

GI SPECIAL 4G18:



7.16.06 THE PHOENIX NEWS-LEADER, PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Straws In The Wind Soldiers Speak Out:

#1:

**“Growing Tax Breaks That Are
Overwhelmingly Consumed By The
Wealthiest Americans And Their Corporate
Investments”**

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
7.17.06

In "Supporting troops takes more than slapping a magnet on your vehicle" (Back Talk, July 3), Marine Corps Capt. Josh Gibbs asks some important questions regarding how Americans choose to show their support for our military in this time of war.

Frankly, I don't believe his questions went far enough.

While the charitable campaigns he mentioned are all wonderful organizations worthy of support, there is something far simpler and far more basic to our existence as a country that we should be doing to support our troops.

I ask America: Do you really want to support your troops?

If so, the answer is simple: Pay your taxes, and don't fight tax hikes.

In these 21st-century days of ever-lower taxation, an insane expectation in the face of ever-higher military costs, who can fail to see the connection between smaller federal tax receipts and military funding shortfalls?

The disparity between military funding requirements and the means to fulfill them was highlighted by the other July 3 Back Talk column by Lawrence J. Korb and Peter Ogden ("Time for hard choices on payroll crisis"). They describe the future funding shortfalls facing the military and caution against answering these shortfalls by relying on budgetary transfers from lower-priority to higher-priority military accounts;.

We, the voters and taxpayers of America, are robbing Peter; decreasing the percentage of the economy the government collects in taxes, and therefore the amount of money the government has to pay military expenditures; to pay Paul, providing the growing tax breaks that are overwhelmingly consumed by the wealthiest Americans and their corporate investments.

We get the military we pay for. If we as a country want to maintain our military prowess, we need to cowboy up, pay our taxes and fund our military to complete the missions we've assigned to it.

Staff Sgt. Charles K. Diamond
Fort Hood, Texas

#2:

Cut The Politicians Pay: "Politicians Who Vote For A War But Are Not Willing To Sacrifice For It Are Chicken Hawks"

I have asked four members of Texas' congressional delegation; Republican Reps. John R. Carter, Michael McCaul and Lamar S. Smith, and Democratic Rep. Lloyd Doggett; to submit a bill to Congress to support our military families.

It would be “The Shared Sacrifice Act of 2006.”

To honor the sacrifices of our military personnel and their families in a time of war, the president, vice president and all members of Congress shall, as of Jan. 1, 2006, reduce their salary by 10 percent and rescind their annual cost-of-living allowance.

I also asked these four legislators to organize and sponsor a combined blood drive in their districts in July because the Pentagon has said there is a blood shortage.

Politicians who vote for a war but are not willing to sacrifice for it are chicken hawks.

One congressman from Texas has already earned this title;. I'm waiting to hear from the other three.

Spc. Alan Roddy
Austin, Texas

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

SOLDIER KILLED IN AL ANBAR PROVINCE

7/17/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-07-01C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: A Soldier assigned to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division died due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province today.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Western Baghdad

7.17.06 (Reuters)

A U.S. soldier died from wounds after coming under fire in western Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

MND B SOLDIER KILLED BY IED IN SOUTHERN BAGHDAD

7/16/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-07-01C

BAGHDAD: A Multi National Division Baghdad Soldier was killed at approximately 4:30 p.m. today when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in southern Baghdad.

Two U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Diwaniya IED

7.17.06 (Reuters)

Two U.S. soldiers were wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their convoy in Diwaniya, 180 km (112 miles) south of Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

Two Ukrainian Military Personnel Hospitalized After Mine Explosion

07/17/2006 Ukrainian News

Two Ukrainian military personnel have been hospitalized as a result of explosion of a homemade mine in Iraq.

According to the press service, the homemade mine exploded at about 06:00 on July 17, under a Toyota Land Cruiser automobile in which the head of the department of assistance to civil police, Serhii Kolobylin, and an officer with the transport logistics department, Serhii Tyschenko, were traveling as part of a Slovakian military column near the town of Ed Divaniya.

The Ukrainian military personnel were hospitalized with numerous shrapnel wounds as a result of the explosion.

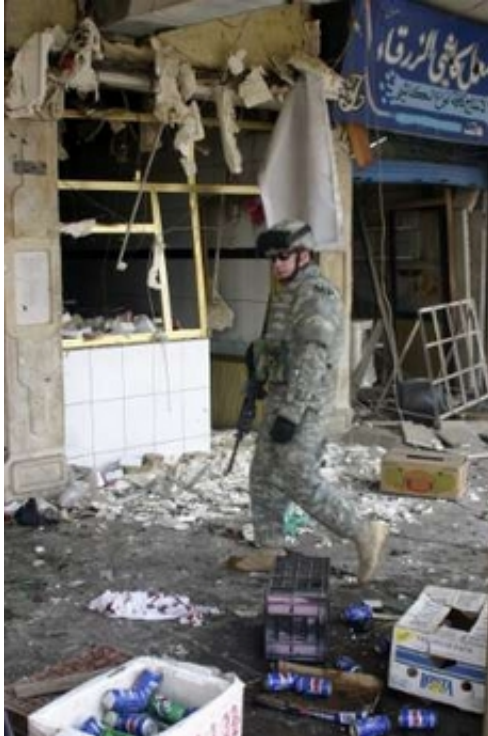
In particular, Kolobylin suffered shrapnel wound on his body, right hip, and right shoulder and was flown to a Baghdad hospital in a helicopter belonging to the Medevac rescue unit. He received surgical assistance at the hospital.

Tyschenko was taken to the medical unit of the Echo base camp of the Center East multinational division with numerous shrapnel wounds on his left forearm.

According to the press service, the lives of the Ukrainian servicemen are not in danger.

Ukrainian military personnel in Iraq have been temporarily banned from leaving their base camps because of this incident. Additional training on mine safety has also been scheduled.

