

GI SPECIAL 413:



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

Americans Don't Support The War: “Two-Thirds Of Americans Oppose The War” “Support At An All-Time Low” “Six In 10 Polled Think There Will Be More Terrorism In This Country Because The U.S. Went To War In Iraq”

September 1, 2006 By WILL LESTER, The Associated Press & By Tom Regan, The Christian Science Monitor

A series of polls taken over the last few weeks of August show that support for the war in Iraq among Americans is at an all-time low.

Almost two-thirds of Americans in each of three major polls say that they oppose the war, the highest totals since pollsters starting asking Americans the question three years ago.

A new CNN poll shows that only about one-third of Americans now support the war in Iraq, with 61 percent opposed.

A Princeton Survey Research Associates International poll conducted Aug. 24-25 for Newsweek shows that 63 percent of Americans disapprove of the way the president has handled Iraq.

A CBSNews/New York Times poll conducted Aug. 17-21 shows 65 percent of Americans disapprove of the way the president is dealing with Iraq.

The AP-Ipsos telephone polling of about 1,000 people found:

More than four in 10, 43 percent, say they're embarrassed by the U.S. image overseas.

Not everyone agrees the war in Iraq is central to the war on terror, as the Bush administration maintains.

Six in 10 polled think there will be more terrorism in this country because the U.S. went to war in Iraq.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Iraq Blast Kills Sailor With Michigan Ties



August 25, 2006 BY MARISOL BELLO, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Chief Petty Officer Paul J. Darga enlisted in the Navy shortly after graduating from Alpena High School so he could serve his country, following in the steps of his father, an Army veteran.

His 14 years of service took him around the world. He was a helicopter mechanic, a deep-sea diver, a welder and since 2002 a bomb squad expert who earned a Bronze star in May for detonating explosives during four tours of duty in Iraq.

Darga, 34, died Tuesday in Anbar province in western Iraq when an improvised explosive device went off as he and his team tried to defuse it.

"We're very proud of him," said Darga's stepmother, Judy, who lives in Cheboygan with his father, John (Jack) Darga.

Darga married 10 years ago and has a 2-year-old daughter.

The Navy will hold a memorial service at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday at the chapel in the Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base in Norfolk. Funeral services in Alpena have not been finalized.

Minnesota Staff Sgt. Killed Near Khalidiyah



Minnesota National Guard Staff Sgt. Joshua Hanson, 27, of Dent, Minn., died Aug. 30, 2006, near Khalidiyah, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device exploded near his military vehicle. Six others were injured. (AP Photo/Minnesota National Guard)

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

That is not a good enough reason.



A U.S. Marine patrols at night in Ramadi June 28, 2006. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

Cheyenne Soldier Killed

August 21, 2006 The Billings Gazette

CHEYENNE, Wyo.: A U.S. Army soldier from Cheyenne has died in Iraq, his family says.

An explosive killed Pfc. James Arellano, 19, on Thursday while he was on a foot patrol, his family said in a copyright story published Sunday by the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle. He died south of Baghdad, according to the newspaper.

Arellano, a 2005 graduate of Cheyenne Central High School, married Jaime Smith in March while he was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas. She was finishing her senior year in high school when they married.

In an interview with the Tribune-Eagle, Smith recalled that for their wedding dinner, they went to the International House of Pancakes. She said her husband had chocolate chip pancakes and she had biscuits and gravy.

Smith said she talked to him almost every other day by cell phone while he was in Iraq, and that they communicated by e-mail, as well.

"He didn't like it there, but he dealt with it," she said.

Arellano's family emphasized that he accomplished much during his life.

"Don't be sorry for my brother," Andrew Arellano said. "He wasn't a sorry person. He lived his life for all of us. He died for all of us - you, me, your kids and my kids to come."

Diana Arellano, James Arellano's mother, said, "We have to be happy James lived his life and had his goals and he strived to meet every one of them.

"He wanted to box, and he boxed," the mother said. "He wanted to join the military, and he got into the Army. He wanted to be married, and he married the love of his life on March 11."

Arellano had followed the path of his father, Jim Arellano, both in becoming a boxer and in serving in the Army.

"He wanted to be just like me," Jim Arellano said. "The only sad part is that he left behind a wife."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Afghan Plane Crash Kills 14 U.K. Troops

09/02/06 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

A NATO plane crashed Saturday in southern Afghanistan, killing 14 British troops, according to a spokesman and the British Ministry of Defense.

The British Ministry of Defense said the dead included 12 Royal Air Force personnel, a Royal Marine and an army soldier.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Wounded; Nationality Not Announced

Sep 2 The Canadian Press

In the east, an assailant driving an explosives-laden Toyota sedan attacked a convoy of Afghan and U.S.-led coalition forces in the Bati Kot district of Nangarhar province, said provincial police spokesman Ghafor Khan.

