

## GI SPECIAL 4F8:



[The Veteran, Spring 2006]

## ***Blood For No Oil:***

**“We Didn’t Go In To Grab The Oil. Just The Opposite. We Went In To Control The Oil And Make Sure We Didn’t Get It”**

May 15th, 2006 Democracy Now [Excerpts]

Investigative journalist Greg Palast joins us in the Firehouse Studio to discuss the follow-up to his best-selling book “The Best Democracy Money Can Buy.”

AMY GOODMAN: *Is the war in Iraq a war for oil?*

GREG PALAST: *Is the war in Iraq for oil?*

Yes, it's about the oil, but not for the oil.

In my investigations for Armed Madhouse, I ended up with a story far more fascinating and difficult than I imagined.

**We didn't go in to grab the oil. Just the opposite. We went in to control the oil and make sure we didn't get it.**

**It goes back to 1920, when the oil companies sat in a room in Brussels in a hotel room, drew a red line around Iraq and said, "There'll be no oil coming out of that nation." They have to suppress oil coming out of Iraq. Otherwise, the price of oil will collapse, and OPEC and Saudi Arabia will collapse.**

And so, what I found, what I discovered that they're very unhappy about is a 323-page plan, which was written by big oil, which is the secret but official plan of the United States for Iraq's oil, written by the big oil companies out of the James Baker Institute in coordination with a secret committee of the Council on Foreign Relations.

**I know it sounds very conspiratorial, but this is exactly how they do it. It's quite wild. And it's all about a plan to control Iraq's oil and make sure that Iraq has a system, which, quote, "enhances its relationship with OPEC."**

**In other words, the whole idea is to maintain the power of OPEC, which means maintain the power of Saudi Arabia.**

And this is one of the reasons they absolutely hate Hugo Chavez. As you'll see in next week's Harper's coming out, which is basically an excerpt from the book, Hugo Chavez on June 1st is going to ask OPEC to officially recognize that he has more oil than Saudi Arabia. This is a geopolitical earthquake. And the inside documents from the U.S. Department of Energy, which we have in the book and in Harper's, say, yeah, he's got more oil than Saudi Arabia.

**Bush does not -- you have to remember, he doesn't like cheap oil. When we talk about paying \$3-a-gallon gasoline, Bush's benefactors, donors and his own family collects the \$3 a gallon.**

*AMY GOODMAN: What do you mean?*

GREG PALAST: Well, we're paying three bucks a gallon.

ExxonMobil is collecting \$3 a gallon.

There's a chapter called "Trillion-Dollar Babies."

When Bush came in, we had oil as low as \$18 a barrel. It was like water.

**Bush has successfully built up the price of oil from 18 bucks a barrel to over \$70 a barrel. That's the "mission accomplished." He didn't make a mistake here. That's the "mission accomplished."**

**ExxonMobil, which after Enron is the biggest lifetime donor to the Bush campaigns, its value of its reserves, of its oil reserves, because of the Bush wars and Bush actions, has gone up by almost exactly \$1 trillion in value.**

**Just one company.**

**A trillion-dollar windfall to a single company.**

**That's the Bush benefactors.**

**And you have to look at where's Bush make his money.**

**[He might have mentioned that France and Russia were doing deals with Hussein to bring the Iraqi oil to market. He might have mentioned how devastating that would be to Exxon and other giant oil companies that have nothing left but reserves with very high production costs, and they would suffer financial disaster if Iraqs oil did flood the market, since a huge amount of their production would no longer be profitable. T]**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Graduate From Minturn Dies**

Jun 9, 2006 (AP)

MINTURN, Colo. A Battle Mountain High School graduate who was deployed to Iraq last month died in combat in Mosul, Iraq, his family said Thursday.

John Shaw Vaughan, 23, assigned to the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team based at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, died Wednesday, his uncle, Dick Shaw said.

The military didn't release Vaughan's name, but the Alaskan base confirmed a soldier was killed by small-arms fire in Mosul Wednesday while conducting a dismounted patrol.

Vaughn, a second lieutenant and platoon leader, had participated in the ROTC program at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and had received his officer's commission after graduation last year.

"He was just always an outdoorsman and loved the military," said his mother, Sarah Vaughan. "From the time he was a boy, it was just his dream."

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### **4 U.S. Occupation Munitions Staff Killed**

June 09, 2006 Huntsville Times

Four contractors working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville died Thursday in Iraq when their vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb.

The Huntsville center operates the Coalition Munitions Clearing Program that is responsible for receiving, transporting, segregating and destroying captured or any other munitions posing a danger in Iraq, according to a Corps of Engineers news release.

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**REALLY BAD IDEA:  
NO MISSION;  
HOPELESS WAR:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Matthew Biellik searches an abandoned house for hidden weapons in Tall Afar, Iraq, May 23, 2006. Biellik is from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. (AP Photo/Department of Defense, Jacob N. Bailey)

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## **Three More Fiji Mercenaries Killed**

9 June 2006 Radio New Zealand International

Another three Fijian security guards have been killed in an insurgent attack in Iraq.

Radio Legend reports that the three died near Baghdad last night as a bomb was exploded under their convoy which was transporting goods.

They died instantly.

The radio says the men worked for ArmourGroup, the same security company which employed the three Fijian security guards killed early last month.

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## **Military Supply Trucks For Ramadi Attacked, Destroyed**

6.9.06 Reuters

**Guerrillas attacked two civilian trucks carrying construction materials for the U.S. base in Ramadi and captured the drivers. The trucks were destroyed in the attack, he added.**

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **IED Wounds Four Occupation Troops: Nationality Not Announced**

June 8, 2006 AP

**Roadside bombings killed three Afghan soldiers and wounded four coalition troops.**

A roadside bomb slightly wounded four coalition soldiers when it blew up near their vehicle in southern Zabul province Wednesday, said coalition spokesman Maj. Quentin Innis. The four were treated at a base and released, Innis said, but he declined to specify their nationalities.