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. at the scene of a car bomb attack in Mosul July 3, 2006. REUTERS/Khaled al-Mousily (IRAQ)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed, 11
Wounded In Tarin Kot:
Nationality Not Announced**

7.17.06 Reuters

A coalition soldier was killed and 11 others wounded during heavy fighting against Taliban militants in southern Afghanistan on Monday, U.S.-led forces said.

Foreign troops operating in Tarin Kot district of Uruzgan province came under heavy fire after attacking and destroying a truck which militants were loading with mortar equipment, the U.S.-led coalition said in a statement.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed In Day Chopan: Nationality Not Announced

7/16/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-07-01CA & Reuters

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan: One Coalition Soldier was killed during a firefight between a Coalition patrol and extremist fighters in the Day Chopan District of Zabul Province on July 16.

The unit was conducting a combat patrol of the area and received small arms fire from enemy fighters. Coalition joint fires responded to the extremist's position during the battle.

The Soldier was transported to a Coalition medical facility where he died during surgery of his wounds.

Taliban Seize Control In Two Afghan Districts: Police And Government Officials Flee

July 17, 2006 AMIR SHAH, Associated Press Writer

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

Taliban militants seized two towns in tumultuous southern Afghanistan, forcing police and government officials to flee, officials said Monday.

Large numbers of militants chased out police after a brief clash in the town of Naway-i-Barakzayi, in Helmand province near the Pakistan border, a local police official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment.

Scores of Taliban forces overran police holed up Sunday in a compound in the nearby Helmand town of Garmser. The security forces and a handful of government officials fled, a local government official said.

The official, also speaking on condition of anonymity because he did not have permission to speak to the media, said Taliban forces were now "moving freely" around the Garmser and the surrounding district.

"We have heard reports of two districts in southern Helmand being under control of the Taliban, and we are in contact with lots of people to build an accurate picture," said another coalition spokesman, Maj. Scott Lundy.

On Monday, a large number of Taliban militants entered Naway-i-Barakzayi, a Helmand town north of Garmser, and fought a brief battle with police before they too fled the area, said a local police official, who also declined to be identified for policy reasons.

Assorted Resistance Action

7.16.06 AP & Softpedia & AFP & Xinhua & AMIR SHAH, Associated Press Writer

An Army general says a remote-controlled bomb also ripped through an Afghan army vehicle in the Girishk area of Helmand on Monday (local time), killing three soldiers and wounding three more.

General Rahmatullah Raufi says said vehicle was part of the security detail of an army logistics convoy that came under attack.

The bomb destroyed their army vehicle in the Yakshal village of Grishk district, Helmand province, Roufi said.

A bomber detonated his explosives inside a local Afghan justice department building, killing three employees Monday in southern Helmand province's capital, Lashkar Gah, police chief Ghulam Nabi Malakhail said. The bomber also died.

Local police chief Ghulam Nabi Malakhail says the bomb was planted inside the office of the local justice department director, who was killed in the blast.

Provincial spokesman Haji Mohaidin Khan says six other people were hurt when the device exploded in the crowded office, while the number of casualties could rise as people may have been trapped under the rubble.

"As a result of the explosion, the building has collapsed," Mr Khan said.

"We have recovered two bodies - that of the director of the department Samad Khan and another employee."

Two bodies were discovered and were taken by police while eye witnesses and bystanders stated that more people are believed to be dead under the rubble of the building, which also included an office of the justice department.

Three Afghan soldiers were killed and three wounded when a roadside bomb destroyed their vehicle in the same province.

Taliban-linked militants gunned down an Afghan laborer working for a U.S. military base in southeast Afghanistan, a press release of the American troops said Monday.

"Extremists shot dead an Afghan citizen in the Khwahan district of Logar province on Saturday. The victim was shot while walking home from the Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team installation where he worked," the press release added.

The assailants riding a motorbike made their good escape, it added.

It is the second time in the past one month that laborers working for the U.S. military installations came under militants' attack.

“The Debacle Of Britain In Afghanistan Cannot Be Ignored”

[Forwarded by Phil G July 16, 2006

From: Open letter from Tariq Ali to Fausto Bertinotti on Italian troops in Afghanistan

"The debacle of Britain in Afghanistan cannot be ignored, because British troops are at risk. They were never meant to be at risk and their presence in that country has nothing to do with British security.

"They are sweltering and dying in Helmand not to prop up an embattled regime in Kabul, for which they are hopelessly undermanned, but to keep NATO alive in Europe, an unworthy mission.

“Every assessment I have heard suggests that the sort of campaign envisaged by the government in southern Afghanistan would require not 3,000 or even 10,000 troops, but over 100,000.

Even the latter total has failed in Iraq, and Iraqis cannot hold a candle to Afghans for insurgent fanaticism." Simon Jenkins, The Guardian, 5 July, 2006

In recent weeks the killing of Afghan civilians has increased tenfold. Headlines which speak of '500 Taliban killed' are deliberate disinformation.

Notes From A Lost War:

“Local Government And Police Chiefs Are Rolling Over For The Taliban”

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

But a Kabul-based human rights observer just back from Washington said: "They're scratching their heads, asking 'How did it come to this?' and 'What are we going to do now?'"

July 15, 2006 Paul McGeough Chief Herald Correspondent in Kabul, Sydney Morning Herald [Excerpts]

The wealthy have become exceptionally so, but the poor languish as their homes are bulldozed to make way for poppy palaces and narco-villas.

There is still the stench of raw sewage in the streets; power is rationed because the Electricity Ministry cannot pay its fuel bill; there is little running water. Teachers and the police complain of insufficient and erratic pay. Kabulis grumble furiously about the aggression and arrogance with which the armoured convoys of US and NATO forces and foreign security contractors have taken over the streets.

