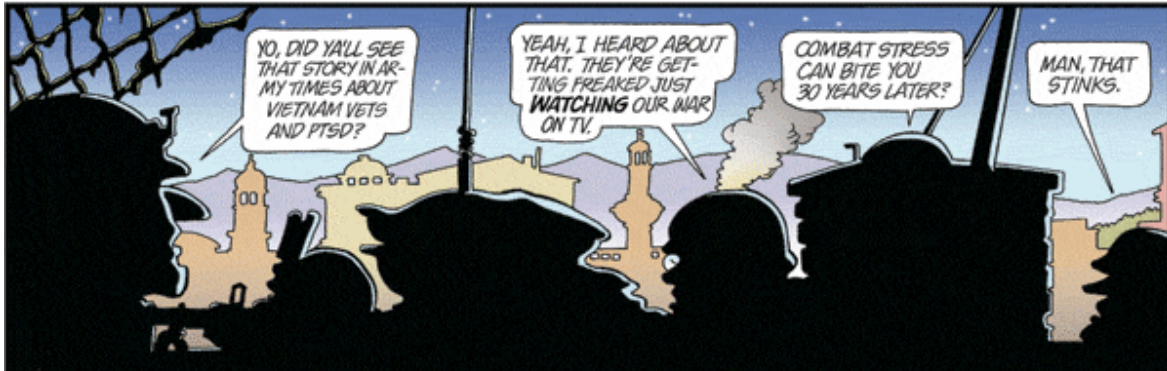


# GI SPECIAL 4H19:



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

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Sgt. Dies Of March 7 Wounds**

August 18, 2006 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 785-06

Sgt. John P. Phillips, 29, of St. Stephen, S.C., died Aug. 16 at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas, from wounds received while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq, on March 7. He was assigned to 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan.

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### **Army Was Life For Slain Soldier; Seattle Native Killed In Roadside Bombing**



Staff Sgt. Tracy Melvin

August 12, 2006 By MIKE BARBER, P-I REPORTER

As a young soldier in the late 1990s, Tracy Melvin served with the Army's "Old Guard" at Arlington National Cemetery, rendering the nation's finest honors to its most distinguished veterans.

In December 1998, he was a pallbearer for the funeral of John Henry Stanford, the retired Army general who led Seattle schools and died of leukemia.

Next week, Melvin, 31, of Seattle, an Army staff sergeant, will himself be laid to rest with other soldiers rendering military honors at the Northwest's hallowed ground, Tahoma National Cemetery near Kent.

Melvin, on his second tour of duty in Iraq, was killed Sunday, along with two other soldiers, when a roadside bomb blew up near their armored Humvee during combat operations in Ar Ramadi, Iraq.

**Melvin was the 126th member of the armed forces with strong ties to Washington state to die in Iraq since the war began in March 2003.**

He left behind a wife of one year, Mary, of Arizona. One of her three children is also a soldier who was stationed with Melvin in Iraq, and he will escort Melvin's body home, said Melvin's father, Bill Swindle of South Seattle.

"Tracy started with the Old Guard, and now he's going out with the Old Guard, in a way," Melvin's father, a Navy veteran, said Friday.

"At least Mary's oldest son wasn't with him in the Humvee."

Melvin was one of four children of Bill and Janice Swindle.

"The Army was his life. He was on his third enlistment and said he would 're-up' and go as long as he could," Swindle said.

"His goal from the time he was 10 or 12 years old was to be a soldier. His brother was in the Marine Corps. I was a Navy man, 10 years active, 18 Reserve," Swindle said.

Melvin was born in Auburn and attended Sealth High School, where he played football, and then graduated from a Federal Way alternative school in 1995.

Melvin entered the Army in 1995 and married Sheri Vandemoere on Veterans Day that year, said her mother, Paula Vandeway of Tacoma.

The two went into the Army together. They had two dogs, Kevlar and Akula, that Melvin still asked about.

Though they divorced after seven years and remarried other people, Melvin and Vandemoere remained close to each other's in-laws, Vandeway said. Melvin's ex-wife, now Sheri Washington and a registered nurse, recently completed training in Texas to receive a commission as an officer and plans to attend Melvin's funeral, Vandeway said.

"He is like family to all of us, and I'm just devastated," Vandeway said.

Melvin was assigned to the Army's 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division based in Baumholder, Germany. He served assignments in Egypt and Panama, and at Fort Lewis.

Before that, Melvin served four years with the 3rd United States Infantry Regiment, known more popularly as the Old Guard, at Fort Myer, Va., home of Arlington National Cemetery.

The unit is not only responsible for solemn, spit-and-polish services and ceremonies, including perpetually guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, but also for combat readiness in defense of Washington, D.C.

Melvin was home on leave from Iraq two months ago. His parents were hoping to meet his wife, Mary, for the first time later this year after he returned home from his latest deployment to Iraq. They have been in touch by phone.

"She has two other children in school and has been broken up but has family with her," Swindle said. "We want to meet her even more now."

Funeral services are being planned through Yarrington Funeral Home in White Center for next Friday.

"We're now waiting for his casket to bring him home," Swindle said.

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## **Soldier From Clovis Loses Life**

August 9, 2006 By Sharna Johnson, Freedom Newspapers

**Leroy "J.R." Segura Jr. had already earned a Purple Heart when he returned to Iraq for a second tour of duty in July.**

**Returning to the war-ravaged country just six months after his first tour was difficult for his son, Leroy Segura Sr. said. He was tired and wanted some down time but didn't complain, his father said.**

**"He thought it was too soon," the senior Segura said his son told him when he received his orders to Iraq for the second time.**

J. R. Segura, 23, a 2001 Clovis High graduate, died Friday from injuries sustained in a vehicle accident while serving in Habbaniyah, Iraq, a news release from the Department of Defense reported. A sergeant assigned to the 362nd Engineer Company, 54th Engineer Battalion at Fort Benning, Ga., Segura built and maintained bridges.