He said three people were wounded - one coalition soldier, an Afghan soldier and an Afghan translator. The unidentified attacker died.

Coalition spokeswoman Lt. Tamara Lawrence confirmed that a coalition soldier and an Afghan soldier had been wounded in a blast near the Nangarhar capital of Jalalabad. However, she said it was a roadside bomb.

Assorted Resistance Action

Sep 2 by Nasrat Shoaib, AFP & The Canadian Press

In Nimroz province, a district police chief, three other policemen and three Taliban were killed in a late night clash.

Two other policemen were killed in an attack on a district headquarters in southern Day Kundi province, the interior ministry said.

A group of insurgents attacked a police checkpoint and killed three policemen and wounded two others in the Grieshk district of Helmand province, about 500 kilometres southwest of Kabul, said district police chief Ghulam Nabi Malakhail.

He said the police officers returned fire, but "we don't know whether the Taliban suffered any casualties."

Malakhail said the Taliban fled after the attack and police were searching for them.

Taliban also fought police for an hour in another part of Grieshk late Friday, but no casualties were reported, he said.

Afghan Occupation Increasingly Deadly For U.S. Troops

02 September 2006 The Associated Press

For US troops, the Afghan mission is increasingly dangerous. At least 272 US service members have died in and around Afghanistan since October 2001, including three recently from Williams' unit. Some 44 US service members died in Afghanistan in 2004, 92 in 2005 and 61 so far in 2006.

[The reporter misses the point. The kill ratio for U.S. troops in Afghanistan is greater than Iraq. Afghanistan is more deadly.]

Strained by the demands of Iraq, the US has only about 20,000 troops in Afghanistan.

The roughly 10,000 in the border area must cover about 30,000 square miles of some of the most forbidding territory on Earth: jagged mountains, both arid and forested, that become impassable in winter.

There are steep valleys and rushing rivers spanned by rickety rope bridges; dark caves that could be booby trapped. Deeply religious and xenophobic villagers also obstruct efforts to run down al-Qaida remnants.

TROOP NEWS

Not One More Life A Reading Of The Names An Anti-War Protest

**Saturday, September 16
12 Noon, Town Green*
Summit, New Jersey**

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, who sent this in.]

On Saturday, September 16, beginning at 12 Noon, citizens of New Jersey will gather on the Town Green of Summit, New Jersey. We will read the name of every American serviceman and woman who has died in Iraq. We will also read some of the names of the tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis who have been killed. The names will be read by members of Military Families Speak Out, who have loved ones in Iraq, by veterans of this war and past wars, and by other volunteers.

We are reading the names because the fallen are not just statistics. They are real people with names, families and stories. We are reading the names because every day more people die in a war that was started based on a lie.

We are reading the names because we must not forget the uncounted Iraqi dead who have been the victims of this unprovoked invasion.

We are reading the names because Americans across the country want an end to this disastrous and senseless occupation that puts our troops in the middle of a civil war.

We are reading the names to say loudly and clearly:

Not One More Life! Bring The Troops Home Now!

The NJ Coalition to Bring the Troops Home Now
<http://www.bringtroopshomenj.org>
*for directions, Google 75 Maple Avenue, Summit, NJ

Israeli Reserve Soldiers “Are Working Towards Bringing Down The Government”

The leaders of the struggle also announced a protest in front of the General Staff in Tel Aviv, which will take place on Sunday, September 10 at 6:30 p.m. They invited interested members of the public from Sheinkin to come and join them.

09.01.06 Vered Luvitch, Ynetnews

Reserve soldiers protesting the decisions of the political echelon during the war in Lebanon came to Sheinkin Street in Tel Aviv on Friday in order to encourage passersby to join in their struggle.

The bystanders were enthused by the "guests," expressed their support of the struggle and took green ribbons as a symbol of solidarity with the soldiers.

"We are now organized and are working towards bringing down the government and creating a change in the military system," said Yakir Segev, one of the protest leaders. "We know it will not be a matter of days, it will take time and we will keep struggling.

"We saw some senior officials who joined us, for example former Chief of Staff (Moshe) Yaalon, and we keep going."

Shagav denied the claims that rightists with political interests were behind the soldiers and said: "It is simply not true. I am actually disappointed by the Right, which was supposed to serve as an alternative to Olmert, and they are not doing their job and they

are not doing anything to oust the government. I am also disappointed by Avigdor Lieberman, Netanyahu and the other side, and also by Yossi Beilin. They are simply not doing their job.

"We will do everything to ensure an appropriate inquiry in the military. There is a severe leadership crisis on every military echelon and this is why the chief of staff cannot keep his post. I believe that he will finally resign because in light of the breach of trust that was created, he cannot keep his post."

Roni Zweigenbaum, 27, one of the leaders of the struggle, said they will open 20 different sites across the country where people would be able to sign the petition.

