet undisclosed prison. Manufacturing of the air crew jackets was slated to begin in November 2005 at federal prisons in Miami, Florida, and Safford, Arizona.

Source: The Patriot News

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Insurgents Bomb Iraqi Oil Pipeline

May 8, 2006 SAMEER N. YACOUB, Associated Press Writer

Insurgents bombed an Iraqi oil pipeline south of Baghdad.

The bombing of the pipeline occurred late Sunday near Mussayab city, about 30 miles south of Baghdad, sending up a large plume of black smoke.

The pipeline carries oil from Dora refinery in Baghdad to Mussayab power station, and police Col. Ahmed Mijwal said the attack had closed the station.

Assorted Resistance Action



Police truck following a bomb attack in Baghdad. (AFP/Sabah Arar)

May 8, 2006 SAMEER N. YACOUB, Associated Press Writer & FOCUS News Agency & (Reuters) & CNN & (KUNA)

A car bomb went off near a main courthouse in western Baghdad on Monday, killing at least five people and wounding 10, an Interior Ministry source said. Iraqi courts have passed a string of sentences, including death penalties and life in prison, in recent months against insurgents fighting the U.S.-backed government.

Four personal body guards of the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani were killed last night near Al-Atheem town north of Baghdad, a close presidential source announced on Monday.

The source said in press statements today that a bomb which was planted on the side of the road exploded as a private presidential convoy was passing by near the town.

The source said the Iraqi president was not in the convoy.

In Baghdad, a car bomb exploded near a police patrol on Palestine street in eastern Baghdad on Monday morning, killing two policemen and wounding 12 Iraqis: five policemen and seven civilians, said police Lt. Ahmed Qassim.

In western Baghdad, suspected insurgents stopped a bus carrying Higher Education Ministry employees to work, fatally shooting the driver and wounding a policeman who was working on the bus as a guard, said police Capt. Jamil Hussein.

Guerrillas attacked an Iraqi police checkpoint in Baquba with small arms fire Sunday evening, killing one police officer and wounding two others, a police official said.

Three Iraqi police commandos kidnapped Friday were found. The police commandos were dragged from a car as they drove to work Friday in Khan al-Mahawil, south of Baghdad, police said. They were found Monday shot to death, their bodies lying in an irrigation canal in the same town, police said.

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

**WELCOME TO RAMADI;
HAVE A NICE DAY**



May 8, 2006: Insurgents openly patrol the streets of Ramadi,. REUTERS/Ali Mashadani

OCCUPATION REPORT

Welcome To What The U.S. Occupation Command Called “Secure” Southern Iraq: “They’re Burning American Flags” “They’re Saying, ‘The Americans Won't Leave Except By The Funerals Of Their Sons’”

May 6, 2006 By Borzou Daragahi, L.A. Times Staff Writer

KARBALA, Iraq: A visitor need not go far or search hard to hear and see the anti-American venom that bubbles through this ancient shrine city, which once welcomed U.S. forces as liberators.

“The American ambassador is the gate through which terrorism enters Iraq,” says a banner hanging from the fence surrounding the tombs of Imam Hussein and Imam Abbas, among the most revered martyrs of the Shiite Muslim faith.

A song screeches from a boombox at a nearby CD shop: “If the occupiers come at us, we will plant a bomb underneath them.”

Perceived American missteps, a torrent of anti-U.S. propaganda and a recently emboldened Shiite sense of political prowess have coalesced to make the south a fertile breeding ground for antagonism toward America's presence.

“There is an anger,” said Jaffar Mohammed Asadi, spokesman for Ayatollah Mohammed Taqi Modaresi, a moderate and well-regarded cleric known more for his attempts to boost business in Karbala than for fiery anti-American speeches.

“You can hear it in the slogans at Friday prayers: 'Death to America,' “he said. “They're burning American flags. They're saying, 'The Americans won't leave except by the funerals of their sons.’”

Many Shiites think the U.S. betrayed them in 1991 when then-President George H.W. Bush called on Iraqis to rise up against Hussein but then took no action as the dictator mowed down an uprising in the south.

Moreover, nationalism is a strong current among Iraqi Shiites, and analysts say their anti-Western attitudes were sure to surface some day.

“We had a lot of grace period,” said Graham E. Fuller, a former Mideast-based CIA operative now writing books about the region. “But essentially, no group in Iraq that aspires to rule with legitimacy can act in a way perceived as being pro-American.”