Family members gathered Tuesday at Segura's childhood home and talked about him.

They described a family-oriented young man who loved his grandmother's homemade tortillas and his mother's menudo. They recalled how he loved summer camping trips, how he would play in the Pecos River, and how he would scoop up his baby brother for hugs.

Most of all they remembered his endless smile.

"Happy-go-lucky," is how Leroy Segura described his son.

During his first tour of duty, J.R. Segura suffered burns to his arms when a suicide bomber rammed his Army vehicle.

He told his father he saw a blinding white light as he turned just in time to see the bomb explode. He woke later in the hospital, he told his parents.

J.R. Segura recovered from his injuries and returned to duty, completing his rotation in the war-torn country, his father said.

“He was a little shaken up but his spirits were good. He saw a lot of scary stuff he shouldn’t have seen,” Leroy Segura Sr. said.

An accomplished high school distance runner and solid student, J.R. Segura followed in the footsteps of his father and uncles and joined the military, family members said.

“He had a choice but that’s what he wanted,” his father said.

His parents said they were surprised when he came home and told them he had joined the Army.

U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq had them concerned, his mother, Sandra Segura, said. But they felt it was his decision to make.

“That’s what he wanted to do — something clicked. I guess he just wanted to make a difference,” the soldier’s father said. It was hard for them, but they supported him, he said.

“He would always say, ‘It’s not that bad over here, Mom,’” Sandra Segura said.

In less than four years, Segura made sergeant and was planning to make the Army his career.

“Everything was going so well for him, everything was just falling into place,” his father told. “He was focused on that E6 (rank), he was just about there.”

His parents went to see him at Fort Benning last month before his unit was deployed.

“They were a good bunch of kids there. He got close to his new unit,” his father said. “They knew what they were going to be facing it together.”

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## **Paducah Soldier Injured**

8/18/2006 ABC24

A 101st Airborne Division soldier has been seriously wounded in a suicide bombing in Iraq.

Sergeant Brad Alexander lives in Woodlawn (Tennessee) with his wife and son. He's a native of Paducah, Kentucky.

Alexander's father, Buel Alexander, says his son was in Baghdad in front of his Humvee when a woman detonated herself nearby on Wednesday.

The soldier suffered burns, a broken ankle and had to have one leg amputated above the knee.

Alexander is 33 years old, has been in the Army for ten years and his second tour in Iraq was scheduled to end September second.

After receiving emergency treatment in Iraq, Alexander was transferred to an Army hospital in Germany and is expected to be brought to a Texas hospital Friday.

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## **Ft. Campbell Soldier Seriously Wounded In Bombing**

8/18/2006 NewsChannel 5.com

A soldier with the 101st Airborne Division out of Fort Campbell has been seriously wounded in a bombing in Iraq.

Sergeant Brad Alexander lives in Woodlawn, Tennessee with his wife and son, and is a native of Paducah, Kentucky.

Alexander's father said his son received burns, a broken ankle and had to have one leg amputated above the knee.

Alexander, 33, has been in the Army for ten years. It is his second tour in Iraq. He was scheduled to leave September 2.

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## **Spruce Creek Grad Wounded**

August 17, 2006 By ANNE GEGGIS, Staff Writer, News-Journal Corporation

A 2002 Spruce Creek High School graduate serving in Iraq with the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne unit was in critical but stable condition Wednesday night after a suicide bombing attack in the Iraqi city of Muqdadiyah, his family said.

Details were sketchy Wednesday about the incident northeast of Baghdad that left Kenneth "Trey" Cate, 22, of South Daytona with shrapnel wounds and broken limbs.

But his father, Dr. Lee Cate of South Daytona, said the family was "extremely relieved" to hear his son speak by telephone after undergoing surgery about 4:30 p.m., local time. The attack occurred about 11 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time, during Cate's second-to-last patrol before he was scheduled to end his second Iraq tour.

"We could hear him but he couldn't hear us," said his father, a longtime Port Orange physician. "He said, 'I'm OK. Everything's OK.' "

Dr. Cate said his son was manning a traffic control point in the city when he felt someone come up and grab him. The bomb exploded and shots were fired. Kenneth

Cate took some shots and suffered a severe leg fracture, but no vital organs were damaged, his father said.

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## **Patrol Attacked In Maqdadiya; Number Of U.S. Casualties Not Yet Announced**

Aug 18, 2006 By DPA

**Iraqi media Friday reported what was believed to have been the first-ever attack by a female suicide bomber, an attack which targeted joint Iraqi-US forces.**

The Iraqi news agency al-Dar cited eyewitnesses as saying the attack took place Wednesday in Maqdadiya, 110 kilometres north-east of Baghdad.

The woman, wearing an explosives belt, approached a joint US-Iraqi forces patrol positioned near a bus stop and blew herself up, the report said.

**At least seven were killed and more than another 20 wounded, including civilians and military personnel, al-Dar said. The US and Iraqi military did not specify the number of casualties inflicted upon their forces in this attack.**

Eyewitnesses said that joint Iraqi and US forces moved in to seal off the site of the blast while US helicopters hovered overhead.

**One of these helicopters reportedly landed in order to evacuate wounded US soldiers. Iraqi and US military vehicles also moved in to evacuate their injured personnel.**

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## **British Military Base Comes Under Mortar Fire**

Aug 18, 2006 By DPA

The British military base near Amarah, some 380 kilometres south of Baghdad, came under mortar fire Friday morning, Iraqi security sources said.