Unemployment is chronic and, with average wages just \$US60 a month, all struggle against rocketing prices in the bazaars and a wild property market; a house that fetched \$US20 rent a month under the Taliban now pulls more than \$US3000 from a foreign aid agency.

Despite 14 per cent growth last year, the economy is essentially drugs and donations. Virtually no taxes are collected. Big dollars are doled out for reconstruction. But after crippling security costs and profit-taking, as contracts are sold from one company to the next, there is often little left to build roads or public facilities.

In the shade of a tree near the hut from which he rents out big cooking pots for wedding feasts, 45-year-old Khalilullah ventured that life was better since the fall of the Taliban. But then he reconsidered. "Nothing is really changed. There are no benefits for the people ... our expectations have not been fulfilled.

"We can move around more than we did under the Taliban. But with insecurity and higher prices people are losing faith in Karzai and the US."

Estimating that maybe half the people had turned against Karzai, a Kandahar MP, Fariba Ahmadzai, warned: "If we can't make serious decisions and act on them, this country will not be rebuilt."

Running operations from Pakistan, the Taliban now claim to have more than 12,000 men under arms and to be in control of more than 20 districts across their old southern

heartland provinces of Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand and Uruzgan. The total poppy crop is worth almost \$US3 billion a year.

Local government and police chiefs are rolling over for the Taliban to the extent that a local MP told the Herald: "It's a Taliban government down south now - the Afghan and foreign military can move only by aircraft; Kabul controls only five to 20 per cent of the southern provinces."

The Taliban are taking advantage of the planned handover of security in the south from the US to NATO on August 1. European governments had been confidently planning for development and reconstruction but they have been landing in an all-out war. Already Britain is packing hundreds more reinforcements onto aircraft.

The Taliban have warned villagers that the foreigners have come south to eradicate their only cash crop - the opium poppy - and that the switch of forces really amounts to an American retreat.

Their tactics have changed markedly since they were bundled out of Kabul in 2001. Now Taliban fighters swarm in 100-strong battle groups and make effective use of the same tools used by the Iraqi insurgency. They use the internet to spread their message just as effectively as their mosque noticeboards, and run their own sharia courts.

Dad Mohammed Khan, a sacked local intelligence chief who was elected to parliament, said: "People listen to the Taliban now because they are afraid, and that keeps them silent about the movement of the Taliban.

"They believed there would be a lot of help when the Americans came, but they are disappointed at getting nothing and they are turning against the foreigners.

"Increasingly, they doubt that the US can defeat the Taliban."

He estimated that as many as 50 Taliban supporters operated from key mosques, taking turns to fight or distribute dreaded "night letters", which carry threats against schools and other symbols of Kabul's or American power.

But they are up against an amoral, self-serving elite that operates with a reckless sense of impunity as it divides the spoils of power in backroom deals that have little to do with democracy.

Kabul's fledgling press is in revolt over attempts to curb reporting. A United Nations report that implicates much of the political elite as brutal war criminals is being suppressed and, at the last minute, Karzai brazenly added 13 warlords with links to drugs and private militias to a list of 100 new police chiefs. One of the worst is Kabul's new top cop.

Many are fearful. Ramazan Bachardoust, the Kabul MP, says history could repeat: "Before the mujahideen leaders gave way to the Taliban, there was a lot of corruption as the leaders took the best houses, the best land and the best cars for themselves. We're seeing it all again."

As it prepares to quit the south, the US rejects accusations of policy failure. But the fact that 6000 troops are replacing only 3000 Americans is an implicit acceptance that on the Americans' watch the Taliban regained control of much of the same region from which they snatched Afghanistan in the 1990s.

And, that while the Taliban reduced poppy cultivation to virtually zero in 2001, Washington and its allies are watching over the mother of all opium harvests this year.

Just as the US rejects comparisons between Iraq and Vietnam, it bristles at a growing tendency to compare Afghanistan with Iraq.

But a Kabul-based human rights observer just back from Washington said: "They're scratching their heads, asking 'How did it come to this?' and 'What are we going to do now?'"

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Army Spc. Christopher D. Rose outside St. Augustine Church in South San Francisco, Calif., July 11, 2006. Rose was killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad June 29, 2006. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

**Conclusive Proof “US War
Commanders” Are Crazy As Shit House
Rats**

7.17.06 Washington Times

U.S. war commanders think some level of U.S. forces will be needed in Iraq until 2016 and those forces will receive continued support from the vast majority of Iraqis.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

Jul 17, 2006 By ROBERT H. REID (AP) & By Alastair Macdonald, Reuters

An attack in Mahmoudiya began about 9 a.m. with a brief mortar barrage, followed by an armed assault by dozens of guerrillas. They killed three Iraqi soldiers at a checkpoint.

Following the attack, police rushed to the market, arresting people at random in an attempt to find the assailants, witnesses said.

Iraqi and U.S. soldiers came under fire and reported at least eight explosions, which bomb disposal experts said had been caused by grenades, the U.S. military said.