"Until now we have not reached Tel Aviv, but certainly not because it's 'a bubble.'," he said. "That's ridiculous – there is no difference between Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. We will reach every area in the country because we know that there are people who can't reach us. Until today, we got 15,000 people to sign the petition and I believe there will be many more."

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MORE:

“The Soldiers Are Never Shy About Pointing Out Shortcomings In Their Officers”

“When The Soldiers Are Sacrificing Themselves So Much Because Of Stupid Orders, The Nation Won't Put Up With It”

August 27, 2006 By Doug Struck, Washington Post Foreign Service

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26: Itamar Shapira refused to go to war. The 26-year-old first sergeant, a combat veteran called up from reserves to fight in southern Lebanon, told his superiors he did not think the war made sense.

His punishment: eight days' confinement in a prison camp. "I read a lot. I practically enjoyed it," he said Friday after his release. Within hours of that release, he was giving interviews about his grievances with the war.

Shapira's voice joined a chorus of other Israeli soldiers, many of whom served their time in Lebanon before airing their complaints. Hundreds of reservists, who make up the bulk

of Israel's army, walked and rode back across the border following the Aug. 14 cease-fire and went straight to protest marches.

In most armies, refusal to serve in a war is met by harsh punishment, and criticism from the ranks is forbidden. But in Israel, where military service is mandatory and soldiering is an experience that almost all Israelis have in common, boisterous dissent from within the ranks is a long-standing staple of political change.

"We are the voice of the nation from the inside. Every family in Israel has a son or father that is in some way involved with the military," said Shmuel Shmueli, 55, one of the organizers of the reservist protests.

"That is why when the soldiers are sacrificing themselves so much because of stupid orders, the nation won't put up with it. We are demanding an investigation with unlimited scope."

None of the protesting reservists will be punished for their harsh criticism. They remain in their reserve units, and may be called up again. Even those who refuse to go, like Shapira, are accepted as part of the political fabric of the country and thus the army, and many remain in the military.

"If you were in combat, you get more respect," said Zohar Shapira, 37, Itamar's brother, who organized comrades in his elite secret unit to refuse operations in Palestinian areas in 2003.

He has formed a group of former soldiers called Combatants for Peace. "Because we were so many years in the army, loyal to the country, endangering ourselves, people listen to us."

When his reserve unit was called, Itamar Shapira made the trip to northern Israel just to explain to his comrades why he was refusing to go. That was the toughest thing, he said.

"People say, if you refuse, and your friends are sent to die, how would you feel?" he said. "I wanted to show my friends that I wasn't doing it out of fear. They understood it. They knew what I was going through."

Shapira said almost all of the army officers he dealt with when he balked at service "were pretty nice."

From time to time, the army has tried to deal with such protests harshly, by dismissing the soldiers from the army and, in a few cases, bringing them to courts-martial. The result has often been more politically costly to the military and the government, Dromi said.

"The army does not want to push very hard on this," said Ishai Menuchin, 48, who founded Yesh Gvul, an organization for soldiers and reservists refusing to serve. As a lieutenant, Menuchin was jailed in 1983 for refusing to fight, but stayed in the reserves and was promoted to major.

After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, about 3,500 Israeli reservists signed a petition refusing to serve but only about 170 were jailed, Menuchin said. A similarly small percentage were punished for refusing to serve during the Palestinian uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza.

In this war, Menuchin said he knows of seven jailed soldiers out of about 50 he estimates refused to serve.

The reserve soldiers protesting this Lebanon war reflect a mix of political backgrounds, and many are simply angry at what they saw as inept leadership.

The soldiers are never shy about pointing out shortcomings in their officers, he said.

"We're all chiefs of staff," he said with a chuckle. "There is not one Israeli soldier in reserve duty who isn't sure that he could replace the current chief of staff at any given minute."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

02 Sep 2006 Reuters & (KUNA) & August 31, 2006 Daily Star staff

Militants stormed a house in Al-Jihad suburb in west Baghdad, and opened fire at a group of people who were invited for lunch killing two and wounding 13 others, the source told KUNA.

The source added that all the victims were believed to be security guards who worked in the conferences palace in the green zone.

The violence in Baghdad extended even to the Dura district, which has been singled out by US and Iraqi forces for special protection. A medic in the city's Yarmuk hospital confirmed receiving seven bodies, including one of an Iraq Army lieutenant and a senior female official in the Justice Ministry, after shootings in Dura.