The sources told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa that unidentified insurgents fired five mortar rounds on Abu Naji base, five kilometres to the south of the city at dawn on Friday.

The sound of explosions could be heard echoing near the base.

The mortar attack was confirmed by the British military, but they did not comment on the extent of material damage or casualties inflicted by the attack.

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## Two Contractors With Local Connections Killed

August 18, 2006 Huntsville Times

Two contractors working in Iraq for the Army Corps of Engineers' center in Huntsville have been killed by roadside bombs in Iraq this week.

One was killed Sunday and another Thursday, according to a news release from the Corps of Engineers, which is in charge of storing and destroying captured munitions in Iraq. There have now been 28 contractors associated with the Huntsville center killed in Iraq. None so far have been from the local area.

The contractor killed Sunday was Rogelio Saraida, 47, from the Philippines. The vehicle he was riding in was struck by an "improvised explosive device," according to the Corps of Engineers. Saraida worked as a security specialist and was employed by the AIM Group, headquartered in Houston, Texas.

The name of the contractor who died Thursday has not been released. His vehicle also was struck by an IED, officials said.

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## “Their Worst Fear, One That Some American Soldiers Share, Is That Top Officials Don’t Really Understand What’s Happening”

**“When I have briefed General Officers, I have given them my perspective and assessment of the situation. Many have been surprised at what I have to say, but I suspect that in the end nothing will or has changed.”**

Aug. 14, 2006 By Tom Lasseter, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

TIKRIT, Iraq: As security conditions continue to deteriorate in Iraq, many Iraqi politicians are challenging the optimistic forecasts of governments in Baghdad and Washington, with some worrying that the rosy views are preventing the creation of effective strategies against the escalating violence.



**Their worst fear, one that some American soldiers share, is that top officials don't really understand what's happening.**

"The American policy has failed both in terms of politics and security, but the big problem is that they will not confess or admit that," said Mahmoud Othman, a Kurdish member of parliament.

Othman charges that top American officials spend most of their time in the heavily guarded Green Zone in Baghdad and at large military bases across the country, and don't know what's happening in the neighborhoods and provinces beyond.

Shiite Muslim parliament member Jalaladin al Saghir had a similar view.

**"All the American policies have failed because the American analysis of the situation is wrong; it is not related to reality," Saghir said.**

**"The slaughtered Iraqi man on the street conveys the best explanation" for what's happening in Iraq.**

**Some U.S. soldiers in Iraq reluctantly agree.**

**"As an intelligence officer ... I have had the chance to move around Baghdad on mounted and dismounted patrols and see the city and violence from the ground," wrote one American military officer in Iraq.**

**"I think that the greatest problem that we deal (besides the insurgents and militia) with is that our leadership has no real comprehension of the ground truth. I wish that I could offer a solution, but I can't.**

**"When I have briefed General Officers, I have given them my perspective and assessment of the situation. Many have been surprised at what I have to say, but I suspect that in the end nothing will or has changed."**

McClatchy is withholding the officer's name to protect him from possible retaliation by his superiors or political appointees in the Pentagon for communicating with the news media without authorization.

American officials and Iraqi officials appointed by them continue to orchestrate ceremonies, news conferences and speeches that suggest that things are getting better.

Nationwide statistics during the past three years suggest that American efforts to secure Iraq aren't succeeding.

While various military operations have at times improved security in parts of the country, the bloodshed has mounted with each U.S.-declared step of progress, according to figures that the Brookings Institution research center compiled from news and government reports.

**When L. Paul Bremer, then the top U.S. representative in Iraq, appointed an Iraqi Governing Council in July 2003, insurgent attacks averaged 16 daily. When**

Saddam Hussein was captured that December, the average was 19. When Bremer signed the hand-over of sovereignty in June 2004, it was 45 attacks daily.

When Iraq held its elections for a transitional government in January 2005, it was 61. When Iraqis voted last December for a permanent government, it was 75.

When U.S. forces killed terrorist mastermind Abu Musab al Zarqawi in June, it was up to 90.

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



7.29.06: US marines at a site where a car bomb exploded. (AFP/Marwan Ibrahim)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed: Nationality Not Announced**

8/18/2006 By FISNIK ABRASHI, The Associated Press

In eastern Kunar province, militants attacked a coalition patrol, killing a coalition soldier and wounding another, a coalition statement said.

The nationalities of the soldiers were not disclosed. Most of the coalition troops in Kunar are American.

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## **“The Only Symbol Of Government Authority”**

Aug 18, 2006 By Terry Friel, (Reuters) [Excerpts]

At least 41 teachers and students have been killed over the past 12 months in a wave of attacks on the country's schools.

Human Rights Watch and analysts say the Taliban, other militants and warlords attack civilian targets such as schools and aid workers to convince Afghans the government can't protect them and can't control the country.

In many areas, schools are the only symbol of government authority, they say.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

### **4,000 More Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

August 21, 2006 Army Times

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, began its long-delayed deployment to Iraq on Aug. 9 after a departure ceremony at Conn Barracks, Schweinfurt, Germany.

Originally slated to deploy in May, the 4,000-member brigade did not get its final movement order until mid-July.

In the Baghdad area, the brigade will be under the operational control of the 1st Armored Division.

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### **“The Condition Of The Vehicles We Are Issued Is Almost Criminal”**

Letter To The Editor

Army Times  
8.21.06

The priority of resources here in Iraq has been completely lost on the senior leadership of the Army.

It is easier for us in Ramadi to get ice cream than it is to get repair parts for our overused M1114 Humvees.

On a recent trip to Logistical Support Area Anaconda, I saw numerous vehicles that looked almost brand new, while we in the Sunni Triangle are issued M1114s full of trash.