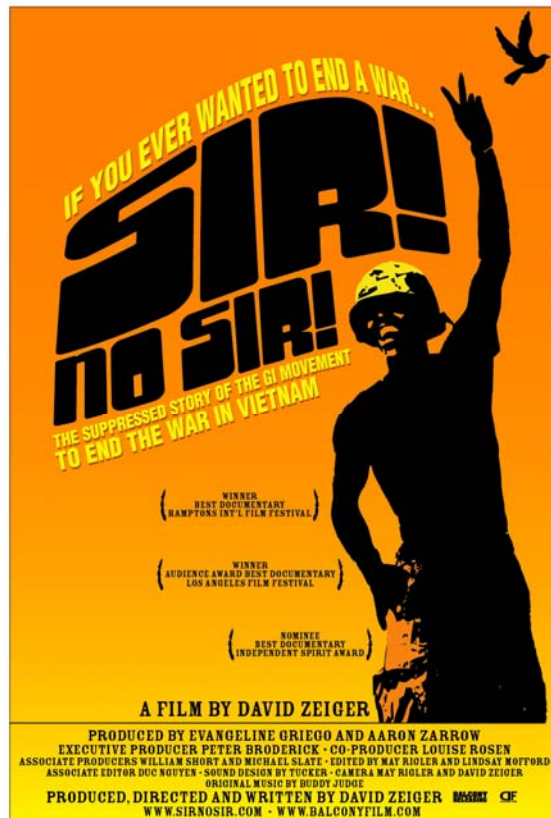
<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“Tens Of Thousands Of GIs
Were Involved In Resistance To
The Vietnam War”**

**“A Nationwide Anti-War Protest By
Active Military Personnel Shut Down**

Planned Celebrations At 28 U.S. Bases”



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

July 14, 2006 By Dean Kuipers, LA City Beat, Alternet.org

The director of the new film 'Sir, No Sir!' speaks up about GI resistance to war -- and why it's absolutely essential now.

David Zeiger's new documentary film, Sir, No Sir!, captures one particular day in 1970 that the U.S. military establishment desperately wants you to forget.

It was Armed Forces Day, and across the country, years of rising resistance to the war in Vietnam culminated in a nationwide anti-war protest by active military personnel that shut down planned celebrations at 28 U.S. bases.

In fact, tens of thousands of GIs were involved in resistance to the Vietnam War, printing over 100 underground antiwar newspapers and coordinating their actions in a string of activist coffeehouses that sprung up near bases all across the country.

Today, however, that memory has been all but erased.

And when Zeiger, an L.A.-based filmmaker, realized that soldiers speaking out about the Iraq War were being largely ignored because of military control of the war message, he felt he had to act.

A former activist in the antiwar coffeehouse circuit, Zeiger found loads of footage about what was a big news story in the 1960s and '70s, showing that thousands of soldiers thought it their duty to speak out against war back then. He hopes to empower those who need to do so today.

Dean Kuipers: Was the GI movement against the Vietnam War not well known?

David Zeiger: **Today, almost no one knows about it, but at the time, in fact, a lot of people did know about it.**

The demonstrations of GIs at Fort Hood for example - there were two demonstrations on Armed Forces Day, demonstrations in 1970 and 1971, that involved thousands of GIs -- those were covered by all the local media in Texas.

Walter Cronkite did a two-part series on the GI underground press. But in the years since, what has happened is literally people's memories have been reshaped by the Reagan administration, which has been obviously carried over with the Bush administrations.

The politics were that the Vietnam War was a noble war fought bravely by soldiers who came home only to be spat on and vilified by selfish middle class hippies who condemned them for the war and who betrayed them.

So the memory of what actually happened has been buried.

Kuipers: Was there an active campaign on the part of the DOD to try to scrub this out of memory?

Zeiger: The political agenda of erasing the GI movement from the memory of Vietnam was set by Reagan himself. He declared in that speech, "I will never send American troops again to a war that their government's not willing to win."

And then, in the early '80s, was a campaign largely orchestrated by the Reagan administration to "honor the vet." This was around the time that the Vietnam memorial was built.

This was very much the project of General Westmoreland, who had been the commander in Vietnam up until the Tet Offensive, and who was roundly hated by the troops, very similar to the role Rumsfeld has today.

The undercover political message was that they fought a good war. And if you say the war was not good then you're not honoring the vets.

Kuipers: But people who were against the war surely remember?

Zeiger: There's a lot of willingness -- even on the part of very progressive people -- to buy into that.

The Presidio Mutiny was one of the biggest events of the San Francisco antiwar movement during that era -- there was actually one really bad Hollywood movie made about it. But books about Vietnam never mention it. Even the Vietnam history that was on PBS in the late '70s, early '80s doesn't say anything about it.

These events have been literally, willfully written out. I got an e-mail from someone who said, "For years, I told people about this stuff and they thought I was crazy."

Kuipers: And soldiers used to publish underground newspapers?

Zeiger: They were coming out of bases, largely. A lot of people had access to mimeograph machines -- company clerks and whatever.

When I worked at the Oleo Strut coffee house in Killeen, Texas, which was off Fort Hood, the civilians helped get the printer (to put out a paper called The Fatigue Press). But all the articles were written by guys in the military and it was all laid out by them. Some of them had some staying power because they had a support base outside of the military. But others might come out with three or four issues and suddenly they got transferred or kicked out or jailed -- which also happened.

Kuipers: Were there consequences for GIs who did these things?

Zeiger: Absolutely. There's no actual law against publishing -- it's not in the Code of Military Justice -- but there's one catch-all regulation that you can't do anything that undermines good order and discipline in the military.

Kuipers: Were these coffeehouses and newspapers connected as a kind of network?

Zeiger: Yeah. It was mainly a fundraising network -- they weren't connected as a political organization. But there were a couple of national organizations that dedicated themselves to supporting the underground newspapers and coffeehouses at military bases.

From about 1968 to 1971, they were very successful -- there were maybe 30 to 40 places that existed near military bases. Even in Saigon: the National Lawyers Guild had a military counseling office in Saigon for GIs who were charged with fragging, for GIs who had deserted, to provide whatever legal aide they could for those guys.

Kuipers: Why do this film now?

Zeiger: Iraq. It was the buildup and the invasion of Iraq that essentially made this story new and relevant again. I realized if I don't tell this story now, then after the Iraq War, it's definitely going to be too much in the past.

It's cool to make a film that says nothing about the present but everyone sees it as a film about the present.

Kuipers: Is there a movement among the soldiers in the Iraq war to get us out of Iraq?