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### **Soldier Wounded In Afghanistan Now In Walter Reed Hospital**

Jun. 09, 2006 Associated Press, BISMARCK, N.D.

A North Dakota National Guard soldier injured in an Afghanistan bomb attack that killed two colleagues has returned to the United States.

Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Wicks, 39, was in stable condition Friday at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., said his wife, Angela, who planned to travel there to see him.

**Timothy Wicks suffered two broken legs, a broken pelvis and internal bleeding, and doctors removed his spleen, his wife and Guard officials said. He was sedated and on a respirator after being flown from a hospital in Germany, his wife said.**

**Military officials said Timothy Wicks was on a reconnaissance mission with other soldiers from the North Dakota National Guard's 188th Air Defense Artillery when a roadside bomb went off near their vehicle early this week. The blast killed Spc. Curtis Mehrer and Sgt. Travis Van Zoest, both 21, of Bismarck.**

Timothy and Angela Wicks have two sons, Christopher, 18, and Andrew, 16. Both are students at Bismarck High School.

Mehrer and Van Zoest graduated in 2003, Mehrer from Bismarck High and Van Zoest from Bismarck Century.

Angela Wicks said she visited both families Thursday, and considers both men heroes. She was awaiting clearance to visit her husband.

"Just to touch him, to know he's there and that he's OK is going to be amazing," she said.

Wicks' father, James, said in a statement released through the Guard that his son had joined the Army right out of high school and had met his wife in Germany. After he left the active duty Army, Wicks moved back to Bismarck and joined the National Guard in February 1993, the Guard statement said.

"He couldn't wait to be a soldier," his father said.

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## **“This Foreigner Was Driving Like A Crazy Man” U.S. Military Vehicle Hits Afghan Minibus Outside Kabul, Injures 3 Civilians:**

June 8, 2006 By Jason Straziuso, ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, Afghanistan: A U.S. military vehicle hit a minibus on a road outside the Afghan capital on Thursday and injured at least three civilians, more than a week after another crash involving U.S. forces sparked deadly riots.

The driver of the minibus expressed anger at the Americans.

**“I was driving on my side, but this foreigner was driving like a crazy man,” he said. “I pulled to the side of the road, but he hit me and pushed my bus off the road. How can this happen so soon after last week's crash?”**

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## **Resistance Attacks, Collaborator Troops Run Away**

9 June 2006 BBC

British troops have recently begun setting up bases in Helmand. They are part of an expanded NATO deployment in southern Afghanistan.

The BBC's Paul Wood in Helmand says the soldiers were jumping off helicopters when they came under fire. No British soldier was injured in the fighting.

**British commanders say it is significant that the Taleban stood and fought and that they earned the grudging respect of the parachute regiment soldiers.**

**According to British sources, the Afghan police fired indiscriminately putting civilians at risk and when confronted by the Taleban they broke and ran.**

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## **Assorted Resistance Action**

June 07, 2006 (AP) & 08 June 2006 By VOA News & By Sayed Salahuddin (Reuters) & AFP & By AMIR SHAH, Associated Press Writer

In western Herat province bordering Iran, three border policemen were shot dead late Thursday while on patrol in their vehicle, provincial police chief Mohammad Ayob Salangi said.

Militants armed with assault rifles killed a police commander and three bodyguards.

Officials said resistance fighters also killed the security chief of western Farah province Thursday. He was shot dead in a bazaar.

**The heaviest clash was reported near Tirin Kot in southern Uruzgan province, where suspected Taliban fighters attacked an army convoy late Thursday, sparking three hours of fighting, Gen. Rehmatullah Raufi said. He said the army suffered no casualties.**

A roadside bomb hit a convoy of Afghan troops in the eastern Afghan mountains, killing three and wounding four, the Defense Ministry said today.

The roadside bomb that killed the three Afghan soldiers went off Tuesday in Kunar province, about 120 miles east of the capital of Kabul, the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

The wounded were rushed to a hospital. Their convoy was carrying equipment to an army base when it was attacked, the ministry said.

Afghan officials say suspected Taleban militants have killed five Afghan security men in separate attacks in the south of the country.

In one incident, in Ghazni province, a roadside bomb killed three Afghan soldiers and wounded one when it blew up under their vehicle, said Mohammed Nasir Ibayat, an army commander. Three suspects were arrested.

In the other attack, officials say Taleban rebels shot dead two Afghan policemen in Kandahar province late Wednesday.

In the western province of Farah, a district chief was shot dead in a bazaar.

In western Herat province bordering Iran, three border policemen were shot dead late Thursday while on patrol in their vehicle, provincial police chief Mohammad Ayob Salangi said.

**Unidentified gunmen killed two Afghan aid workers with Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance, and wounded another in the same vehicle in the northern province of Balkh, an official with the western-funded relief agency said.**

**MORE:**

## **“Aid” Workers Job: Recruiting Informers To Betray Resistance Fighters; Civilian Operatives For The Occupation Killed Whenever Possible**

3.11.06 Socialist Worker (Canada) [Excerpts]

We hear that Canada is reconstructing Afghanistan.

This is a lie.

Reconstruction in Afghanistan is at a halt.

The money earmarked for rebuilding is being used as bribes for local commanders and to ensure support for Hamid Karzai.

**After the invasion there were numerous reports from aid workers that the US military was offering reconstruction money to local groups if they would hand over information that lead to the capture of Taliban and Al Qaeda suspects.**

**This is why the aid agencies are leaving. They were made pawns in a very dangerous game and more than 150 of them have paid with their lives since the invasion.**

Aid must be impartial or the reconstruction money will be nothing more than another way to buy political favours.

This ensures that the only way you will receive a new hospital or school is if you support the government.