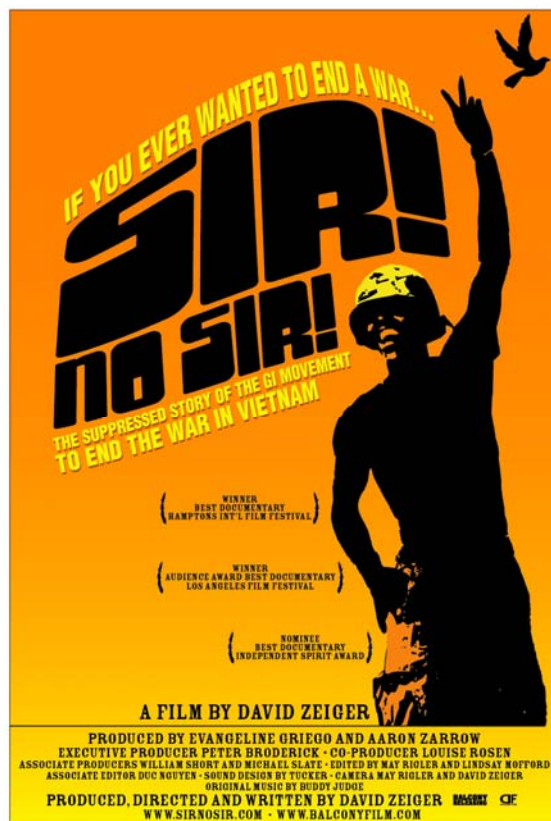
Guerrillas attacked an Iraqi security firm in the western Baghdad Jihad neighbourhood killing two and wounding eight, an Interior Ministry source said.

A roadside bomb wounded two policemen in the town of Mahmudiya, just south of Baghdad, police said.

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

“The Unprecedented Rise Of The Grassroots Anti-War Movement Within The Military During Vietnam”



6.06 Patrick Sisson, The Chicago Tribune [Excerpts]

Like many filmmakers, David Zeiger was inspired by the Iraq War.

Between the questionable battlefield buildup and the current drawn-out conflict, Zeiger was driven to show how American soldiers cope when they're sent to fight in a war that much of the public--and some of the soldiers themselves--consider unjust. The result is his documentary "Sir! No Sir!"

"The door was opening for this, and the need was there for this story to be told," he said. "I knew I had to make the film."

The film documents the unprecedented rise of the grassroots anti-war movement within the military during Vietnam--one that spawned protests, dozens of underground newspapers and a string of anti-war coffeehouses at army bases around the country.

Since today's soldiers in Iraq face repeated tours of duty fighting in a war that's losing public support, the film is nothing if not relevant.

The film itself is screening at theaters around the country and has garnered several under-the-radar awards, including best documentary from the Hamptons International Film Festival, best film on war and peace from the Vermont International Film Festival and the audience award for best documentary at the Los Angeles Film Festival, among others.

"I thought the film was very powerful," said Michael Blake, a 23-year-old member of the group Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). "(It) shows me that we, as a movement, really need to tap into the active army and the active community right now. We need to let soldiers know they don't have to agree with and participate in an illegal war for immoral purposes."

Blake's organization, which helps vets speak out against the war and connects them to a "community of like-minded individuals," is distributing 500 DVDs of the film, free of charge, to current and former service members who request it.

He's hoping it helps change soldiers' minds and inspires them to oppose the war, much like those profiled in "Sir! No Sir!" did. IVAW has steadily grown to 250-plus members since being founded in 2003. But, as Blake's own experience in the Fourth Infantry Division in Iraq has taught him, the Army has learned important lessons from Vietnam that make it more difficult and rare for today's volunteer soldiers to speak out.

While they may not directly protest or refuse orders as some GIs did in Vietnam, soldiers today have other means to express their discontent with the mission and the contentious stop-loss orders that have sent soldiers back to Iraq multiple times.

Yesterday's underground newspapers have largely been replaced by blogs and podcasts, such as Fight to Survive (ftssoldier.blogspot.com).



www.ivaw.net

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.

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."

The Great Escape



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: August 30, 2006
Subject: The Great Escape

The Great Escape

If you are an American soldier who absolutely cannot go to Iraq for the first time, or for the second or third time for moral principles, then you do not have to.

No one owns your belief system, least of all the U.S. military.

When I came back from Vietnam, I had it.

If the U.S. government had given me orders to go back to Vietnam, knowing what I know now, I would not have gone to Canada, I would have gone to hell.

The pull to go back is not to be branded a coward, or betraying your buddies.

When you see American soldiers getting wasted for the corporate rich, you don't have to do it anymore.

The Dead do not want you to waste your life for a Lie.

Give a dead buddy a gift, reach for a new life, so you can honor the fallen for the rest of your life.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
1st. Squadron 10th Cavalry
4th Infantry Division
Vietnam 1970-71

Photo and caption 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.

While U.S. “Anti-War” Empty Suits Refuse To Reach Out To Organize Our Troops, Even Al-Qaida Is Less Stupid And Cowardly

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: Even bin Laden gets it (it being outreach to troops). Never thought I'd see him beat UFPJ to the punch.]