**Many of our so-called new vehicles require major overhauls as soon as we get them. Transmissions leak, engines seize and the turrets do not work. Meanwhile, the major logistical bases have sport utility vehicles and 24-hour swimming pools.**

We claw our way through maintenance and have to piece together our existing fleet of vehicles every day. My platoon's M1114s are in constant use and face the enemy on a daily basis.

**Meanwhile, units whose vehicles rarely see any combat have top-of-the-line parts. The condition of the vehicles we are issued is almost criminal. What are the logistical support people doing at these sprawling LSAs to assist those of us who are actually doing the fighting?**

To make a difference, they should have some sort of combat service and support outposts located within a reasonable distance of where the war is being fought. Why do I have to send my soldiers and vehicles to some distant LSA for major repairs? This takes valuable assets away from the fight.

If one is worried about depot-level repair facilities coming under mortar fire, consider this: Our small number of mechanics here are overwhelmed with the sheer volume of work they have to do. They perform their duties while being mortared almost daily, and numerous times a day at that.

The problem is getting major end items on a timely basis. Get rid of the ice cream and soda convoys, and start sending us the things we need to fight and win.

Before everyone cries about morale, welfare and recreation, remember what we need to accomplish our mission: ammunition, water, food and repair parts. Now we receive things for our comfort rather than our survival.

I will give up my ice cream and Internet café for some combat-ready vehicles and equipment.

Sgt. 1st Class David M. Phillips  
Ramadi, Iraq

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# “Americans Significantly More Pessimistic About The Situation In Iraq Now Than They Were Two Months Ago”

17 August 2006 Reuters

A new poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found Americans significantly more pessimistic about the situation in Iraq now than they were two months ago.

In June, after the killing of Iraq's al Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, 53 percent of Americans thought the situation was going well in Iraq, while only 41 percent believe so now after weeks of sectarian violence, the poll said.

The survey also said that 52 percent of Americans believe there should be a timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops, while 41 percent believe there should not be.

Bush's overall job approval rating was at 37 percent, which is in the danger zone for a president whose party is seeking to retain control of the U.S. Congress in the November election.

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## Brain Dead Piece Of Shit Won't Apologize To 172nd



Kellogg.northwestern.edu

August 18, 2006 Associated Press, FAIRBANKS, Alaska

Army Secretary Francis Harvey said Thursday he was “pretty sure” the 172nd Stryker Brigade will be back in Alaska by mid-December.

However, he said during a news conference at Fort Wainwright that the ultimate decision rests with central military command.

**Harvey defended the short notice of the extension and said he didn’t agree with those that might say the extension was mishandled.**

**“I don’t think an apology is necessary and I don’t think the families would want that,” he said. [Right. They want the troops home now.]**

Francis was in Fairbanks Thursday for the Military and Family Appreciation Day, which initially had been intended as a welcome home party for the brigade.

**MORE:**

## **The 172<sup>nd</sup> Trashed By Rumsfeld For “Four AK-47s And A Tiny Green Water Pistol”**

August 17, 2006 By Louise Roug, L.A. Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

**BAGHDAD: Sweating through their uniforms, Capt. Ed Matthaidess and his men hunted through the heart of this Shiite neighborhood. In 120-degree heat, they spent six hours searching drawers and sewers alike.**

**By the end of the day, their afternoon search had yielded slim pickings: four AK-47s and a tiny green water pistol.**

"The hard-core Al Mahdi guys left on the first day," said Matthaidess, of the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

**"It's frustrating," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Kelly, commander of the 1st Battalion, whose men arrived in Baghdad 10 days ago.**

**About 3,800 soldiers with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team were about to return home to Alaska when they were told to go to the capital from Mosul, adding 120 days to their yearlong deployment.**

Many homes in the neighborhood are decorated with posters of Sadr; Al Mahdi members provide aid to widows and struggling families, and they distribute free gasoline. With only a few hours of electricity per day, Iraqis must rely on generators to keep cool. But at \$1 per gallon at the pump and \$4 on the black market, the fuel for the machines has become prohibitively expensive.

"They are pretty smart about gaining popular support," Kelly said.

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## **“A Majority Of The Vets Said The Iraq War Has Made Them Feel That The U.S. Has Not Learned Lessons From Vietnam”**

August 16, 2006 Brian Albrecht, Plain Dealer Reporter [Excerpts]

On a grim night in July 1969, Clevelander Hank Vasil stared through the sights of an M60 machine gun at a fire support base near Quang Ngai, Vietnam, waiting for the attack that would come after the Viet Cong loudspeakers stopped playing "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"

Decades after Vasil had medically retired from the Army for wounds suffered in Vietnam, he wrote, "When asked to recount that night, it has been 30 years of tears and beers trying to put it behind me."

So when war erupted in Iraq, the more that Vasil watched news coverage of the fighting, the more upset he got.

**"I try to stay abreast of the news, but I reach a point where I have to cut it off," said Vasil, 58, of Brook Park.**

**"Otherwise, I just get real angry. This is ridiculous. This is just as bad as Vietnam."**

Vasil is not alone.

Echoes of combat in Iraq are reverberating among veterans of bygone wars to the point where some are experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD.

A majority of the vets said the Iraq war has made them feel that the U.S. has not learned lessons from Vietnam.

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## **Guard Unable To Deal With Two Hurricanes At The Same Time; “Too Little, Too Late”**

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

Aug 17 By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press Writer

Strapped by war and equipment shortages, the National Guard will find it difficult to deal with two or more major hurricanes if they sweep ashore in different regions around the same time, Guard leaders say.