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## **Most Imbecilic Comment By A Bush Stooge In 2006, So Far**

June 9 2006 By Rachel Morarjee in Kabul [Excerpt]

Jawed Ludin, chief of staff in the government of Hamid Karzai, said: "The government wants to take measures to strengthen the security situation in the south.

**"It is not so much that the terrorists are strong, but that we are weak."**

**Just in case you missed it someplace along the way, the U.S. employee running the Afghan collaborator "government," which governs nothing, is the above mentioned Hamid Karzai, formerly employed by Unocal Corporation, the parent company of Union Oil Company of California, which has an investment in building a pipeline from the Caspian Sea area oil fields through: Surprise! Surprise! Afghanistan!! T**

## **Bush Regime Dropping More Bombs On Afghanistan Than Iraq**

06/08/2006 By Jim Krane, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates: The U.S. Air Force increased its bombing of Taliban and other insurgent targets in Afghanistan this spring, making about 750 airstrikes in May alone, Air Force officials said.

The intensified bombing in Afghanistan has overshadowed the smaller number of U.S. airstrikes on Iraq, said Air Force Lt. Gen. Gary L. North, who commands U.S. and coalition air operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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# Incompetent Bush Stooges Can't Get Their Stories Straight

June 8, 2006 By Carlotta Gall The New York Times

KABUL More than a week after the worst riots in the Afghan capital in years, officials raised the death toll from 12 to 17 Wednesday, and said that 140 people remained in detention, accused of involvement in the rioting.

**At a rare news conference, the chief of the National Security Directorate, Amrullah Saleh, said that the riots May 29 were a spontaneous reaction to a traffic accident caused by an American military truck, and that there was no proof of any political motivation or planning behind the violence, though some of those detained belonged to criminal gangs or political groups.**

"We cannot reject the possibility of anything yet," Saleh said. "There were some instigators, people from small bands or groups in Kabul, but so far we have not reached the final conclusion to be able to say a certain political organization was orchestrating the riot."

**A Ministry of Interior official, Abdul Jabar Sabit, seemed to contradict Saleh's assessment. In a separate news briefing, he said the riots appeared to have been organized.**

"We think it was very coordinated, and it spread all over the city very quickly," Sabit said. People carried banners that bore political slogans, and some men were arrested with leaflets encouraging people to protest on the day of the riots, he said.

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## TROOP NEWS



## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

***Oh Shit!***

### **As Idiot Collaborator Boasts That Killing Zargawi Will Help Oil Production, Resistance Captures His Top Oil Executive**

6.9.06 ANS CBN

**Resistance fighters captured a senior official of Iraq's oil ministry after he left work in Baghdad on Thursday, police and ministry sources said on Friday.**

**The incident happened the same day US troops killed Iraq's al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, whose demise the Iraqi Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahristani said would help improve the country's oil production, particularly in the north.**

The sources said Muthana al-Badri, Director General of Iraq's State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP), was on his way home in the Sunni district of Adhamiya when guerrillas in four cars stopped his car and captured him but set his driver free.

"The death of Zarqawi will lead to the reduction in the level of violence and terrorist attacks and this will definitely help to improve our production, particularly from the northern fields and exports," Shahristani told Reuters in an interview in Istanbul on Thursday.

Badri, who the sources said is in his 60's, has always worked for SCOP. He became head of the company after Saddam Hussein was toppled in 2003. Oil Ministry sources described him as a "professional and energetic."

"We call him the son of SCOP because he spent his life there," said an oil industry official.

SCOP is in charge of the oil projects for the ministry such as building new refineries and pipelines.

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## **ASSORTED RESISTANCE ACTION**

6.9.06 By KIM GAMEL, Associated Press Writer & Brian Whitaker in Baghdad, The Guardian & AFP

An attack on a police patrol in the New Baghdad area of eastern Baghdad, killed two policemen and four civilians and wounded 11 other people, including three policemen, Lieutenant Ali Abbas said.

Guerrillas opened fire on Friday's funeral procession for the brother of the governor of the northern city of Mosul. Zuhair Kashmola was killed on Thursday.

Insurgents killed three oil engineers.

Two police commandos were wounded in separate Baghdad roadside bombings.

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

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

***Vietnam: The Soldier's Revolt***  
**“It Was Highly Effective In  
Destroying Everything That  
Military Hierarchy And Discipline  
Stand For”**  
**“It Was The Proudest Moment In  
The U.S. Army's History”**

August-September 2000 By Joel Geier, International Socialist Review Issue 9

Part 1: NOTE: Numbers at end of sentences refer to footnotes at end.]

***Our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near-mutinous. [C]onditions [exist] among American forces in Vietnam that have only been exceeded in this century by...the collapse of the Tsarist armies in 1916 and 1917. Armed Forces Journal, June 1971***

**THE MOST neglected aspect of the Vietnam War is the soldiers' revolt: the mass upheaval from below that unraveled the American army.**

It is a great reality check in an era when the U.S. touts itself as an invincible nation. For this reason, the soldiers' revolt has been written out of official history.

Yet it was a crucial part of the massive antiwar movement whose activity helped the Vietnamese people in their struggle to free Vietnam, described once by President Johnson as a "raggedy-ass little fourth-rate country," from U.S. domination.

**The legacy of the soldiers' revolt and the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, despite more recent U.S. victories over Iraq and Serbia, casts a pall on the Pentagon. They still fear the political backlash that might come if U.S. ground forces sustain heavy casualties in a future war.**

The army revolt was a class struggle that pitted working-class soldiers against officers who viewed them as expendable.