“We agreed with Americans only at the point of removing Saddam Hussein,” said Sheik Abu Mohammed Baghdadi, a cleric in Najaf who is close to Sistani. “The relationship ended at that point.”

“Beside every Cabinet minister there is an American advisor,” said Mohammed Bashar Najafi, son of, and spokesman for, one of Iraq's four grand ayatollahs. “Each province has an American advisor. Each city council has an American advisor.

“The country is occupied, and this occupation is a weight on the chest of Iraq.”

Provincial officials in Basra and Amarah, as well as here in Karbala, have had recent run-ins with American and British military counterparts. Basra's government for a time completely suspended contacts and cooperation with British troops.

In Karbala, “the American soldiers are wandering the streets asking people provocative questions about whether they belong to this militia or that,” said Qazali, the governor. “They've been doing airborne raids without the knowledge of security forces in ways that are terrifying local residents.”

One banner hanging from a government building in Karbala said the blood of Iraqi Shiites “stained the hands of Khalilzad” along with those of his Sunni Arab “deputies.”

“Americans are interfering and not allowing us to control security,” said Fallah Aliyawi, a publisher in Najaf. “Iraqis know better how to enforce security.”

Deadly attacks against U.S., British and allied troops in the region appear to have increased in recent weeks, but the U.S. military says assaults there on allied forces still average less than one a day except in Basra, which has about two a day. [That, mind you, is supposed to be the good news.]

Any call to violent jihad, or holy war, Shiites say, would come only from the senior level of the clergy, the marjaiyah, as it did in the 1920s, when Shiites here rose up against Iraq's British occupiers.

For now, the clergy is watching and waiting, perhaps convinced that it will get what it wants without having to sacrifice more Iraqi blood.

“The marjaiyah is calculating things and counting things according to the benefit of the Iraqi street,” said Najafi, a mid-ranking cleric. “It wants independence with a minimum of losses and a maximum of profit.

“The marjaiyah has not ruled out the option of calling for jihad, and the Americans and their allies best not forget that.”

Notes From A Lost War:

Basra: “No One Waves Back Now”

Patrols in armoured Land Rovers were welcomed with waves from children and soldiers walked through market places fully armed, but wearing their soft berets. Now they cannot go to the toilet on their bases without carrying their helmet and flak jacket.

2006/05/06 Lisa Mitchell, BBC News

The British forces use helicopters in Basra like buses.

Because of the distances between bases, and more importantly because of the dangers of bombs at the sides of roads, they fly in and out of the Army's main base at Basra airport constantly.

Helicopters are increasingly being used to replace vehicle patrols in the region.

I had last been in Basra in March 2004 when the "battle for hearts and minds" was at its height.

Patrols in armoured Land Rovers were welcomed with waves from children and soldiers walked through market places fully armed, but wearing their soft berets.

Now they cannot go to the toilet on their bases without carrying their helmet and flak jacket.

Once seen as the "safe zone" in Iraq, violence has escalated to such a point that a US Embassy report said Basra city is as dangerous now as any of the troubled northern cities.

The RAF patrols the marshlands around the airport. Sometimes they visit villages at night on foot.

A few weeks before I arrived, the RAF found a cache of weapons including mortars and a launcher in one of the homes.

Crude devices, they routinely are used to shell the bases at night, but often miss the target.

But when they hit, they do a lot of damage and left a huge crater in a road on the base when I was there.

They can also down aircraft. Since a surface-to-air missile hit a DHL plane at Baghdad airport, no-one goes anywhere in the air without being armed and wearing protection.

Such incidents are rare in the southern province although they often catch small arms fire as they fly overhead. Pilots say it is easier to see at night.

I went on patrol with the RAF in a helicopter, flying low over Basra city and then out over the isolated hamlets of the marshes.

An airman manned a gun control on the side and one hung out the back.

They still smile and wave at the people below, but no-one waves back now.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

It's The Oil, Stupid:
**Cheney Sucks Up To Local Dictator After
Criticizing Russian Regime For Political
Repression**

5.6.06 By JOHN D. MCKINNON, Wall St. Journal

ASTANA, Kazakhstan: A day after criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin for political repression, Vice President Dick Cheney held a series of friendly meetings with the autocratic leader of Kazakhstan to discuss future U.S. investment in developing its huge oil resources.

The meetings in Kazakhstan's glittering new capital, Astana, underscored just how much oil, and access to it, matter in the current global economy.

**82 Year Old Vet Terrorist Keep From
Doing His Fiendish Deed**

May 04, 2006, Ryan Singel, Wired News

What do you say about an airline screening system that tends to mistake government employees and U.S. servicemen for foreign terrorists?