09/02/06 OMAR SINAN, AP

CAIRO, Egypt: An American thought to be an al-Qaida activist appeared in a videotape with the terror group's deputy leader Saturday and called on his countrymen to convert to Islam and for U.S. soldiers to switch sides in the Iraq and Afghan wars.

It was the second time Gadahn appeared in the same video with al-Zawahri. But Saturday's video - and the length of Gadahn's speech - suggested al-Qaida has found in him someone who can directly address the American people in idiom they are familiar with.

The video included no direct threats of terror attacks.

Gadahn delivered a lecture on Islam and the "errors" in Christianity and Judaism.

He also said the United States is losing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and told U.S. soldiers they are fighting President Bush's "crusades."

"Instead of killing yourself for Bush ... why not surrender to the truth (of Islam), escape from the unbelieving army and join the winning side. Time is running out so make the right choice before it's too late," he said.

"You know that if you die as an unbeliever in battle against the Muslims you're going straight to Hell without passing 'Go,'" Gadahn said on the video, addressing American soldiers.

"You know you're considered by Bush and his bunch of warmongers as nothing more than expendable cannon fodder ... You know they couldn't care less about your safety and well-being."

"We send a special invitation (to convert to Islam) to all of you fighting Bush's crusader pipedream in Afghanistan, Iraq and wherever else 'W' has sent you to die. You know the war can't be won," he said, using Bush's nickname.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Big Occupation Military Propaganda Ceremony Falls Apart In Public: Chaos And Confusion Rule, As Usual

Sep 2 By Ibon Villedabeitia, Reuters

A much-anticipated ceremony to transfer operational command from U.S.-led forces to Iraq's new army was postponed on Saturday at the last minute amid confusion, a U.S. military spokesman said, citing poor planning.

The event had been hailed by the U.S. military as a big step toward Iraq taking responsibility for security, key to any eventual withdrawal of U.S. forces. U.S. commanders, with 140,000 troops on the ground, would still have a big say.

Reporters who had been invited to attend the ceremony in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone were left sitting in a bus for more than one hour as the U.S. military first informed them that the event had been delayed for later in the day and then postponed until Sunday.

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

THIS IS NOT A PARODY:
**General Chiarelli Preaches Quality Of
Life In Iraq**

9.1.06 Mideast Stars and Stripes

A top U.S. general toured one of Baghdad's roughest Sunni neighborhoods to view the effects of a recent operation aimed at reducing sectarian fighting, urging commanders to improve quality-of-life issues for locals. **[Not killing them might be one place to start.]**

**The Stupidest Liar Of 2006, So
Far:**
**Brig. Gen. Michael Barbero:
Kissing Rumsfeld's Ass, He
Whines About "Iranian Influence"
In Iraq;**

But The U.S. Occupation Just Loves Pro-Iran Collaborator Parties; And The U.S. Command Is Trying To Wipe Out Anti-Iranian Shia Parties That Also Oppose The U.S. Occupation

"The evidence is that the Shiite groups most opposed to the (U.S.-led) coalition presence and the current pro-U.S. government ... are also the most anti-Iranian." But the United States draws less attention to SCIRI's connection to Iran presumably because party members hold key positions in the U.S.-backed unity government in Iraq.

September 02, 2006 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

Top U.S. officials have made strong charges in recent weeks that Iran is directly stirring up trouble in Iraq.

But inside Iraq, it's hard to see any change and some American officials in Baghdad say privately the evidence is not that clear.

Most experts on Iran say there is no question that Iran is funneling support to certain Shiite political parties in Iraq, groups it long supported when they were fighting Saddam Hussein.

Ironically, most of that aid appears to go to the same Shiite parties in Iraq that the American government supports and that are part of the government.

The more militant Shiite groups are equally critical of U.S. and Iranian influence in the country.

Nevertheless, the anti-Iran rhetoric from Washington has escalated sharply.

Brig. Gen. Michael Barbero, the deputy director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Pentagon reporters on Aug. 23 that there was "irrefutable" evidence that Iran was training, funding and equipping Shiite militants in Iraq.

The only specifics Barbero cited were allegations made before that the Iranians were providing insurgents with technology to build more powerful roadside bombs, including armor-piercing "shaped charges" developed by Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon.

In background briefings, however, senior U.S. officials in Baghdad have been far less certain about the nature of Iranian involvement. They say that technology to build "shaped charges" in roadside bombs is now widely available across the Middle East.

Unlike their counterparts in Washington, the officials in Baghdad spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Earlier in August, U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad said in an interview that Tehran was encouraging Shiite militias to step up attacks on U.S. forces in retaliation for the Israeli war with Shiite Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon. Iran backs and trains Hezbollah.

Khalilzad blamed the Iranians specifically for an uptick in mortar and rocket attacks on the U.S.-controlled Green Zone in Baghdad, including one attack that wounded four Australian soldiers. Those attacks were believed carried out by the Mahdi Army of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

The attacks on the Green Zone from al-Sadr's movement came just after an increase in U.S. and British military pressure on al-Sadr. That included raids on his Baghdad stronghold of Sadr City and the arrest of his top lieutenant in Basra.