**The fashionable attempt to revise Vietnam War history, to airbrush its horrors, to create a climate supportive of future military interventions, cannot acknowledge that American soldiers violently opposed that war, or that American capitalism casually tolerated the massacre of working-class troops.**

Liberal academics have added to the historical distortion by reducing the radicalism of the 1960s to middle-class concerns and activities, while ignoring working-class rebellion. But the militancy of the 1960s began with the Black working class as the motor force of the Black liberation struggle, and it reached its climax with the unity of white and Black working-class soldiers whose upsurge shook U.S. imperialism.

In Vietnam, the rebellion did not take the same form as the mass stateside GI antiwar movement, which consisted of protests, marches, demonstrations and underground newspapers.

In Vietnam, the aim of the soldiers was more modest, but also more subversive: survival, to "CYA" (cover your ass), to protect "the only body you have" by fighting the military's attempt to continue the war.

**The survival conflict became a war within the war that ripped the armed forces apart. In 1965, the Green Machine was the best army the U.S. ever put into the field; a few years later, it was useless as a fighting force.**

"Survival politics," as it was then called, expressed itself through the destruction of the search-and-destroy strategy, through mutinies, through the killing of officers, and through fraternization and making peace from below with the National Liberation Front (NLF).

**It was highly effective in destroying everything that military hierarchy and discipline stand for. It was the proudest moment in the U.S. army's history.**

**Like most of the revolutionary traditions of the American working class, the soldiers' revolt has been hidden from history. The aim of this essay is to reclaim the record of that struggle.**

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## **A Working-Class Army**

*"The Vietnamese lack the ability to conduct a war by themselves or govern themselves."*  
Vice President Richard M. Nixon, April 16, 1954<sup>2</sup>

From 1964 to 1973, from the Gulf of Tonkin resolution to the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, 27 million men came of draft age. A majority of them were not drafted due to college, professional, medical or National Guard deferments. Only 40 percent were drafted and saw military service. A small minority, 2.5 million men (about 10 percent of those eligible for the draft), were sent to Vietnam.<sup>3</sup>

This small minority was almost entirely working-class or rural youth. Their average age was 19. Eighty-five percent of the troops were enlisted men; 15 percent were officers. The enlisted men were drawn from the 80 percent of the armed forces with a high school education or less. At this time, college education was universal in the middle class and making strong inroads in the better-off sections of the working class. Yet, in 1965 and 1966, college graduates were only 2 percent of the hundreds of thousands of draftees.<sup>4</sup>

**In the elite colleges, the class discrepancy was even more glaring. The upper class did none of the fighting. Of the 1,200 Harvard graduates in 1970, only 2 went to Vietnam, while working-class high schools routinely sent 20 percent, 30 percent of their graduates and more to Vietnam.<sup>5</sup>**

College students who were not made officers were usually assigned to noncombat support and service units. High school dropouts were three times more likely to be sent to combat units that did the fighting and took the casualties. Combat infantry soldiers, "the grunts," were entirely working class. They included a disproportionate number of Black working-class troops. Blacks, who formed 12 percent of the troops, were often 25 percent or more of the combat units.<sup>6</sup>

When college deferments expired, joining the National Guard was a favorite way to get out of serving in Vietnam. During the war, 80 percent of the Guard's members described themselves as joining to avoid the draft. You needed connections to get in--which was no problem for Dan Quayle, George W. Bush and other ruling-class draft evaders. In 1968, the Guard had a waiting list of more than 100,000. It had triple the percentage of college graduates that the army did. Blacks made up less than 1.5 percent of the National Guard. In Mississippi, Blacks were 42 percent of the population, but only one Black man served in a Guard of more than 10,000.<sup>7</sup>

In 1965, the troops came from a working class that had moved in a conservative direction during the Cold War, due to the long postwar boom and McCarthyite repression. Yet, in the five years before the war, the civil rights movement had shaped Black political views. The troops had more class and trade-union consciousness than exists today. The stateside Movement for a Democratic Military, organized by former

members of the Black Panther Party, had as the first points of its program, "We demand the right to collective bargaining," and "We demand wages equal to the federal minimum wage."<sup>8</sup>

**When the Defense Department attempted to break a farm workers' strike by increasing orders for scab lettuce, soldiers boycotted mess halls, picketed and plastered bases with stickers proclaiming "Lifers Eat Lettuce."<sup>9</sup> When the army used troops to break the national postal wildcat strike in 1970, Vietnam GI called out, "To hell with breaking strikes, let's break the government."<sup>10</sup>**

Shortly after the war began, radicalism started to get a hearing among young workers. As the Black liberation struggle moved northward from 1965 to 1968, 200 cities had ghetto uprisings--spreading revolutionary consciousness among young, working-class Blacks.

In the factories, those same years saw a strong upturn in working-class militancy, with days lost to strikes and wildcats doubling.<sup>11</sup> Left-wing ideas from the student movement were reaching working-class youth through the antiwar movement. In 1967 and 1968, many of the troops had been radicalized before their entry into the army. Still others were radicalized prior to being shipped to Vietnam by the GI antiwar movement on stateside bases. Radicalizing soldiers soon came up against the harsh reality that the officers viewed working-class troops as expendable.

## **The Middle-Class Officers Corps**

*"Let the military run the show."* Senator Barry Goldwater<sup>12</sup>

The officer corps was drawn from the 7 percent of troops who were college graduates, or the 13 percent who had one to three years of college. College was to officer as high school was to enlisted man. The officer corps was middle class in composition and managerial in outlook. Ruling-class military families were heavily represented in its higher ranks.<sup>13</sup>

In the Second World War, officers were 7 percent of the armed forces, an amount normal for most armies. The officer corps used the postwar permanent arms economy, with its bloated arms budget, as its vehicle for self-expansion. By the time of the Vietnam War, the officer corps was 15 percent of the armed forces, which meant one officer for every six plus men.<sup>14</sup>

After the end of the Korean War in 1953, there was no opportunity for combat commands. As the old army song goes, "There's no promotion/this side of the ocean." In 1960, it took an excruciating 33 years to move from second lieutenant to colonel.