Newly released government documents show that even having a high-level security clearance won't keep you off the Transportation Security Administration's Kafkaesque terrorist watch list, where you'll suffer missed flights and bureaucratic nightmares.

According to logs from the TSA's call center from late 2004, which black out the names of individuals to protect their privacy, the watch list has snagged:

*A State Department diplomat who protested that "I fly 100,00 miles a year and am tired of getting hassled at Dulles airport, and airports worldwide, because my name apparently closely resembles that of a terrorist suspect."

*A person with an Energy Department security clearance.

***An 82-year-old veteran who says he's never even had a traffic ticket.**

*A technical director at a science and technology company who has been working with the Pentagon on chemical and biological weapons defense.

*A U.S. Navy officer who has been enlisted since 1984.

*A high-ranking government employee with a better-than-top-secret clearance who is also a U.S. Army Reserve major.

*A federal employee traveling on government business who says the watch list matching "has resulted in ridiculous delays at the airports, despite my travel order, federal ID and even my federal passport."

*A high-level civil servant at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

***An active-duty Army officer who had served four combat tours (including one in Afghanistan) and who holds a top-secret clearance.**

*A retired U.S. Army officer and antiterrorism/force-protection officer with expertise on weapons of mass destruction who was snared when he was put back on active-duty status while flying on a ticket paid for by the Army.

*A former Pentagon employee and current security-cleared U.S. Postal Service contractor.

Also held up was a Continental Airlines flight-crew member traveling as a passenger, who complained to TSA, "If I am safe enough to work on a plane then I should be fine to be a passenger sleeping."

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.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

***Class War In Mexico:* Mexican Police Kill Two Workers; Injure Dozens at Steel Plant; The Workers Go To War And Take Back Their Plant**

April , 2006 By Dan La Botz, Mexican Labor News & Analysis Vol. 11, No. 4 [Excerpts]

The struggle between the Mexican government and the Mexican Mine Workers Union which has gone on now for more than two months, took a violent turn when police killed two workers while storming a plant held by strikers in Lázaro Cárdenas on April 20.

Workers and townspeople retook the plant, but were then besieged by the police.

Parts of the plant have been taken over by the Mexican Army and the Mexican Navy. Government human rights organizations have gone to the scene to investigate and prevent further loss of life.

Other unions are dispatching their members to Lázaro Cárdenas to support the mine workers. Reports from around the country indicate attacks on miners by authorities or vigilantes in other parts of the country.

Police shot and killed two workers, five were gravely injured, and over 40 others were wounded, most by gunshots, when authorities launched an assault to expel striking workers occupying the SICARTSA steel mill in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, Mexico on April 20. Reports from the scene suggest that others may also have been killed or may die from their wounds. A video taken at the scene and released to the press shows Michoacán state police taking aim at strikers and police later admitted shooting at them.

In the latest stage of a months-long struggle between the government of President Vicente Fox and the Mexican Miners' and Metal Workers Union (SNTMMRM), some 800 state and federal police, using tear gas, clubs and fire arms, stormed the steel plant held by 500 workers.

The SICARTSA steelworkers are members of Local 271 of the Miners union. The workers have been on strike since April 2, demanding the reinstatement of the union's top official who had been removed from office by the government and replaced by a new leader close to Mexican mining companies.

Grupo Villacero, the owner of the plant, reportedly called upon the federal secretary of public security to send in the police to remove the striking workers.

Killed by the police were Mario Alberto Zúñiga, a worker at the SICARTSA steel plant and Héctor Álvarez Gómez, a union representative of the nearby Mittal Steel company. Two other workers were severely wounded: Luis Alberto Zárate, who was shot through the lungs, and Cirilo Quiñones, who was shot in the chest.

Many other workers were wounded, though less severely, and five had been taken to the Civil Hospital in Morelia, the state capital. Dozens of others were treated in the Mexican Institute of Social Security Hospital in Lázaro Cárdenas, the city where the steel mill is located.

Sometime later, union members and townspeople armed with rocks and metal bars retook the plant from the police. In the course of the struggle between workers and police one building and more than 30 company and private vehicles were burned and equipment was destroyed.

At 6:00 p.m. on the day of the attack and killings, more than 1,000 women, mothers, wives, and daughters of the steel workers, marched to the plant to call upon the police to stop their violence. Federal and state governments dispatched human rights agencies to the site of the conflict. Leaders of the National Front for Union Unity and Autonomy (FNUAS) went to the plant to offer support.