To counter equipment shortfalls caused largely by the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Guard has borrowed more than \$500 million worth of equipment from the active duty military to restock its units. Thousands of trucks, Humvees and other supplies have been shifted mostly from inland states' Guard units closer to where storms are more likely to strike.

But that may be too little, too late, for states warily watching the weather reports as the nation enters peak hurricane season.

If a hurricane hits North Carolina and another one spins toward Texas, "we would have to make some very difficult decisions," Col. Pat Tennis, the National Guard's director of operations, told the Associated Press.

"Have we thinned the lines? Yes we have. Could we deal with the consequences of another hurricane like Katrina? Yes. Could we deal with two? That would be very challenging," Tennis said.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Assorted Resistance Action**

August 18, 2006 AFP & Reuters

One officer was wounded in Madain, south of the capital, when insurgents fired on his patrol.

A truck driver was killed and his assistant wounded when a kerosene tanker hit a booby trap and exploded in a ball of flames near Baladruz, officers said Friday.

The commander of the fifth brigade of the Iraqi army, Brigadier Shakir al-Kaabi, escaped injury when a roadside bomb exploded near Kirkush, wounding three of his guards, a defence official said.

Four bodyguards working for a Baquba city council member were wounded in a mortar attack on his home.

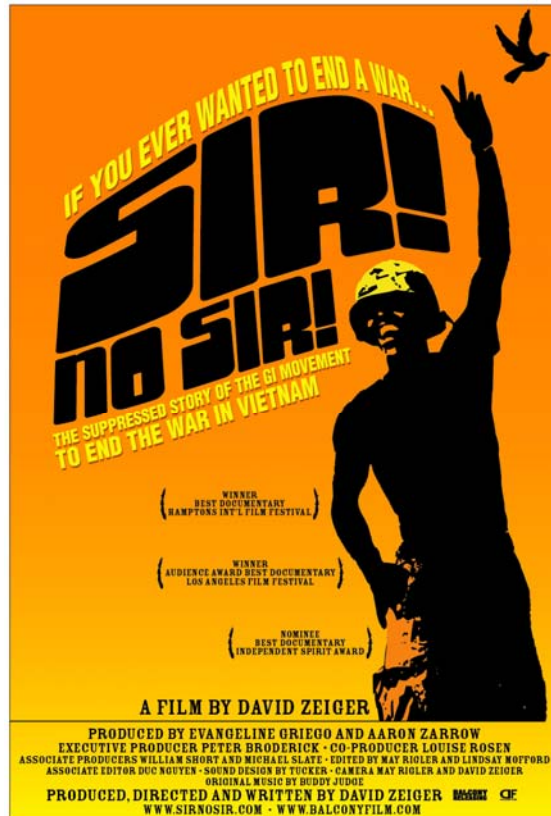
Two policemen were killed on Thursday and four people were wounded when gunmen attacked police watch towers in Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.



IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION

## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Anti-War Sentiments That Were Brewing In The Trenches Of The Battlefield And In The Barracks Of American Military Personnel”



8.06 By Robert Waldman, clubvibes.com [Excerpts]

War is hell. So are cover-ups.

Just when things are heating up with the Iraq situations along comes a smart, perfectly timed documentary that looks at the quagmire of Vietnam. Smart from start to finish is Sir! No Sir!

**This independent film, on screen at The Ridge, focuses on the anti-war movement of the late 60s early 70s from an unusual source: disenchanting military personnel.**

Director/writer David Zeiger sure does have a knack to get under one's skin by exposing long forgotten misdeeds and cover-ups from high up.

**By now everyone knows of the disenchantment over the Vietnam escapade. Few, however, are aware of the anti-war sentiments that were brewing in the trenches of the battlefield and in the barracks of American military personnel, both on the front lines and on the home-front.**

Through actual footage of events between 1965 and 1972 Zeiger somehow manages to interview scores of military activists who played central roles in exposing the drawbacks to this U.S. military misadventure.

**Long forgotten are the GI Joes and Janes who stood up against their commanders in a public way, often earning severe reprimands and court martials for daring to question and chastise the policy of their military and political leaders.**

Good usage of archival and newsreel footage of government efforts to protest the mass protests of the mid-60s on college campuses and riots in Chicago circa 1968 were only part of the mass mobilization against the military excursion underway in South East Asia.

**Only in Sir! No Sir we end up going directly to the source of the discontent: combat soldiers who now recall their efforts to drum up support against the war while on active duty.**

Present interviews book ended by actual photos of these men and women at antiwar rallies really brings home the point that some sort of cover-up was in play. Archival news footage of the bombings and the protests are masterfully presented in a way that you can't help but feel for the trauma these objectors faced and cringe at the treatment they suffered when their actions became known to the authorities.

Lots will be learned by watching this documentary.

Behind the scenes workings of the military underground press show the widespread support for a halt to hostilities while chats with lead protester Jane Fonda will bring back memories as will her anti-Bob Hope/USO tours of entertainers who wound up doing shows questioning the war.

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

**The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at  
[www.sirnosir.com](http://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.

## Statements Speak For Themselves



From: Richard Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 16, 2006  
Subject: Statements speak for themselves.

**"The only thing worse than death is betrayal."  
Malcolm X**

**The only way to survive betrayal, is to bear witness to the truth.  
Mike Hastie**

Vietnam Veteran  
August 15, 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](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)



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

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

## OCCUPATION REPORT

# “But What Kind Of Exit Strategy Is It When Iraqi Soldiers Have Been Leaving Faster Than The Americans”

August 18, 2006 By Michael R. Gordon, The New York Times [Excerpts]

Barwana was a way station for a joint Iraqi-U.S. convoy as it traveled to a stretch of hard-packed sand in the Haditha triad, one of the more challenging areas in Anbar, the most dangerous province in Iraq.