Zeiger: Absolutely. There have been more individuals who have refused to go to Iraq or refused to return to Iraq in the last couple of years than in the first few years of the Vietnam War. There are some very public cases. The one that is becoming a big case now is Lieutenant Ehren Watada. There's Sgt. Kevin Benderman, who's in prison now. There's Petty Officer Pablo Paredes down in San Diego. Katherine Jashinski.

The fact that these soldiers are choosing to very publicly refuse and oppose the war is significant because they're setting themselves up for the worst kind of military retribution, which is not just putting you in prison but declaring that you're betraying your buddies.

This is how the military has re-shaped things to undercut an antiwar movement in the military. In Vietnam, you went in and out of the war as individuals. One of the things the military does now is they keep units together; you're there to protect yourself and your buddies.

Kuipers: Have you connected with that movement?

Zeiger: Yeah. Iraq Veterans Against the War Iraq Veterans Against the War, which was formed a couple of years ago on the first anniversary of the war, has been working very closely with the film and we've actually done a program with them of sending free DVD's of the film to anyone in the service who wants them.

Kuipers: Are soldiers aware of an antiwar movement and how it pertains to them?

Zeiger: I'm not sure how much debate there is going on inside the military about the nature of the war and the justness of it. I know that if you saw the film Occupation Dreamland, which was the second film about Iraq troops -- the one that came out after Gunner Palace -- it revealed the conflict that exists inside a unit of the 101st Airborne. It really showed that there's not the kind of monolithic unity that people think there is.

Kuipers: It's clear that soldiers have questions about their role. But do they have contact with solutions?

Zeiger: It's hard to know. One of the things that influenced a lot of troops in Vietnam was the Vietnamese people. There was a lot more freedom in Vietnam, as soldiers, to be out there among the people if they wanted to. That doesn't seem to be the case in Iraq.

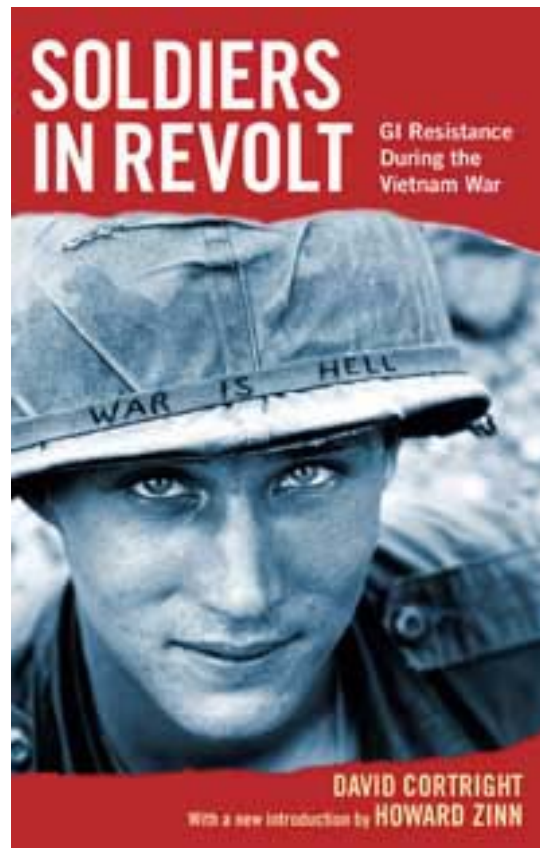
Dean Kuipers is editor of LA CityBeat.

Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

The Sir! No Sir! DVD goes on sale July 15, exclusively at www.sirnosir.com.

Also available will be a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of

"A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film by me about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."



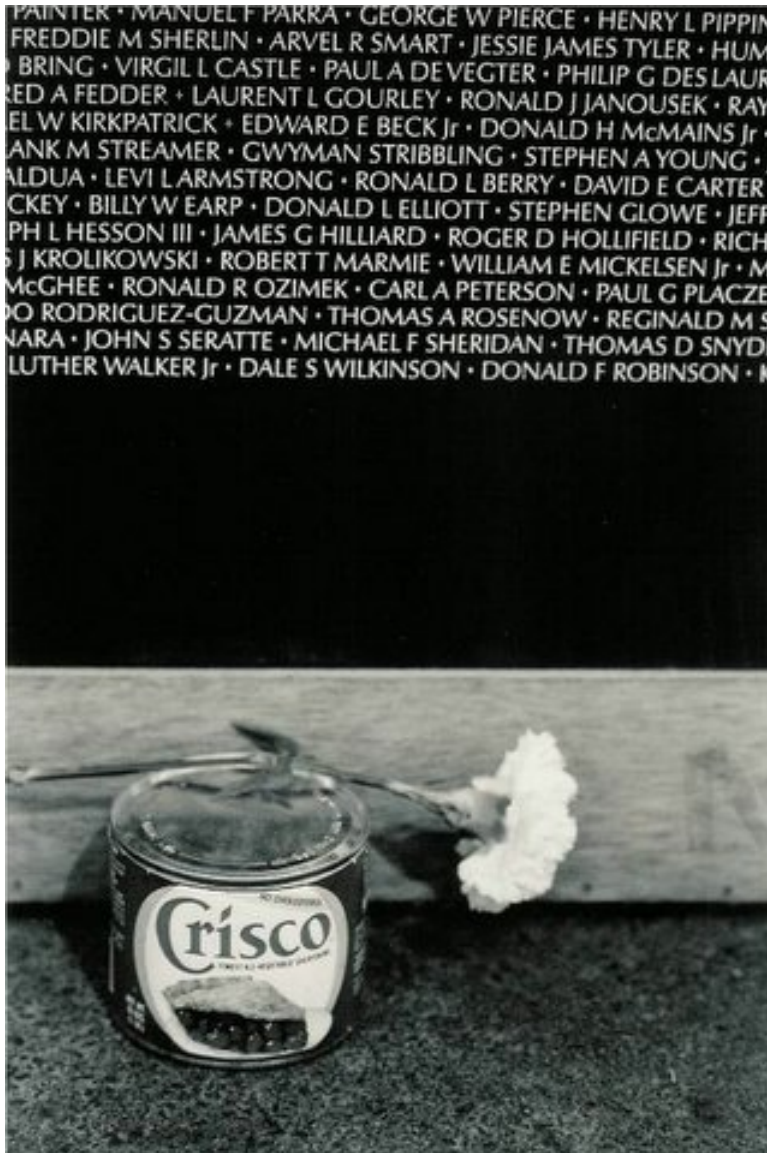
Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