Those incidents, rather than any encouragement from Tehran, may well have been behind the Green Zone attacks.

But many experts on the region believe Iran thinks its interests would be better served by a stable Iraq dominated by Shiites friendly to Tehran.

Those experts question why Iran would be trying to destabilize a government already dominated by parties with longtime ties to Tehran.

"Iran has every reason to want a stable Iraq," said Juan Cole, a professor of Middle Eastern history at the University of Michigan.

"The evidence is that the Shiite groups most opposed to the (U.S.-led) coalition presence and the current pro-U.S. government ... are also the most anti-Iranian."

Iran is believed to finance some major Shiite political parties, but mostly ones the United States also backs.

The Shiite party with the closest ties to Iran is the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI, which was based in Tehran during the Iran-Iraq war. Its Badr Brigade militia was trained and equipped by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

But the United States draws less attention to SCIRI's connection to Iran presumably because party members hold key positions in the U.S.-backed unity government in Iraq.

Both Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and his predecessor, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, belong to the Dawa party, whose ties to Iran are nearly as strong as SCIRI's.

But al-Sadr is an easier target because of his anti-U.S. stand.

He also is believed to receive some Iranian money, but not as much as SCIRI.

Al-Sadr's politics also are more strongly nationalistic, and thus he opposes SCIRI's dream of creating a Shiite self-rule region in Iraq's south something Iran presumably would support.

Two other Shiite groups that are close to al-Sadr's movement are outspokenly critical of Iran and its links to SCIRI and Dawa, America's partners in the Iraqi government.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

Zionist Punishment For Palestinian Winning An Election? Prison

August 31, 2008 by Adam Keller, Kibush.co. [Excerpt]

The fact of occupation was laid starkly bare, stripping off the last thin pretence that the Palestinian Authority is a sovereign body, when in the beginning of August it was proudly announced that the fugitive Speaker Dweik of the Palestinian Parliament had been nabbed, having been incautious enough to spend one night in his Ramallah home.

Subsequently, Dweik was duly charged at the Ofer courtroom with 'being a member of an illegal organization' - the incontrovertible evidence being that he had presented himself to the electors as a candidate of (yes) the Hamas Party, and been actually elected on that party's ticket and was subsequently nominated and sworn in as Speaker of the Palestinian parliament.

The Rafah Crossing: “They Deal With Us Like Animals”

August 28, 2006 Erica Silverman, Palestine Chronicle [Excerpts]

Scores of buses overflowing with passengers, so tightly packed that bodies are pressed against glass windows, approached the gates of Rafah Terminal along the Gaza-Egypt border Saturday in a desperate bid to exit the Gaza Strip.

Luggage and people piled high on top and on trailers dragging behind, some precariously balancing themselves even on metal hitches in between.

Mohamed, 17, clung to the side of one bus by his arms, trying to make his way into Egypt for medical care. One mother grasped the side of a trailer with one arm and her crying little girl with the other as suitcases were rapidly hurled on top of them.

Buses pushed on -- some carrying as many as 200 people, tires flattened from the weight -- towards lines of preventative security forces trying to control the chaos.

Over 7,000 passengers swarmed the terminal frantically trying to escape, but only 2,396 passengers departed and 341 returned, according to EU monitors stationed there. Students, medical patients, and foreign visa holders were permitted to leave.

An estimated 30,000 are still waiting to depart, and as of Tuesday the border remained sealed.

"They deal with us like animals," cried 37- year-old Riad Syiam, an electrical engineer trying to reach Abu Dhabi with his wife and three children.

Like hundreds of families they came to Gaza to visit relatives and were trapped inside when Israel sealed the border after an Israeli soldier was captured by Hamas 25 June. Rafah (Gaza's only passenger crossing) has been closed by Israel for seven weeks, ostensibly to prevent the soldier from being smuggled outside the Strip as well as to cut off large amounts of cash Hamas leaders have been bringing across the border.

Wow! Here's A Big Surprise! Zionist Regime Responsible For Most Truce Violations; Refuses To Stop Blockade Of Lebanon

August 31, 2006 By Haaretz Service and News Agencies & By Leila Hatoum, Daily Star staff & 30 August 2006 Aljazeera & Haaretz &

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Tuesday that Israel was responsible for most of the violations of the UN-brokered cease-fire that ended the 34-day conflict between Israel and Hezbollah two weeks ago.

The Israeli prime minister has rejected UN calls to end its air and sea blockade of Lebanon until all aspects of a ceasefire have been fully implemented.

Fuad Siniora, the Lebanese prime minister, had expressed hope on Wednesday that the blockade could be lifted "in the next few days".