The convoy's goal was to inspect a company of Iraqi soldiers who had been involved in a U.S.-directed operation to round up insurgents.

What I saw in more than three weeks in Anbar Province was not reassuring. Dogged efforts were being undercut by a dysfunctional Iraqi bureaucracy in Baghdad

A goodly number of the Iraqi soldiers have voted with their feet and gone absent without leave - or left to join the Iraqi police, so they could live close to home.

In the Haditha triad, Colonel Jebbar Abass, a beefy Iraqi with a drooping mustache, commanded a battalion that started out with about 700 soldiers last autumn. It had dropped to about 400 troops. Since almost one-third of his battalion is on leave at any one time, that means that Abass can field about 270 soldiers on any given day, a useful supplement to the U.S. Marine Corps forces in and around Haditha but hardly enough to enable the Americans to draw back.

But what kind of exit strategy is it when Iraqi soldiers have been leaving faster than the Americans.

I stopped at Camp Falluja to see Colonel Tom Greenwood, who had been a military aide on the staff of the National Security Council leading up to the war, and then commander of a Marine Expeditionary Unit in Baghdad. Now he was finishing a six-month tour as the senior marine responsible for training the Iraqi Army and police forces in Anbar.

**Greenwood explained that the pay issues in Haditha were quite common. In the Anbar region, about 550 Iraqi soldiers received no pay for June, while another 2,200 were receiving less pay than they were entitled to by rank.**

**Logistics was another of Greenwood's worries. U.S. commanders in Baghdad had pushed the Iraqis to take over responsibility for their own logistics, but that led to cases in which Iraqi soldiers had received spoiled meat and rotten vegetables.**

Each month, Iraqi soldiers are granted about a week's leave to deliver their pay to their families, who may live hundreds of kilometers away, a custom that reflects the lack of an

effective banking system in Iraq. With all the dangers, hardships and problems, the soldiers do not always come back.

**U.S. commanders consider Falluja a success story.**

After the U.S. Marine Corps cleared the city in a violent battle in 2004, seven checkpoints were established to control access, making Falluja Iraq's largest gated community.

**For all that, militants have managed to slip back in. The night I arrived, a roadside bomb killed one Iraqi soldier and wounded another during a shift change at an observation post**

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

**OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON**

**The Slaughter Of The 401<sup>st</sup>  
Brigade:  
“A Kind Of Show Designed To  
Demonstrate To Hizbullah Who Is The  
Boss”**

[Thanks to J, who sent this in. She writes: I've just received this. Adam Keller has translated it from an Israeli news paper. It's about the last battle of the war from the soldiers viewpoint. This action took place after the UN called for the cease-fire and shouldn't have happened. Tanks were sent into a narrow canyon and Hezbollah was waiting.]

August 16, 2006 Interviews with soldiers by Nava Tzuriel and Eitan Glickman, translated by Adam Keller

**"The commanders told us that the infantry had already cleared the area, and then the tanks started getting hit, tank after tank. Why did they send us into this hell? Why did they send us into the missile trap? We already thought we were going to go home smiling and with the flags flying - and instead, we go to our fellows' funerals."**

Yesterday, a bit after 10.00 am, the tank soldiers of the 401th Brigade left Lebanon in a long and dusty convoy, and at long last they could breathe freely. They did not have many such moments since Saturday noon, the bitter time when they tried to cross Wadi Saluki in the Western Sector of South Lebanon, only to find that they had blundered into a well-prepared Hizbullah anti-tank ambush.

Yesterday they could at last embrace each other, call their parents, ask for the condition of their wounded comrades - but the hard questions did not stop for a moment.

"Why did they send us into that hell?" one of the soldiers asked angrily. "Why did they send us directly into the missile trap? Now everybody sees that the last days of the fighting were not sufficiently prepared".

**It was one of the hardest and most tragic battles which the IDF had known in this war. Nine tanks were hit by missiles, there in the Saluki. 12 soldiers were killed, a few hours after the UN security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a cease-fire in Lebanon.**

Already one day after the battle there were IDF officers charging that entering the wadi (canyon) was hurried and unnecessary, that the tanks should not have been sent into the steep-banked wadi and made into movable targets, and that the area was not cleared of terrorists by the IDF.

**The blows which the fighters suffered on the field were painful - but perhaps the most painful blow came later, when the soldiers heard the words of several senior officers.**

**"This was a Battle of Awareness against the Hizbullah" an unnamed senior officer told Yediot Aharonot two days ago (August 14). "We have proven that this legend, as if a regular army cannot fight guerillas, is not true".**

**As much as the fighters are now angry at the insufficient preparation and the mistakes in the conduct of the battle, they feel deeply insulted by those who sent them to the field of slaughter and who now tell them that the battle was not really necessary - that it was just a kind of "Battle of Awareness", a kind of show designed to demonstrate to Hizbullah who is the Boss.**

This is not the first blow which the IDF gets in Wadi Saluki. Lebanon veterans remember well earlier tough fights in this small stream below the village of Randuriya. The worst mishap in the Saluki, up to the present, was in August 1997. Soldiers of the Golani Brigade had set a routine ambush when news came of six Hizbullah men having infiltrated the area. IDF artillery opened fire a kilometre away, but failed to knock out the infiltrators. Due to the intensity of the shelling, a fierce brush fire broke out, and four of the Israeli soldiers were trapped and burned to death.

**The Armoured Corps soldiers were notified of the present Saluki action several days before being sent in, and were told that infantry soldiers of the Nahal brigade would go in well in advance of them to clear out the terrorists and ensure a smooth passage to tanks.**

**The situation on the ground, however, turned out to be very different.**

Hizbullah squads had prepared their positions in the villages above the wadi long in advance, and when the tanks arrived they were subjected to a relentless attack.