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)

A Brutal Truth Is Left At The Moving Wall In Salem, Oregon In 1989



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: July 17, 2006

The connection between Vietnam and Iraq

Betrayal of the American soldier in Vietnam,

was the ultimate pathology that was the major cause of Vietnam Veterans committing suicide after they came home. No other phrase better describes this brutal reality than "Political Incest."

The emotions have a great deal of trouble grasping this truth, because it dismantles one's belief system.

The soldier is simply a pawn in a deadly chess game, for corporate profit. The Soldier Is For Sale. When I came home from Vietnam, the lies of that war consumed me. Day after day, I withdrew from society.

For me, it felt like I was in enemy territory. In the end, the truth was always hidden in my anger. What made it so difficult, was I had to feel the pain behind the anger.

It is not what we experience that destroys us-- it is our inability to feel the grief behind those experiences that ultimately takes our life. The people who face this truth, will be compelled to bear witness. Their suffering has to have meaning, and if revealing the forbidden truth can save lives, their war experience will indeed have meaning.

For many veterans, this task will last a lifetime. The will to bear witness for many survivors is a matter of life or death. The living must speak for the dead.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
July 17, 2006

Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Bush Buddies Steal \$30 Billion Of Reconstruction Money: Result: Over Half Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops Dead Now

As they sit in the stifling heat with just six hours of juice per day and watch American contractors swagger around their country, largely immune from criminal prosecution, over half of all Iraqis approve of attacks on U.S. personnel.

17 July 2006 By Joshua Holland [Excerpts] & July 13, 2006 By Pauline Jelinek, Associated Press

If you were to gather together the finest, most creative minds and ask them to come up with a plan to outsource the reconstruction of Iraq that would guarantee shoddy work, overcharges, unfinished projects and overt graft, they would probably devise a system very similar to what U.S. taxpayers have enjoyed - to the tune of about \$30 billion - for the past three years.

In Baghdad, basics like electricity, sanitation and clean drinking water are at lower levels today than they were before the war.

A poll last year found that after more than two years of work, only 30 percent of Iraqis had any idea that there was any kind of reconstruction effort at all.

The reconstruction of Iraq has become a boondoggle of historic proportions, but make no mistake: It's a boondoggle by design.

It's an elegant design that begins by shrinking the universe of possible contractors as far down as possible - competition mercilessly drives firms to ever greater efficiency, and that won't do.

The Center for Public Integrity (CPI) found that 60 percent of the top 70 firms getting reconstruction contracts in Iraq - the New York Times called them "among the politically best-connected in Washington" - had high-level employees or board members who came out of the military or the government.

The group donated almost \$50 million to PACs and candidates since 1990.

Charles Lewis, then director of CPI, said that there's "a stench of political favoritism and cronyism surrounding the contracting process in both Iraq and Afghanistan."

Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., said of the Army. "I believe literally hundreds of millions, and probably billions, of dollars have been wasted; it's almost an unbelievable amount of waste and abuse and likely fraud."

Many of these contracts are "cost-plus" - the firms get a percentage of what they dish out to their subcontractors. They effectively become bloated, well-connected corporate middlemen, hiring firms that are actually qualified to do each job (hopefully) and then doing what the government itself should be doing- overseeing their performance.

But with a straight cut of the lucre, their only incentive is to stick it to the taxpayers. Reps. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., and John Dingell, D-Mich., were surprised to find that

"Halliburton officials frequently told employees that the high prices charged by vendors were not a problem. One whistleblower said that a Halliburton motto was: 'Don't worry about price. It's cost-plus.'"

And the tab is being paid in blood as well as treasure.

The inspector general says a "reconstruction gap" has developed between Iraqis' (and Americans') expectations and what's really getting done.

One shopkeeper in Baghdad told the Washington Post: "It is easy for the Americans to say, 'We are doing reconstruction in Iraq,' and we hear that. But to make us believe it, they should show us where this reconstruction is. Maybe they are doing this reconstruction for them in the Green Zone. But this is not for the Iraqis."

It would be overstating the case to say that the reconstruction mess led directly to the insurgency, but it sure hasn't helped win any hearts and minds.

As they sit in the stifling heat with just six hours of juice per day and watch American contractors swagger around their country, largely immune from criminal prosecution, over half of all Iraqis approve of attacks on U.S. personnel.

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Israel Takes A Stupid Pill

15 July 2006 By Larry Johnson, Booman Tribune [Excerpts]

Apparently not content to let the U.S. do a self-immolation act in the Middle East by itself, Israel decided to set itself on fire by invading Lebanon. Burn baby burn?

Like George Bush, Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, never served in a combat unit and launched military operations without thinking the matter through. In fact, Olmert reportedly never even served in the military.

I raise this because there is one simple question Israel cannot answer about the current operations: what is their strategic military objective.

Olmert has somehow persuaded the Israeli military to ignore strategy, think tactically, and in the process become really stupid. The events in the next several weeks will expose as myth the canard that you can secure a nation by killing terrorists. No you can't.

Israel is attacking targets in Lebanon like a drunken sailor in a bar fight. Flailing about, causing significant damage, hitting innocent bystanders, and generally making a mess of things.