Many of the "lifers," professional officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs), welcomed the Vietnam War as the opportunity to reinvigorate their careers. They were not disappointed. By 1970, the agonizing wait to move up the career ladder from second lieutenant to colonel had been reduced to 13 years.<sup>15</sup> Over 99 percent of second lieutenants became first lieutenants, 95 percent of first lieutenants were promoted to

captain, 93 percent of qualified captains became majors, 77 percent of qualified majors became lieutenant colonels and half of the lieutenant colonels became colonels.<sup>16</sup>

The surest road to military advancement is a combat command. But there were too many active duty officers of high rank, which produced intense competition for combat commands. There were 2,500 lieutenant colonels jostling for command of only 100 to 130 battalions; 6,000 colonels, 2,000 of whom were in serious competition for 75 brigade commands; and 200 major generals competing for the 13 division commands in the army.<sup>17</sup>

General Westmoreland, the commander of the armed forces in Vietnam, accommodated the officers by creating excessive support units and rapidly rotating combat command.

**In Vietnam, support and service units grew to an incredible 86 percent of military manpower. Only 14 percent of the troops were actually assigned to combat.**

**Extravagant support services were the basis for the military bureaucracy. The armed forces created "numerous logistical commands, each to be headed by a general or two who would have to have high-ranking staffs to aid each of them." Thus it became possible for 64 army generals to serve simultaneously in Vietnam, with the requisite compliment of colonels, majors etc.<sup>18</sup>**

**These superfluous support officers lived far removed from danger, lounging in rear base camps in luxurious conditions. A few miles away, combat soldiers were experiencing a nightmarish hell. The contrast was too great to allow for confidence--in both the officers and the war--to survive unscathed.**

**Westmoreland's solution to the competition for combat command poured gasoline on the fire. He ordered a one-year tour of duty for enlisted men in Vietnam, but only six months for officers. The combat troops hated the class discrimination that put them at twice the risk of their commanders. They grew contemptuous of the officers, whom they saw as raw and dangerously inexperienced in battle.**

Even a majority of officers considered Westmoreland's tour inequality as unethical. Yet they were forced to use short tours to prove themselves for promotion.

**They were put in situations in which their whole careers depended on what they could accomplish in a brief period, even if it meant taking shortcuts and risks at the expense of the safety of their men--a temptation many could not resist.**

The outer limit of six-month commands was often shortened due to promotion, relief, injury or other reasons. The outcome was "revolving-door" commands. As an enlisted man recalled, "During my year in-country I had five second-lieutenant platoon leaders and four company commanders. One CO was pretty good...All the rest were stupid."<sup>19</sup>

**Aggravating this was the contradiction that guaranteed opposition between officers and men in combat. Officer promotions depended on quotas of enemy dead from search-and-destroy missions. Battalion commanders who did not furnish immediate high body counts were threatened with replacement. This was no idle threat--battalion commanders had a 30 to 50 percent chance of being relieved of command. But search-and-destroy missions produced enormous**

casualties for the infantry soldiers. Officers corrupted by career ambitions would cynically ignore this and draw on the never-ending supply of replacements from the monthly draft quota.<sup>20</sup>

Officer corruption was rife. A Pentagon official writes, "(the) stench of corruption rose to unprecedented levels during William C. Westmoreland's command of the American effort in Vietnam." The CIA protected the poppy fields of Vietnamese officials and flew their heroin out of the country on Air America planes. Officers took notice and followed suit. The major who flew the U.S. ambassador's private jet was caught smuggling \$8 million of heroin on the plane.<sup>21</sup>

Army stores (PXs) were importing French perfumes and other luxury goods for the officers to sell on the black market for personal gain. But the black market extended far beyond luxury goods: "The Viet Cong received a large percentage of their supplies from the United States via the underground routes of the black market: kerosene, sheet metal, oil, gasoline engines, claymore mines, hand grenades, rifles, bags of cement," which were publicly sold at open, outdoor black markets.<sup>22</sup>

The troops were quickly disillusioned with a war in which American-made military matériel was being used against them. And then there were endless scandals: PX scandals, NCO-club scandals, sergeant-major scandals, M-16 jamming scandals. In interviews, when Vietnam veterans were asked what stood out about their experience, a repeated answer was "the corruption."<sup>23</sup>

The ethics of the officer corps imitated those of the business elite they served.

They were corrupted by six-month command tours while their men served a year, by career advancement at the expense of troop welfare, by black market profiteering, and by living in luxury in the midst of combat troop slaughter. The corruption of the officers, combined with the combat plan that avoided officer casualties while guaranteeing the slaughter of their men, produced explosive results.

## **A Ruling-Class Strategy**

*"We know we can't win a ground war in Asia."* Vice President Spiro T. Agnew on "Face the Nation" (CBS-TV), May 3, 1970<sup>24</sup>

**The political and military position of the U.S. was hopeless from the moment it entered the war. The U.S. was fighting to protect capitalism and empire. The Vietnamese were fighting to reunify their country and break free of foreign control.**

The American-controlled government of South Vietnam was the political representative of the landlord class, which took 40 to 60 percent of the peasants' crop as rent. In National Liberation Front (NLF)-controlled territory, rents were lowered to 10 percent, creating enormous peasant support for the Communist insurgency.<sup>25</sup>

As the NLF expanded their areas of control, it became increasingly difficult for the landlords to collect rents. They therefore struck a fateful bargain with their government: the army would collect the peasants' rent in return for a 30 percent cut, which was to be split three ways between the government, the officers and the troops. Rent collection became more important to the army than fighting. The corrupt South Vietnamese government and its army were little more than tax collectors for the landlords. The enormous economic and military power of U.S. imperialism was no stronger than the social relations of its most corrupt and reactionary colonial clients.<sup>26</sup>

The war was fought by NLF troops and peasant auxiliaries who worked the land during the day and fought as soldiers at night. They would attack ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) and American troops and bases or set mines at night, and then disappear back into the countryside during the day.