**"We thought we were going into a lightly-defended, easily-passed area, and we found ourselves in a fiery hell" says with pain one of the fighters. "The Nahal went away, we got the order to go in with the tanks and we got anti-tank fire from all directions. Nobody believed we could possibly get into such a trap. It is a total fiasco. Why did nobody check to make sure there were no anti-tank squads in the upper ridges, before sending us to be totally exposed to fire from these ridges?"**

**"And why was it needed to go to this whole operation to start with, when everybody knew that within two or three days there would be a cease-fire?" wonders one of the junior commanders.**

"Did nobody worry about anti-tank fire? Did the higher command not think about it? Everything was foggy, unclear. When we went in we knew that there will be a battle, that there will be terrorists, we were prepared for being attacked, but going into battle was slow and clumsy. All this time the other side was preparing and organizing, with high-grade missiles.

**"I don't know why the people whose mission was to prepare for this kind of situation just did not do their job, they just did not do what was needed to prevent this damn fiasco".**

The forces which went out of Lebanon heard of the mutual recriminations between Armour and Infantry regarding the responsibility for the grave results of the Battle of the Saluki.

"The fighting was hard" says one of them "but the lack of coordination between the forces on the ground, between what we were told was going to happen and what actually happened was the biggest mishap in the last days of the Lebanon fighting.

"It is as if nobody had prepared" accuses another fighter. "There was no clearing out of the terrorists by the Nahal Brigade infantry. I don't understand why they did not let the Nahal finish their job before sending us in. We thought that we were entering the Saluki after the area had been cleaned up, but then the terrorists came out of the houses and hiding places and started shooting at us as if we were in a shooting range. Nobody really had any idea how big the terrorist forces were".

"When the first tank was hit, we knew that the nightmare had begun" says a fighter. "You should understand that the first missile which hits is not the really dangerous missile. The ones which come afterwards are the dangerous ones - and there always follow four or five after the first. It is awesome! You just think :where can I hide?' and fear the unknown.

"It was hellfire, you have no idea when it will get to you. You just pray that it will end at last, that the volley will end and that you will hear on the radio that everybody is OK. But unfortunately, that is not what we heard when the shooting ended, no sir!"



"This was supposed to be the final accord of the war" says one of the soldiers. "But it was much worse than the battles in the beginning of the war. They told us that this will be just the final accord, that the cease-fire is on the way, but the tanks were hit and we lost precious fighters".

**More than causing them to wonder, the talking of "a Battle of Awareness" is insulting for the fighters which left Lebanon yesterday. "To say that the fighting there was conducted in order to gain an achievement in awareness is an insult" says a junior officer of the armoured brigade.**

**"Soldiers' parents call me since early this morning, asking me about this expression. What can I say to bereaved parents, when they hear that their son died for 'an achievement in awareness'?"**

"I feel that whoever spoke this way had hurt me personally, me and my soldiers. To say 'an achievement in awareness' after a battle from which you emerge unscathed - OK.

**But this was a very bitter end-of-the-war battle in which 12 soldiers got killed and ten tanks got hit by Hizbullah fire. "This is an achievement in awareness? This is a failure. We just did not know what was going on?"**

**"I can't connect this statement about the achievement in awareness to anything which actually happened" says a senior officer. "They all the time demanded of us to produce photos of dead terrorists, terrorists with hands raised. To form the consciousness of the Israeli public.**

"I think that first you have to kill the enemy, only then can you start taking photos of their dead bodies. And still, there is some importance from the awareness point of view to entering deep into enemy territory. To show them that we are no longer hesitating near the border, as were in the first 24 days, but passing the Saluki and moving forward. You prove to the enemy that you possess the ability to enter his territory".

What is clear now is that, while there could be some debate about the awareness, the pain of the fighters is unmistakable.

**"It is very sad that exactly at the end of the war, when everything is already ready to a cease-fire, we get such grave blows" says a fighter on the day after leaving Lebanon. "It should not have happened. We feel that this battle just should not have happened. Of course, we are soldiers and we fulfil every mission placed upon us, but when we look at what happened there and what surprises were waiting for us, we just were fucked. We were caught unprepared".**

There are very hard feelings among the soldiers" admits a junior officer who took part in the battle. "Just in the end, when everything, the whole war, was about finished, that's when we got the big blow. Somebody should investigate what happened there in the Saluki. We already thought that we were going home smiling, with flags flying - and here we go to comrades' funerals."

A senior officer of the brigade responds: "It was a super-important mission!"

About the initial decision: "Can anybody point a better point where the Saluki can be crossed? There are several passes, all of them narrow. The one we chose was the correct one. The risk is obvious, when you get to the ground there is a chance that you will be shot at.

**"War is a dangerous game."**

Clearing the area: "The Nahal Brigade was sent to take over the area and they did that. But you can't achieve a hundred per cent clearance. You have limitations when you use a combined armour/infantry force. When there is infantry in the area, the tanks can't shoot freely.

The action: "We sent in a primary force of 12 tanks, to cross the wadi. We blazed a trail and bypassed the bridge crossing the Saluki. Then we planned to send in 30 tanks because we knew that this is an inferior terrain and therefore we did not want to put big forces at risk. But the two tanks which arrived in the village of Randuriya found their route blocked by the collapse of buildings which were bombed by the air force."