What about Hamas and Hezbollah?

They are not terrorists. They are something far more dangerous. They are fully functioning political, social, religious, and military organizations that use terrorism tactics, but they are far more formidable than terrorist groups like Al Qaeda or the Basque Terrorist Organization.

They do have the resources and the personnel to project force, sustain operations, and cannot be easily defeated.

Unlike the Egyptian and Syrian armies in 1973, Hamas and Hezbollah will not easily fold and cannot be defeated in a seven day war. If that is the assumption among some Israeli military planners it is a crazy fantasy.

While most folks in the United States buy into the Hollywood storyline of poor little Israel fighting for it's survival against big, bad Muslims, the reality unfolding on our TV screens shows something else.

Hamas and Hezbollah attacked military targets, kidnapping soldiers on military patrols may be an act of war and a provocation, but it is not terrorism.

Israel is not attacking the individuals who hit their soldiers. Israel is engaged in mass punishment.

How did Israel respond? They bombed civilian targets and civilian infrastructure and have killed many civilians.

Let's see if I have this right.

The Arab "terrorists" attack military units, destroy at least one tank, and are therefore terrorists. Israel retaliates by launching aerial, naval, and artillery bombardments of civilian areas and they are engaging in self-defense.

A CALL TO ACTION: DEMONSTRATION AT ISRAELI MISSION TO THE UN ON TUESDAY

PROTEST ATTACKS ON LEBANON AND THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE!

DEMAND FREEDOM FOR LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS!

When Tuesday July 18, 4:30 p.m.

**Where Israeli Mission to the UN, at 2nd Ave. between E
42nd and 43rd Sts., NY**

Why:

The Israeli military is expanding its operations from Palestine to Lebanon. It has killed scores of Lebanese civilians and bombed essential civilian infrastructure, such as the Beirut airport. Simultaneously, the Israeli military continues its deadly attacks on Gaza and its stifling economic blockade .

True to form, Israel continues its aggressive expansionism in efforts to suppress all resistance to its oppressive, illegal policies toward the people of the region.

Come to a protest and demonstration to demand action now to stop the killing of Lebanese and Palestinians, hold Israel accountable for its crimes, and free all Lebanese and Palestinian political prisoners.

Bring signs, candles, and slogans. We have a common struggle and history is on our side. Come out and show your solidarity.

For more information, contact Riham Barghouti at rihambarghouti@yahoo.com ; or Issa Mikel at 917-446-8032 or issamikel@gmail.com .

Endorsed by: The National Council of Arab-Americans – New York, International Solidarity Movement – NYC, the New York Campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and

Sanctions, ANSWER Coalition, Campus Anti-War Network, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee – ADC NY, International Socialist Organization, United for Peace and Justice - NYC, International Action Center, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (As of 7.16.06: List in formation)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

“But Is Israel Winning?”

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

07/16/06 By Robert Fisk, The Independent [Excerpts]

The Israelis were yesterday trumpeting the fact that the missile was made in Iran as proof of Iran's involvement in the Lebanon war. This was odd reasoning. Since almost all the missiles used to kill the civilians of Lebanon over the past four days were made in Seattle, Duluth and Miami in the United States, their use already suggests to millions of Lebanese that America is behind the bombardment of their country.

It will be called the massacre of Marwaheen.

All the civilians killed by the Israelis had been ordered to abandon their homes in the border village by the Israelis themselves a few hours earlier. Leave, they were told by loudspeaker; and leave they did, 20 of them in a convoy of civilian cars. That's when the Israeli jets arrived to bomb them, killing 20 Lebanese, at least nine of them children. The local fire brigade could not put out the fires as they all burned alive in the inferno.

Another "terrorist" target had been eliminated.

Yesterday, the Israelis even produced more "terrorist" targets - petrol stations in the Bekaa Valley all the way up to the frontier city of Hermel in northern Lebanon and another series of bridges on one of the few escape routes to Damascus, this time between Chtaura and the border village of Masnaa.

But is Israel winning?

Friday night's missile attack on an Israeli warship off the coast of Lebanon suggests otherwise. Four Israeli sailors were killed, two of them hurled into the sea when a tele-guided Iranian-made missile smashed into their Hetz-class gunboat just off Beirut at dusk.

Those Lebanese who had endured the fire of Israeli gunboats on the coastal highway over many years were elated. They may not have liked Hizbollah - but they hated the Israelis.

The original border crossing, the capture of the two soldiers and the killing of three others was planned, according to Hassan Nasrallah, the Hizbollah leader who escaped assassination by the Israelis on Friday evening, more than five months ago.

And Friday's missile attack on the Israeli gunboat was not the last-minute inspiration of a Hizbollah member who just happened to see the warship.

Hizbollah had presumed the Israelis would cross into Lebanon after the capture of the two soldiers and they blew up the first Israeli Merkava tank when it was only 35 feet inside the country. All four Israeli crewmen were killed and the Israeli army moved no further forward.

The long-range Iranian-made missiles which later exploded on Haifa had been preceded only a few weeks ago by a pilotless Hizbollah drone aircraft which surveyed northern Israel and then returned to land in eastern Lebanon after taking photographs during its flight.

These pictures not only suggested a flight path for Hizbollah's rockets to Haifa; they also identified Israel's top-secret military air traffic control centre in Miron.

The next attack - concealed by Israel's censors - was directed at this facility. Codenamed "Apollo", Israeli military scientists work deep inside mountain caves and bunkers at Miron, guarded by watchtowers, guard-dogs and barbed wire, watching all air traffic moving in and out of Beirut, Damascus, Amman and other Arab cities. The mountain is surmounted by clusters of antennae which Hizbollah quickly identified as a military tracking centre. Before they fired rockets at Haifa, they therefore sent a cluster of missiles towards Miron.