There were reports that authorities or vigilantes had engaged in violent attacks on miners in other mining towns in Mexico, though not on the scale at SICARTSA in Lázaro Cárdenas.

The president of the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), José Luis Soberanes Fernández, told the press that the Fox government was responsible for the repression and the killing at SICARTSA.

Fox's presidential spokesman, Rubén Aguilar Valenzuela, said that the violence took place because the Mine Workers Union and the mine workers don't respect the law. And he said the government would not give in to the workers demands that their former union leader, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia be returned to his position as General Secretary.

The Villacero Corporation, which owns SICARTSA, accused the miners of being "terrorists," and defended the actions of the corporation and the government.

The Michoacán Business Coordinating Council praised the government for taking action to evict the strikers from the plant, accused the Miners' union of violence and showed no sympathy for the families of the dead or for the wounded. COMPARMEX, the Mexican Employers Association, also supported the Michoacán authorities for having taken action.

Workers Accuse Government

Local officials of the Mexican mine workers' union held the government of President Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) responsible for the attack by federal police and for the killing of the workers.

They also blamed governor Lázaro Cárdenas Batel of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) for sending in the state police who were also involved. Cárdenas Batel denied responsibility, saying state troops had been unarmed and were only cooperating with the Federal police.

Later, the Michoacán Attorney General admitted that the state police had fired at the workers and video tapes subsequently proved that this was the case. Two high state police officials resigned and the state police have been withdrawn from the plant.

Unions Respond

The new National Front for Union Unity and Autonomy (FNUAS), composed of the National Union of Workers (UNT), the National Union of Mine and Metallurgical Workers's now unofficial leadership, and the Revolutionary Confederation of Workers and Peasants (CROC) had earlier called for a symbolic national one-hour strike on April 28.

Following the April 20 killings FNUAS called upon its members to "organize a caravan" of worker to go to Lázaro Cárdenas to provide a protective ring around the plant, for a mass rally on April 24 in Mexico City, and for other demonstrations of solidarity.

Benedicto Martínez, a co-president of the Authentic Labor Front and a vice-president of the UNT reported to Mexican Labor News and Analysis that among the central demands of the FNUAS were:

- * Recognition of Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, the union leader chosen by the mine workers.
- * End of repression at the SICARTSA plant.
- * Removal of Francisco Xavier Salazar Sáenz, the Secretary of Labor.
- * Political trial of president Vicente Fox by the Congress (impeachment).
- * Punishment for those responsible for the violence against the workers.

The AFL-CIO, the United Steel Workers of America (USW), the United Electrical Workers (UE) and other labor unions have expressed their solidarity with the Mexican Mine Workers union in its struggle for union autonomy.

Background: The Pasta de Conchos Accident

The struggle between the National Union of Mining and Metallurgical Workers of Mexico (SNTMMRM) has arisen from both labor union issues and political causes. The explosion and cave in at the Pasta de Conchos mine in San Juan de Las Sabinas, Coahuila in northern Mexico on February 19 trapped and killed 65 miners. The miners' union leader, Gómez Urrutia, blamed the employer, Grupo México, calling the deaths "industrial homicide."

The Pasta de Conchos cave-in set off a storm. Throughout Mexico, politicians, academics, intellectuals, and ordinary people criticized the mining company. The Grupo México stock fell. Copper and other commodity prices rose.

The Mexican Catholic Bishops Conference criticized the employer's negligence and called for an international investigation, expressing their lack of confidence in the Mexican government.

While miners throughout the country mourned the death of their brothers and complained of health and safety conditions in their own mines, there was no official or wildcat strike in the immediate aftermath of the accident.

The Political Issue: The Ousting of Gómez Urrutia

Then, on February 28, the Mexican Secretary of Labor Francisco Xavier Salazar Sáenz announced that Gómez Urrutia was not actually the head of the union, but that the real general secretary was Elías Morales Hernández.

The government's action was based in part on Mexican labor law known as "taking note" (toma de nota), a process by which the government legally recognizes the elected officers of labor unions. Six years earlier Morales Hernández had appealed to the Secretary of Labor Carlos Abascal Carranza, arguing that he had actually been elected and should be the new head of the union. The government had rejected the appeal by Morales Hernández and in 2002 Secretary of Labor Abascal Carranza recognized Gómez Urrutia as the general secretary.

Why had the Mexican government suddenly opted to overturn its own earlier decision, recognize the dissident, and bring him out of retirement to assume leadership of the miners' union? The answer has partly to do with the miners' union and the recent accident, but just as much to do with the Congress of Labor (CT), the umbrella organization that brings together most of the largest Mexican labor federations and industrial unions.