**In this form of guerrilla war, there were no fixed targets, no set battlegrounds, and there was no territory to take.**

**With that in mind, the Pentagon designed a counterinsurgency strategy called "search and destroy." Without fixed battlegrounds, combat success was judged by the number of NLF troops killed: the body count. A somewhat more sophisticated variant was the "kill ratio"--the number of enemy troops killed compared to the number of Americans dead. This "war of attrition" strategy was the basic military plan of the American ruling class in Vietnam.<sup>27</sup>**

For each enemy killed, for every body counted, soldiers got three-day passes and officers received medals and promotions. This reduced the war from fighting for "the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese" to no larger purpose than killing.

**Any Vietnamese killed was put in the body count as a dead enemy soldier, or as the GIs put it, "if it's dead, it's Charlie" ("Charlie" was GI slang for the NLF).**

***This was an inevitable outcome of a war against a whole people. Everyone in Vietnam became the enemy, and this encouraged random slaughter.***

Officers further ordered their men to "kill them even if they try to surrender--we need the body count." It was an invitation to kill indiscriminately to swell a tally sheet.<sup>28</sup>

Some enlisted men followed their officers into barbarism. The most infamous incident was the genocidal slaughter of the village of My Lai, where officers demanded that their men kill all inhabitants--more than 400 women, children, infants and old people. Only one minor officer, Lt. Calley, received a sentence for this Nazi-like war crime. President Nixon quickly pardoned him.<sup>29</sup> At that point, 32 percent of the American people thought high government and military officials should be tried for war crimes.

**Rather than following their officers, many more soldiers had the courage to revolt against barbarism.<sup>30</sup>**

Ninety-five percent of combat units were search-and-destroy units. Their mission was to go out into the jungle, hit bases and supply areas, flush out NLF troops and engage them in battle. If the NLF fought back, helicopters would fly in to prevent retreat and unleash massive firepower--bullets, bombs, missiles. The NLF would attempt to avoid

this, and battle generally only occurred if the search-and-destroy missions were ambushed.

**Ground troops became the live bait for the ambush and firefight. GIs referred to search and destroy as "humping the boonies by dangling the bait."<sup>31</sup>**

Without helicopters, search and destroy would not have been possible--and the helicopters were the terrain of the officers. "On board the command and control chopper rode the battalion commander, his aviation-support commander, the artillery-liaison officer, the battalion S-3 and the battalion sergeant major. They circled...high enough to escape random small-arms fire."

The officers directed their firepower on the NLF down below, but while indiscriminately spewing out bombs and napalm, they could not avoid "collateral damage"--hitting their own troops.

**One-quarter of the American dead in Vietnam was killed by "friendly fire" from the choppers. The officers were out of danger, the "eye in the sky," while the troops had their "asses in the grass," open to fire from both the NLF and the choppers.<sup>32</sup>**

When the battle was over, the officers and their choppers would fly off to base camps removed from danger while their troops remained out in the field. The class relations of any army copy those of the society it serves, but in more extreme form. Search and destroy brought the class relations of American capitalism to their ultimate pitch.

**Of the 543,000 American troops in Vietnam in 1968, only 14 percent (or 80,000) were combat troops. These 80,000 men took the brunt of the war.**

**They were the weak link, and their disaffection crippled the ability of the world's largest military to fight.**

**In 1968, 14,592 men--18 percent of combat troops--were killed. An additional 35,000 had serious wounds that required hospitalization.**

**Although not all of the dead and wounded were from combat units, the overwhelming majority were. The majority of combat troops in 1968 were either seriously injured or killed. The number of American casualties in Vietnam was not extreme, but as it was concentrated among the combat troops, it was a virtual massacre. Not to revolt amounted to suicide.<sup>33</sup>**

Officers, high in the sky, had few deaths or casualties. The deaths of officers occurred mostly in the lower ranks among lieutenants or captains who led combat platoons or companies. The higher-ranking officers went unharmed.

**During a decade of war, only one general and eight full colonels died from enemy fire.<sup>34</sup> As one study commissioned by the military concluded, "In Vietnam...the officer corps simply did not die in sufficient numbers or in the presence of their men often enough."<sup>35</sup>**

**The slaughter of grunts went on because the officers never found it unacceptable.**

**There was no outcry from the military or political elite, the media or their ruling-class patrons about this aspect of the war, nor is it commented on in almost any history of the war.**

It is ignored or accepted as a normal part of an unequal world, because the middle and upper class were not in combat in Vietnam and suffered no pain from its butchery. It never would have been tolerated had their class done the fighting.

**Their premeditated murder of combat troops unleashed class war in the armed forces. The revolt focused on ending search and destroy through all of the means the army had provided as training for these young workers.**

## **Tet: The Revolt Begins**

*"We have known for some time that this offensive was planned by the enemy...The ability to do what they have done has been anticipated, prepared for, and met...The stated purposes of the general uprising have failed...I do not believe that they will achieve a psychological victory."* President Lyndon B. Johnson, February 2, 1968<sup>36</sup>

The Tet Offensive was the turning point of the Vietnam War and the start of open, active soldiers' rebellion. At the end of January 1968, on Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, the NLF sent 100,000 troops into Saigon and 36 provincial capitals to lead a struggle for the cities. The Tet Offensive was not militarily successful, because of the savagery of the U.S. counterattack. In Saigon alone, American bombs killed 14,000 civilians. The city of Ben Tre became emblematic of the U.S. effort when the major who retook it announced that "to save the city, we had to destroy it."