The caves are untouchable but the targeting of such a secret location by Hizbollah deeply shocked Israel's military planners. The "centre of world terror" - or whatever they imagine Lebanon to be - could not only breach their frontier and capture their soldiers but attack the nerve-centre of the Israeli northern military command.

Then came the Haifa missiles and the attack on the gunboat. It is now clear that this successful military operation - so contemptuous of their enemy were the Israelis that although their warship was equipped with cannon and a Vulcan machine gun, they didn't even provide the vessel with an anti-missile capability - was also planned months ago.

Once the Hetz-class boats appeared, Hizbollah positioned a missile crew on the coast of west Beirut not far from Jnah, a crew trained over many weeks for just such an attack. It took less than 30 seconds for the Iranian-made missile to leave Beirut and hit the vessel square amidships, setting it on fire and killing the sailors.

Ironically, the Israelis themselves had invited journalists on an "embedded" trip with their navy only hours earlier - they were allowed to film the ships' guns firing on Lebanon - and the moment Hizbollah hit the warship on Friday, Hizbollah's television station, Al-Manar, began showing the "embedded" film. It was a slick piece of propaganda.

The Israelis were yesterday trumpeting the fact that the missile was made in Iran as proof of Iran's involvement in the Lebanon war. This was odd reasoning.

Since almost all the missiles used to kill the civilians of Lebanon over the past four days were made in Seattle, Duluth and Miami in the United States, their use already suggests to millions of Lebanese that America is behind the bombardment of their country.

“The Incompetence Of Arab Rulers, The Arrogance Of A Superpower And The Self-Righteousness Of The Israeli State”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

July 17, 2006 Charles Harb, The Guardian. Professor Charles Harb teaches social psychology at the American University of Beirut

The story reported in much of the western media in the past few days has painted a straightforward picture: Hizbullah's militants suddenly decided to launch an attack against Israel, killed some of its soldiers, kidnapped two, and has bombed Israeli cities. Israel, acting on its right to self-defence, retaliated by bombing the "infrastructure of terror" in Lebanon.

The crisis will end when Israel's terms are implemented: the kidnapped soldiers are returned, Hizbullah is disarmed, and the Lebanese army protects Israel's northern border.

This narrative borders on the dangerously naive.

Since Israel's 1996 massacre of Lebanese refugees at Qana in Lebanon, and the end of the 22-year Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000, an agreement between the various parties - sponsored by France, the US, and the UN - has reflected the "balance of terror": Israel would refrain from bombing Lebanese civilian structures, and Hizbullah would not bomb civilian structures in northern Israel.

Although several military operations by the Israelis and by Hizbullah have occurred since 2000, neither side has violated this understanding.

In 2004, Hizbullah secured the release of some prisoners held captive in Israeli jails in an exchange with Israel. And Hizbullah's military operation last week falls squarely within that framework.

Israel's immediate reaction broke the established rules of the game by bombing civilian structures across Lebanon, imposing a land, air and sea blockade, terrorising the population, and killing more than 100 civilians in a disproportionate display of power not

seen since 1982. Hizbullah then retaliated by bombing northern Israel, in line with the "balance of terror" equations, and the escalation of the conflict has spiralled.

Israel's significant policy shift is linked to domestic politics, psychological factors and power plays.

The wider geostrategic implications are more important than the operational details.

For the first time in recent history, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli and US interests now converge in an implicit alliance to quell Hizbullah.

Reactions by these states in the past few days have been strongly indicative of such a stance, from the Saudi statement implicitly condemning Hizbullah, to the US president's explicit refusal to "rein in" Israel.

US rhetoric last year about spreading "democracy and freedom" in the Middle East was ended when the administration realised that the outcome might lead to governments more in tune with national interests than American ones.

The complacent reaction by US (and, to some extent, European) officials to the widespread election fraud and repression in Egypt as well as the open war on the democratically elected Palestinian government reflect this change.

The question is increasingly whether entire populations are being punished for making the "wrong" democratic choices.

The Islamic-led resistance movements are now the only credible forces resisting the US occupation forces in Iraq, the Israeli occupation forces in Palestine, and the dictatorial regimes in the Middle East. They have come of age, and are ready to fill the void left by Arab nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s.

Attempts to divide the movement along sectarian and geographic lines have been given significant airtime in the media, but do not seem to fully reflect the reality on the ground.

The Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and Hizbullah are far from being the fanatics some in the west would like to believe they are. They have displayed an increasingly complex and pragmatic discourse, moderated over time and appealing to wider sections of Arab public opinion.

Hizbullah is at a crossroads.

It faces a massive Israeli onslaught, hostile international media and Arab regimes, and a potentially hostile Lebanese government. On the other hand, it has broad support among the Arab population across the region.

As one Lebanese analyst argued, Hizbullah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, will either come out of this a hero the like of which the Arab world hasn't seen since Nasser or he will have to step down.

What is happening in Lebanon is a tragedy for a people who have been made to suffer a great deal in the past three decades.

A tiny country with a war-weary population and great pride is being made to pay once more for the incompetence of Arab rulers, the arrogance of a superpower and the self-righteousness of the Israeli state.

“Under The Nuremberg Standard Used To Sentence Nazi War Criminals To Death, The Israeli Government Is Clearly Guilty Of War Crimes”

07/17/06 by Paul Craig Roberts, Information Clearing House [Excerpt]

Regardless, in the first two days of the Israeli military attack on Lebanon more than a hundred civilians, including Canadians, have been killed by Israeli bombs (gifts from U.S. taxpayers). The Beirut International Airport has been repeatedly bombed, as have residential neighborhoods, roads, bridges, ports, and power stations.

Soldiers are a legitimate military target. Civilians, civilian neighborhoods, tourists, and international airports are not.

Under the Nuremberg standard used to sentence Nazi war criminals to death, the Israeli government is clearly guilty of war crimes.

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