**The battle: "While the tanks were searching for another way an explosive charge went off behind them. The road collapsed and then the first tank was hit by a missile. The entire first crew, of Company Commander Bernstein, was killed. The tank behind Bernstein tried to move back and take a new position. Effi Dafri, Commander of the 9th Battalion, was already wounded before this stage; now his deputy Shimi Batat was wounded as well. After that, the third tank was also hit, and the advance stopped."**

The failure: "Sending in the tanks was vital, full stop. When the infantry arrives they need a day or two to take control of the area. They have no possibility to penetrate to a depth of ten kilometres. Only the tanks can break forward. Already on the same night another battalion arrived, blazed another trail and penetrated forward with its tanks. The officers who make all this criticism don't really know what had happened there. Of 12 tanks only 2 were hit. The losses are grave but this should be placed in proportion to the fact that the mission was defined as super-important."

The withdrawal: I was surprised to get the order to withdraw from this area just a short time after we reached Randuria, at the cease-fire. I think that the fighting should have been continued westward so as to deepen the achievement.

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[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. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

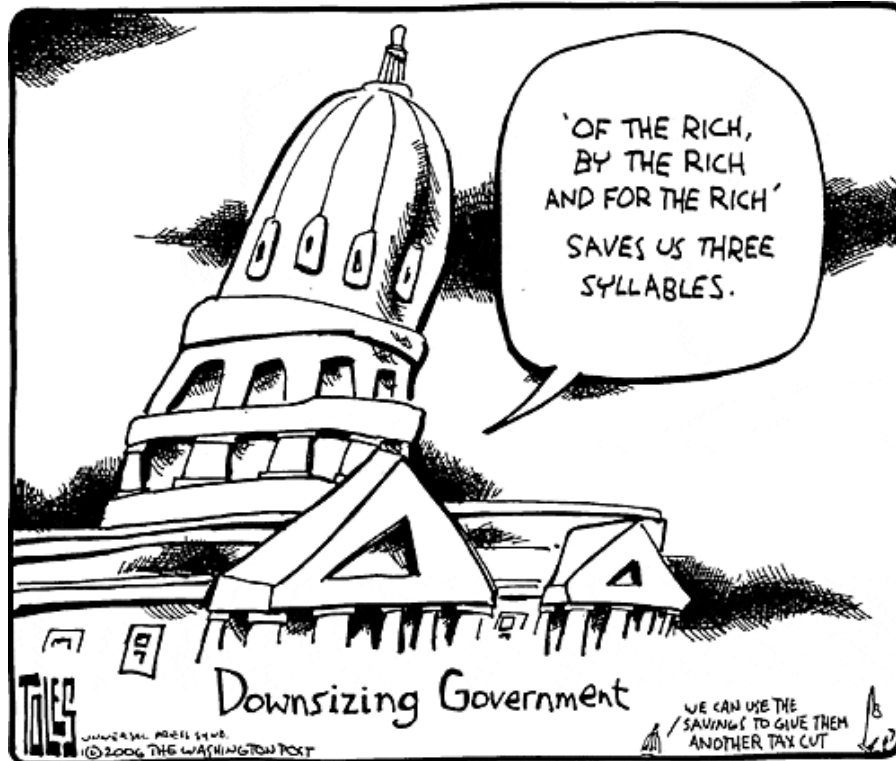
## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

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

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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## **Bush Lowers Expectations On Iraq To Moderate Fiasco; Revises 'Mission Accomplished' To 'Mission Impossible'**

August 17, 2006 The Borowitz Report

Perhaps in response to the steady drumbeat of bad news coming out of Iraq, President George W. Bush today attempted to lower expectations about the situation there, telling

reporters at a White House briefing that the best-case scenario for Iraq is now "a moderate fiasco."

Mr. Bush acknowledged some errors in judgment about the war, including posing in front of a banner that said "Mission Accomplished" when it should have said "Mission Impossible."

But he lashed out at critics who called the invasion of Iraq a total fiasco, saying, "If we continue to make progress at the rate we are going, we will have a moderate fiasco on our hands."

The somewhat more sober assessment of the situation in Iraq comes just days after a new poll was released showing that a majority of Americans now hope that the Bush presidency turns out to be a dream sequence.

According to the survey, 57 percent of those polled say that they wish the last five years turn out to be "just a weird dream," while 51 percent hold out hope that their mothers will come wake them up and tell them it is time for school.

At the press briefing, Mr. Bush acknowledged that most Americans now wish his presidency was imaginary, but said that he did not regret invading Iraq even though no weapons of mass destruction existed.

"I'll go further than that," he said. "I would still invade Iraq even if Iraq never existed."

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## **FAA Bans People From Flights 'Zero Tolerance for People,' Chertoff Says**

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

August 15, 2006 The Borowitz Report

In a move aimed at further tightening airport security, the Federal Aviation Administration announced today that it would ban all people from flights leaving or entering the United States, effective immediately.

The FAA, which has in the past banned such objects as toenail clippers and hair gel, took the extraordinary step of banning people after the Department of Homeland Security conducted a thorough investigation of previous terror plots.

"We looked at terror plots of the past, and in each and every case, people were involved," said Homeland Security Michael Chertoff at a Washington press briefing. "These new rules send the strong message that the FAA has zero tolerance for people."

Mr. Chertoff said that while banning liquids from flights was a constructive step, the only true solution was to ban people altogether.

"Let's face it, hair gel doesn't kill people," he said. "People kill people."

The Homeland Security Secretary acknowledged that the new rules would curtail Americans' ability to travel, but added, "On the plus side, that will make them easier for us to spy on."

The FAA's ban on people onboard flights raised questions for the nation's airlines, which must now ponder what, if anything, their airplanes will be carrying.

But Davis Logsdon, who studies the airline industry at the University of Minnesota, said that the FAA's crackdown on people could be a "win-win" for the airlines: "Maybe if the airlines don't have people to worry about, they can finally concentrate on getting our luggage to the right destination."

### **GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

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[http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/);

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