**Westmoreland and his generals claimed that they were the victors of Tet because they had inflicted so many casualties on the NLF. But to the world, it was clear that U.S. imperialism had politically lost the war in Vietnam.**

**Tet showed that the NLF had the overwhelming support of the Vietnamese population--millions knew of and collaborated with the NLF entry into the cities and no one warned the Americans.**

**The ARVN [Army Of The Republic Of Vietnam: the collaborator troops] had turned over whole cities without firing a shot. In some cases, ARVN troops had welcomed the NLF and turned over large weapons supplies.**

**The official rationale for the war, that U.S. troops were there to help the Vietnamese fend off Communist aggression from the North, was no longer believed by anybody. The South Vietnamese government and military were clearly hated by the people.<sup>37</sup>**

**Westmoreland's constant claim that there was "light at the end of the tunnel," that victory was imminent, was shown to be a lie. Search and destroy was a pipe dream. The NLF did not have to be flushed out of the jungle--it operated everywhere. No place in Vietnam was a safe base for American soldiers when the NLF so decided.**

**What, then, was the point of this war?**

**Why should American troops fight to defend a regime its own people despised?**

***Soldiers became furious at a government and an officer corps who risked their lives for lies.***

Throughout the world, Tet and the confidence that American imperialism was weak and would be defeated produced a massive, radical upsurge that makes 1968 famous as the year of revolutionary hope.

**In the U.S. army, it became the start of the showdown with the officers.**

**Within three years, more than one-quarter of the armed forces was absent without leave (AWOL), had deserted or was in military prisons.**

**Countless others had received "Ho Chi Minh discharges" for being disruptive and troublemaking.**

**But the most dangerous forces were those still active in combat units, whose fury over being slaughtered in useless search-and-destroy missions erupted in the greatest rebellion the U.S. army has ever encountered.<sup>38</sup>**

**[To be continued]**

1 Colonel Robert D. Heinl, Jr., "The Collapse of the Armed Forces," Armed Forces Journal, June 7, 1971, reprinted in Marvin Gettleman, et al., Vietnam and America: A Documented History (New York: Grove Press, 1995), p. 327.

2 Quoted in William G. Effros, Quotations: Vietnam, 1945-70 (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 172.

3 Christian G. Appy, Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), p. 18.

4 Appy, pp. 24-27 and James William Gibson, The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), pp. 214-15.

5 James Fallows, "What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?" Vietnam: Anthology and Guide to a Television History, Steven Cohen, ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), p. 384.

6 Appy, p. 26. The rate of Black deaths in Vietnam in 1965 was double their army participation rate, but was brought down to normal proportions within three years because of Black soldiers' struggle against racism. The struggle for Black liberation within the army in these years deserves another article of its own. For more information, see David Cortright, Soldiers in Revolt: The American Military Today (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 201-16.

7 Appy, pp. 36-37.

8 Larry G. Waterhouse and Mariann G. Wizard, *Turning the Guns Around: Notes on the GI Movement* (New York: Praeger, 1971), pp. 136-38.

9 *Camp News*, January 15, 1971, and March 15, 1971.

10 *Vietnam GI*, May 1970. Of the hundreds of underground GI newspapers, only a handful appeared regularly over time and had readership beyond a particular base or army division. Of these, the most important were *Camp News*, *The Bond* and *Vietnam GI*. *Vietnam GI* had the largest following in Vietnam due to its ability to put a clear, radical political analysis in language that connected with the experiences of the grunts. It was put out by Vietnam vets and by former members of the left wing of the Young People's Socialist League, who were loosely associated with, although organizationally independent from, the current that became the American International Socialists.

11 Kim Moody, "The American Working Class in Transition," *International Socialism*, No. 40 (Old Series), Oct/Nov 1969, p. 19.

12 Effros, p. 209.

13 Appy, pp. 25-26.

14 Cincinnatus, *Self-Destruction, The Disintegration and Decay of the United States Army During the Vietnam Era*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), p. 155.

15 Cincinnatus, p. 139.

16 Cincinnatus, p. 145.

17 Cincinnatus, p. 146.

18 Cincinnatus, pp. 147-48.

19 Cincinnatus, pp. 157-59.

20 Gibson, p. 116.

21 Cincinnatus, p. 54-56.

22 Cincinnatus, p. 55.

23 Cincinnatus, p. 53.

24 Effros, p. 217.

25 Gibson, p. 71.

26 Gibson, pp. 74-75.

27 Gibson, pp. 101-15 and Cincinnatus, pp. 75-82.

28 Appy, pp. 155-56, and Cincinnatus, pp. 84-85.

29 Seymour M. Hersh, "What Happened at My Lai?" in Gettleman, pp. 410-24.

30 Cohen, p. 378.

31 Appy, pp. 152-58, 182-84.

32 Cincinnatus, pp. 62-63, 70.

33 Cincinnatus, p. 147, 161.

34 Cincinnatus, p. 155.

35 Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage, *Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), p. 16.

36 Effros, p. 89.

37 Gibson. See Chapter 6, "The Tet Offensive and the Production of a Double Reality."

38 Robert Musil, "The Truth About Deserters," *The Nation*, April 16, 1973 and for "Ho Chi Minh" discharges, Steve Rees, "A Questioning Spirit: GIs Against the War" in Dick Custer, ed., *They Should Have Served that Cup of Coffee* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), p. 171.

**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.**

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

**“A Contest Underway Over Who’s  
Going To Kill More Civilians?”  
U.S. News Network Uninterested In  
Stories Of Atrocities:**

# **“Not Exciting Enough; Many Similar Things Happen Every Day”**

**“They took pictures of Nahrein after placing a Kalashnikov on her chest.**

**And yet one hears General Casey, the top US commander in Iraq, saying American actions in Iraq cannot be compared to the atrocities of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi and the insurgents. Now there's an interesting point. Is a contest underway over who's going to kill more civilians?**

8 June 2006 By Nermeen Al-Mufti, AL-AHRAM (Cairo, Egypt)

**Zeinab Ali, relative to three brothers killed by Americans while their mother watched said she had called US media networks present in Iraq to tell them about the crime her family's suffered, but no one was interested. One producer working for an American news network told her that the incident was not exciting enough; that many similar things happen every day.**

Lawyer Omar Al-Azzawi says that Bremer is to blame for the media blackout.