The Official Labor Movement in Crisis

In mid-February 2006 miners' union leader, Gómez Urrutia, joined together with Isaías González, head of the Revolutionary Confederation of Workers and Peasants (CROC), to challenge the election of Victor Flores Morales, head of the Mexican Railroad Workers Union (STFRM), for control of the Congress of Labor. Gómez Urrutia was trying to position himself to become the top leader of the numerically most important Mexican labor organization.

His ambitions troubled many.

The Congress of Labor (CT), which brings together most of the "official" unions of Mexico, historically formed part of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the ruling party of Mexico. The CT had historically backed the PRI's candidates, supported the PRI's policies, and served in the Mexican Congress as PRI senators and congressmen.

More recently the CT had worked out a modus vivendi with Mexican president Vicente Fox, collaborating with his National Action Party (PAN). Napoleón Gómez Urrutia's attempt to take over the CT not only challenged railroad workers union leader Victor Flores, it also worried the PRI and PAN.

Rival Leaders

Victor Flores had been the ideal labor union leader of both PRI and PAN governments. He had worked closely with the government to carry out the privatization of the Mexican railroads, leading to their sale to the Union Pacific and the Kansas City railroads.

When rank-and-file railroad workers had protested, Victor Flores had cooperated with the government to have them fired—easy enough with some 100,000 railroad workers losing their jobs in the privatization—and if that did not work he had sent his thugs to beat them and threaten them with murder.

While somewhat volatile—as a PRI Congressman Victor Flores had once tried to strangle another representative—he was loyal to the government's program of neoliberalism.

Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, on the other hand, from the government's point of view, seemed to be becoming a loose canon. In some ways this was odd. Gómez Urrutia had inherited the leadership of the mine from his father Napoleón Gómez Sada, and both had been typical charros, that is, union bureaucrats absolutely loyal to the PRI.

They had turned out the vote for the party, collaborated with the employers, and had expelled union activists or leaders who opposed them or supported other political parties. Doing all of those things, they enjoyed the wealth, power and privilege to which their loyalty entitled them.

The Miners' Union in Struggle

Lately, however, Gómez Urrutia had begun to challenge both the employers and the Congress of Labor/PRI leadership.

In June 2005, Mexican miners joined their compañeros in Peru and the United States as more than 10,000 miners carried out a simultaneous protest against Grupo Mexico to demand that the company stop violating workers' rights.

The three unions accused Grupo Mexico of having a policy of repression, exploitation and unwanted involvement in union affairs. The protest was organized by the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) in the United States, the Federation of Metal Workers of Peru (FETIMAP), and the National union of Miners and Metal Workers (SNTMM) of Mexico.

The international solidarity against the Mexican mining company was backed by the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF).

Then, in September 2005, the Mexican Miners and Metal Workers Union won a 46-day strike against two steel companies in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacan, in what may be one of the most important strikes in Mexico in a decade.

The local union and its 2,400 members succeeded in winning an 8 percent wage gain, 34 percent in new benefits, and a 7,250 peso one-time only bonus.

The Mexican miners' union also indicated the ability to impact domestic politics.

The miners' union played a critical role in helping to lead the union bloc that opposed the Fox administration's labor law reform package.

All of these actions threatened to upset the Mexican system of labor control by which the governmental labor authorities, the employers, and the "official" unions of the CT collude to channel and suppress workers.

Then, in February, Gómez Urrutia made a bid to take over the CT, raising the prospect that he would lead labor struggles at a national level.

Clearly at that point the Fox government must have already been looking for a way to get rid of him, when his remarks on Grupo Mexico's "industrial homicide" made him persona non grata not only with the PRI but also with the employers.

Received:

Correction

From: NB
Sent: May 8, 2006
To: GI Special
Subject: The Bourbons

You stated that: "...It was said of the Bourbon line of French kings: "They had learned nothing and forgotten nothing." Their incompetent, corrupt tyranny ended when the French people rose in revolution and chopped the head off the last one".

Er...not exactly.

Louis XVI indeed lost his head in January 1793.

After Waterloo, the Bourbon monarchy was restored, only to be lost again in July 1830 when Charles X tried to 'put the clock back' to the old regime pre - the 14th July 1789.

The good people of Paris rose against him, as they did against Louis, but on that occasion Charles didn't lose his head - merely his throne, for exile in Britain.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/; <http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;

<http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>; <http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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