

GI SPECIAL 4J30:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

British To Evacuate Consulate In Basra After Mortar Attacks “A Huge Blow”

30/10/2006 By Thomas Harding in Basra, Telegraph Group Limited 2006

The British consulate in Basra will evacuate its heavily defended building in the next 24 hours over concerns for the safety of its staff.

Despite a large British military presence at the headquarters in Basra Palace, a private security assessment has advised the consul general and her staff to leave the building after experiencing regular mortar attacks in the last two months.

The move will be seen as a huge blow to progress in Iraq and has infuriated senior military commanders. They say it sends a message to the insurgents that they are

winning the battle in pushing the British out of the southern Iraqi capital, where several British soldiers have died and dozens have been injured. **[As if the resistance needed "a message."]**

The evacuation also comes halfway through Operation Sinbad, which has experienced some success in restoring control in Basra. The operation ends early next year but Basra will need massive investment by the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development to build on its successes.

There are about 200 staff at the impressive consulate building - formerly one of Saddam's palaces - including a team of bodyguards and ex-Gurkha guards. There were 12 full-time staff, some hand-picked by Tony Blair.

A handful have already left by helicopter and the rest are expected to go this week, some of them to Basra air station eight miles outside the city and the rest back to Britain.

A skeleton staff [no pun intended] will continue to man the building until it is deemed safe enough for the rest to return. [Sometime in 2087.]

A Foreign Office spokesman insisted last night that its officials were "not bailing out". "This is a temporary measure as a response to increased mortar attacks," the spokesman said. [Right. Sure. Whatever you say.]

"Core staff will remain at Basra Palace and the consulate will continue to maintain a full range of activities."

The Foreign Office and Dfid operation in southern Iraq has been criticised for the poor handling of economic and political regeneration in the area.

While £14 million has been spent on refurbishing the consulate, including a new portico, hardened roof defences and swimming pool, it has spent just £12.5 million on reconstruction that included repainting a tower in the city.

The palace, which is surrounded by a 30ft blast wall and graced with manicured lawns, is in the same fortified compound as 800 British infantry.

Major Charlie Burbridge, the British military spokesman in Basra, said: "We believe very strongly that the Foreign Office and other agencies are critical to the long term solution in Iraq. We have worked closely in our shared endeavour and will continue to do so." **[Right. Sure. Whatever you say.]**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Local Marine Killed In Iraq

October 29, 2006 By Nathan Phelps, Green Bay Press-Gazette [Excerpts]

People who knew Luke Zimmerman say he was a hard worker, an upstanding individual who always had a smile and had long aspired to be part of the U.S. Marine Corps.

On Friday, friends and family got the news the 24-year-old Marine from the town of Green Bay was killed in Iraq.

Zimmerman, a 2000 Luxemburg-Casco graduate, was a close friend of Steve Metzler and his family. He worked for Metzler and his wife, Julie, who own Julie's Café on Main Street in Green Bay, for four years. They'd also taken him on a family vacation and he was a best friend to Scott and Troy Metzler, two of Steve's sons.

"He was a great friend," said Steve Metzler, who lives in Green Bay. "He was always smiling ... the life of the party. He was always upbeat. He was a hard worker and he was a dedicated worker ... and he was a man of his word.

"He was a lot of fun, he was a dedicated kid. You couldn't have asked for a nicer guy."

The Department of Defense had not yet given public notification of Zimmerman's death Saturday afternoon. That announcement from the military normally takes a day or two after family is told of the death.

But the news had spread among family and friends.

Steve Metzler's family heard the news Friday afternoon; just days after Troy got a phone call from Luke in Iraq.

"Things were going quite well," Metzler said. "They were arresting some insurgents, and they were searching for roadside bombs and insurgents from what he mentioned."

They last saw him in summer when Zimmerman was home on leave and attended one of Metzler's son's pre-wedding activities. "He couldn't stand up for the wedding because he had to go to Iraq, but he came to the shower and then he had to leave," Metzler said.

Zimmerman's family members declined comment Saturday. American and Marine Corps flags snapped on a staff in front of the town of Green Bay home and a blue star flag — signifying a family member on active duty — hung in the window. A man who came to the door gave a brief statement, "His service was exemplary and that will speak for itself."

Zimmerman is the second Marine from Luxemburg-Casco High School to die in Iraq. In April 2004 Marine Cpl. Jesse Thiry, 23, of Casco was killed in Anbar province.

Thiry and Zimmerman graduated in 2000 and the two men were described as friends who hung out together and followed the same path into the Marines.

For Randy Thiry, Zimmerman's death hurts just as much as it did 2½ years ago when he got the news about his son. "It's déjà vu," he said shortly after talking to Zimmerman's parents Saturday. "It brings back a lot of memories... It doesn't get any easier. It's just like day one."

Randy Thiry said Zimmerman was an upstanding individual and a "very, very nice kid."

Sue Thiry said she believes the two Marines crossed paths later in life when they were home on leave at the same time and may have crossed paths in the Corps. Metzler said serving in the Marine Corps was something Zimmerman had worked for since he was in his teens.