However, Siniora rebuffed comments from Israeli officials and Annan that implementation of the UN resolution would bring about a "durable peace" between the two countries.

Siniora said Wednesday that he refused to have any direct contact with Israel, and that Lebanon would be the last Arab country to ever sign a peace deal with it.

"Lebanon will be the last Arab country to sign a peace agreement with Israel after 300 million Arab citizens sign it. There will be no agreement with Israel before there is a global peace deal that is just and lasting," Siniora told reporters at the Grand Serail.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**What Keeps Rumsfeld Up At
Night?
Dead And Maimed U.S. Troops?**

Fuck No!

He's Worried About Bad Publicity!

August 31, 2006 By Arianna Huffington, AlterNet [Excerpts]

Forget the escalating sectarian violence. Forget the rising influence of Iran. Forget the 100-Iraqi-deaths-per-day.

Forget the 2,638 American dead.

For Don Rumsfeld the problem isn't that we are not winning the war in Iraq, the problem is that we are not properly spinning the war in Iraq.

Along with comparing his critics to Hitler appeasers, the beleaguered Defense Secretary has spent the early part of this week making the case that the horrific state of affairs in Iraq is really just a case of bad PR.

"The enemy is so much better at communicating," he whined to a gathering of Veterans of Foreign Wars. "I wish we were better at countering that because the constant drumbeat of things they say -- all of which are not true -- is harmful."

And during a question-and-answer session with Navy personnel, he bemoaned the ability of terrorist groups -- who, according to Rummy, have "media committees" -- to "manipulate the media," saying, "That's the thing that keeps me up at night."

That's all you need to know about Don Rumsfeld. He's not losing sleep over the bloody reality in Iraq (and his role in creating it); he's tossing and turning over the fact that he hasn't been able to package that bloody reality more effectively. It's all about appearances.

You can just picture him in bed, fuming -- not over the latest body count stats or the latest dire predictions by U.S. generals, but over the latest batch of bad press clippings.

It wasn't hard to detect a hint of envy in his voice and a wistful look in his eye as he said this. After all, hadn't he and Doug Feith created the Office of Strategic Influence before the war so the Pentagon also could lie with impunity? Damn the New York Times! If it hadn't exposed their plans, America could be winning the spin war (if not the real one).

But even without the OSI, Rummy still manages a little manipulation of his own.

During his Navy Q&A, he claimed that the terrorists groups -- using their crack "media committees," no doubt -- had tried to undermine support for the war by falsely blaming U.S. troops for civilian deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As if it was it the terrorists' PR geniuses who came up with the horrors of Abu Ghraib, Haditha, the rape and murders in Mahmudiyah, and the long line of civilian casualties from American bombing runs in Afghanistan.

No matter. The facts are besides the point with Rummy. As he's made clear from the beginning, he doesn't see Iraq as a war that needs to be won. For him, it's a PR campaign that needs to be spun.

It's a long, hard media manipulation slog.

**LIAR
TRAITOR
SOLDIER-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



(AFP/Getty Images/File/Chip Somodevilla)

**OK, Is This Clear Enough For
You?
Murtha Wants More Dead U.S.
Troops, And More Dead Iraqis**

[So much stupid bullshit flying around, of the kiss-Murtha's-ass variety. So much deceit about his position on the war. So much pathetic groveling at his feet, as if he opposes more dead U.S. troops, and more dead Iraqis, which he does not. You agree with Murtha? Fine. If you support Murtha's version of more war in Iraq, WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE? SHUT UP AND SHIP OUT. T]

August 30th, 2006 Democracy Now!

REP. JOHN MURTHA: I feel very strongly we can't desert Iraq, but we have to find a way to reduce our presence.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Win One For Our Side: Striking Copper Miners Win 5% Wage Hike And \$17,000 Bonus



Workers at the world's largest copper mine, Chile's Escondida, voted on Thursday to accept a new contract deal and end a strike.

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes WE AMERICAN WORKERS HAVE TO LEARN TO SPEAK SPANISH TO OUR BOSSES. THAT'S ONE HELL OF A BONUS]

Aug 31 By Pav Jordan, Reuters

Workers at the world's largest copper mine, Chile's Escondida, voted on Thursday to accept a new contract deal and end a strike that sent international copper prices on a 25-day rollercoaster ride.

The strike at Escondida polarized opinions in Chile about how much of a share workers should receive of booming global mining profits and came ahead of contract talks at Codelco, the state-owned company that is the world's largest copper producer.

Workers at Escondida, a giant open-pit mine in northern Chile, accepted a 5 percent wage hike and a special bonus equal to some \$17,000.

Welcome To The Barbaric City Of Steamboat Springs, Colorado: Depraved Asshole Prosecutor Sends Men To Jail For Six Months For Taking Food From Garbage Can

Authorities said they took five cucumbers, four or five apricots, two bundles of asparagus spears and a handful of cherries from a garbage can at Sweet Pea Produce. The two pleaded guilty to misdemeanor trespassing Wednesday and the felony charge was dropped.