The former US civil administrator passed a law preventing Iraqi authorities from pressing charges against civilian and military personnel of countries of the coalition. Legal immunity has encouraged foreign forces, especially the Americans, to regard Iraqi lives as dispensable.

**The US has given itself the right to try anyone suspected of involvement in or planning "terrorist" operations against America and of bringing such individual to trial in American courts. And yet the US is not handing over any American accused of committing acts of terror against others.**

Al-Azzawi said. "I am using the word 'terrorist' advisedly, for the definition of a terrorist by the consensus of many countries is someone who kills civilians intentionally."

In Al-Ashaqi, near Samaraa, dozens of armoured vehicles and hundreds of soldiers besieged a house last March. The troops killed 11 "terrorists", including a four-month-old infant. A statement by the US military claimed that several terrorists and four civilians were killed.

**Mohamed Al-Majmaye, a neighbour of the victims, told me with tears in his eyes what he saw that day.**

**"At 1.30pm on Tuesday 13 March, the US occupation forces backed with a helicopter attacked the home of Fayez Harrat, a teacher. After taking control of the house and the adjacent houses and tying up and beating the inhabitants, troops shot Fayez's entire family, killing him and his wife, three of his children, his sister and her three children, his father, and a woman relative.**

**"The children were aged between four months and six years. After killing the family, the troops rigged the house with explosives and blew it up, after which the house was shelled by planes. Even the family pets were killed."**

Um Mahmoud, Fayez's sister, was sobbing as she confirmed to me the story. "They killed my mother, who was 60, and my brother Fayez, who was 27, and his wife Somaya, who was 25.

"They also killed three children: Hura, who was four, Aisha, who was two, and Hossam, who was four months. And they killed my sister Fayza, who taught at the same school. Now her two children, Osama, who's six, and Asmaa, who's five, are orphans, for the occupation army killed her husband last summer.

"They also killed Aziz Khalil, 30, and Khatiba, 23, who were engaged and planned to get married in two days time."

Um Mohamed said the children were placed inside a closet and then shot by machineguns, their heads blown clean off. The rest of the family was then executed in nearby rooms.

**On 10 April, in a town 70 kilometres north of Baghdad, occupation forces landed and broke into the house of Nahrein, a 22-year-old woman, and killed her. The news was reported on Al-Rabita Al-Iraqiya website. I went to the town and spoke to Nahrein's sister in law.**

**"Nahrein came from Baghdad to live with us after she married my brother Ahmed Al-Jarmut following a love story between them. She was an exceptional woman, young as she was. Her parents were Shias and yet they blessed her marriage to a Sunni. She gave birth to Aisha, three, and Haydar, who is only 40 days old. She was always proud to belong to a family that represents the true Iraq, with no sectarianism or fear.**

**"Nahrein was with her husband when troops shot them both. Her husband was wounded in the same incident. Occupation forces threw grenades to break the doors and went with police dogs, firing inside the house. They searched everyone, including women.**

"Planes had not stopped shelling the vicinity for three hours. Then a soldier went into the couple's bedroom and fired 30 rounds, then called for medical care, saying that he didn't know he was shooting at a woman.

"Afterwards, we learnt that she was killed. My brother Ahmed was taken into custody, allegedly to receive treatment. We started crying and the US trooper left and came back with 20 soldiers, some of them holding cameras.

**"They took pictures of Nahrein after placing a Kalashnikov on her chest. Then they started hitting my brothers and firing at them without reason, then claiming that they were armed. After that they started offering them medical care, and then arrested them."**

And yet one hears General Casey, the top US commander in Iraq, saying American actions in Iraq cannot be compared to the atrocities of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi and the insurgents. Now there's an interesting point. Is a contest underway over who's going to kill more civilians?

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

## OCCUPATION PALESTINE

# Zionist Terrorists Slaughter Family Having Picnic At The Beach

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

June 9, 2006 Guardian & 10 June 2006 Aljazeera

Israeli forces today attacked the northern Gaza Strip with a series of air strikes and artillery fire, killing at least nine Palestinians, including six civilians who had been enjoying a family picnic at the beach.

**The shells struck a large crowd at a beachside picnic, killing six people and wounding more than 30 others, the Palestinian health minister, Bassem Naim, said. A woman and two young children, six months old and 18 months old, were among the dead, medical officials said. All of the dead were believed to be related.**

**The barrage scattered body parts along the beach, destroyed a tent and sent bloody sheets flying into the air. A panicked crowd quickly gathered, screaming and running around in confusion.**

**One tearful man held the limp body of what appeared to be a girl or young woman. "Muslims, look at this," he cried.**

**Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, called the Israeli attack "a bloody massacre" and urged the international community to intervene.**

Palestinian Islamist group Hamas has shelved a 16-month-old truce with Tel Aviv.

Hamas, which was elected into government in January, called off the truce in a statement on Friday following deadly Israeli air strikes and artillery fire on a crowded Gaza beach that resulted in the highest Palestinian toll in a single day since late 2004.

"The Israeli massacres represent a direct opening battle and that means the earthquake in the Zionist cities will resume and the herds of occupiers have no choice but to prepare the coffins or the departing luggage," the statement by Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, said.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The occupied nation is Palestine.]

## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



"Americans don't want to join the National Guard anymore. You guys interested? You might have to help the Border Patrol."

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

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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](http://www.ivaw.net))

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