Sep. 01, 2006 Associated Press

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo.: Two men who took fruit and vegetables out of a garbage can have been sentenced to six months in jail, a punishment they say is harsh and the only choice they had to avoid a felony on their records.

Giles Charle, 24, of Sumersworth, N.H., and David Siller, 27, of Wayne, Pa., were on their way to the Rainbow Family's annual gathering when they were arrested in June and charged with felony burglary and misdemeanor theft.

Authorities said they took five cucumbers, four or five apricots, two bundles of asparagus spears and a handful of cherries from a garbage can at Sweet Pea Produce. The two pleaded guilty to misdemeanor trespassing Wednesday and the felony charge was dropped.

"We didn't have any intention of committing a crime or doing anything wrong," Charle told the Steamboat Pilot & Today newspaper. "We had just come in town and we were prepared to buy groceries from a store but everything was closed."

Thousands of people were in the Steamboat Springs area at the end of June and early July for the Rainbow Family gathering north of town. At times, the relationship between members of the nomadic group and authorities was tense and a number of citations were issued.

Assistant District Attorney Kerry St. James said the men were facing the felony because they trespassed onto property without permission and took something that did not belong to them. He said the plea bargain was the suspects' decision.

"They had a choice between accepting a deferred felony with 90 days in jail or a misdemeanor conviction with six months in jail," he said. "They agreed to spend the six months in jail."

Don Wirtshafter, an attorney in Ohio who represented many Rainbow Family members over the summer, said Charle and Siller were forced to choose between two evils.

"A suspended sentence would have worked for these boys, but when a prosecutor is really going after you, the best thing you can do is plea," he said. "At best, this case is bizarre."

Charle's mother, Shaune McCarthy Charle, called the jail sentence a joke.

"It's really amazing and unbelievable how taking garbage out of a Dumpster became a felony," she said. "(St. James) is completely incorrigible."

Bangladesh “Brought To A Standstill By A General Strike And Violent Protests”

31 August 2006 By Justin Huggler, Asia Correspondent, Independent News and Media Limited

Bangladesh has been brought to a standstill by a general strike and violent protests against a British company's plans to develop a huge open coal mine.

Protesters accused the company, Asia Energy, of stripping Bangladesh of its resources and forcing tens of thousands of people from their homes.

One policeman was killed when he was hit by a stone, and several demonstrators were injured in police baton charges in the capital, Dhaka. At the weekend, six people were shot dead by security forces in a protest at the site of the proposed mine.

Asia Energy plc is planning a \$1.1bn investment in mining 570 million tons of coal at Phulbari, in northern Bangladesh.

But the mine's opponents say it will displace more than 100,000 people, destroy hundreds of thousands of trees and damage the environment.

Over the weekend huge numbers of people, many of them armed with rocks and machetes, converged at the site of the proposed mine in Phulbari. Witnesses put the number as high as 30,000. The police called on the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles for backup, and they opened fire into the crowd, killing six and wounding more than 300.

"The reason this is so explosive is that relocating people is a much bigger issue here than in the West," said Sharyar Khan of Bangladesh's Daily Star newspaper. "Bangladesh is already so crowded people feel there is nowhere else to go. They have very little and they feel if you take away their land you are taking away what little they have. That is why they react so desperately."

But the issue is complicated by the fact that many of those who will be displaced - the exact figure is disputed - are members of the Santal indigenous tribal people. Like most tribal groups in South Asia, they do not have any land deeds or other documents proving ownership of their land, but their families have lived on it for centuries. Many of the Santals fear they will miss out on being rehoused because they do not have the paperwork.

For them, the deforestation issue is important, too. Most still live traditional lives, cooking on firewood. The mine's opponents say it will destroy 2.5 million trees; Asia Energy says it will destroy 800,000.

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)

Palestinian Workers Attack The Legislative Council

30 August 2006 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

PCHR's preliminary investigation indicates that at approximately 11:40 on Tuesday, 29 August 2006, a large number of workers arrived in a protest march to

the vicinity of the PLC building in Gaza City to request jobs. They held a rally at the site.

A number of protestors attempted to break into the PLC building. They threw stones at it, causing material damages. Some protestors succeeded in forcing open the outer eastern gate leading to the building.

They rushed inside towards the PLC building despite efforts by police, armed with sticks, to stop them.

After the break in, tens of members of the Executive Force deployed at the entrances of the PLC. They fired in the air and threw a teargas bomb and a sound bomb in an attempt to break up the protestors and prevent their entry inside the PLC building.

The clashes between the protestors and security forces resulted in the light injury of 6 policemen and 1 protestor. All of them were treated at Shifa Hospital.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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

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

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

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