"Since eighth grade, he was talking about joining. This is something he always wanted to do," he said. "It's something he had in his heart, and he was going to do it. He believed in it, and when they sent him to Iraq, he did not waiver. He wanted to go fight for his country."

This was Zimmerman's first tour in Iraq, where he had been for the past few months, Metzler said.

Both Zimmerman and Thiry wrestled at Luxemburg-Casco, where wrestling coach Bob Berceau said Zimmerman was a hard worker and was always fun to be around. "Just a go-getter, he always had a lot of fire in him," he said. "He was just a nice kid to have around ... He always had a smile on his face."

Six people from the Green Bay area have died in Iraq since February of 2004.

"He was a family friend, and I knew he was going to be friends with us forever," Steve Metzler said. "It's a big loss for us and big loss for a lot of people. He was a great person."

Selfless Marine Gave His All

October 17, 2006 By Rich Davis and Mara Lee, Courier and Press staff writers

Sgt. Brock Babb, a 40-year-old Evansville Marine killed Sunday in Iraq, felt he had unfinished business in that country.

At 19, he'd joined the Marine Reserves and served in Iraq during the first Iraq war. Two years ago, as the second Iraq war had passed the 18-month mark, he decided to return.

It was totally in character for the sheet-metal worker, volunteer coach and father of three.

"He just didn't do anything halfway at all," his mother, Susie Babb, said Monday.

At fundraisers for junior football or wrestling, "he was the first one there and the last one to leave," said friend and co-worker Tim Maxey.

In 2004, more than a year into the war in Iraq, Babb decided it was time to return.

He wanted to "help young Marines survive," his mother said.

"I said, 'Son, you're breaking my heart, but I am so darn proud of you.'"

Neither his friends nor his family could talk him out of it.

"We tried to talk him out of it, but it was something he felt he wanted to do. I told him he served his time already. He's already been over there once. That was enough," Maxey said. "He loved his country too much. He was committed to everything he did." It was, he told his father, Terry, "his calling, his duty and his honor ... to go to Iraq."

Babb was killed by a roadside bomb in Anbar Province, a stronghold of Sunni insurgents. One other Marine from Kilo Company of Terre Haute, Ind., also died.

They'd been in Iraq two weeks, though the reservists had been training in California since May. "Sergeant Babb was one of our senior Marines over there; an excellent Marine," said Marine Reserves spokesman Staff Sgt. Tim Kosky.

The news came to his parents as it has for 2,771 others: Soldiers in dress uniform on the doorstep.

"Brock is in heaven now," she remembered thinking.

On Monday, she'd been looking at a picture sent from Bangor, Maine, of his unit just before it flew to Iraq. "He looks really happy in this picture. I know he's just as happy now."

Babb was the oldest of three children. "He was the sweetest, kindest child you could ever imagine," Susie Babb said. "Then he went into the Marine Corps." It changed him, she said. He was sterner and more of a leader.

"He taught me to get out of my comfort zone," she said, noting about a year ago she began doing bookkeeping for the AIDS Resource Group.

Babb's own three children were the center of his life. He coached their sports, talked about their accomplishments to his friends and always put his own wants behind theirs.

Tanner, 16, wrestles and plays football for Reitz High School.

His grandmother says he's the spitting image of his father in a football uniform. Zoie, 13, a soccer player, is a seventh-grader at Helfrich Park Middle School. Levi, 8, just starting to get into soccer, is a second-grader at St. Agnes.

"Tanner turned one when (his father) was in Desert Storm," Susie Babb said. "I was just going through pictures of Tanner when he was real little."

She was also talking Monday with his widow, Barbara, about how the couple met. Barbara Babb saw Brock Babb across the room at a party when she was 16 and he was 17.

She told a friend, "See that guy over there? I'm going to marry him some day."

A boyhood friend, Mark Hauschild, was in their wedding. When he heard about Babb's death, "I was just devastated," Hauschild said.

"You just don't think something like that can happen. It ain't fair. It ain't right. I'm missing him a whole lot."

Susie Babb said her daughter-in-law is devastated, but added: "She's a really strong girl. As long as she'll take our help, we'll get through this together."

The loss ripples out beyond immediate family and friends, to the friends of his children. When word got out, about 100 teenagers and adults gathered near his home, said Jon Houchins.

Houchins' son has been best friends with Tanner since they began wrestling at Tekoppel School. "He was a solid, solid guy. It's going to be an unbelievable blow to the whole West Side, really," Houchins said.

Maxey said Levi is his son's best friend. "Levi and Trevor, they're two peas in a pod." Trevor was told his friend's dad was killed, but at that age, he can't fully grasp that "forever is forever."

Every Friday night during football season, Maxey and Babb would go to Reitz games, where Babb graduated in 1984.

Usually it was just the two of them, though sometimes the kids would come too and "they'd go running around the stands. We had our little spot, we stood up on the rail."

His voice strained with sorrow. "There'll be a hole in my heart that'll probably never be filled."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Bush Regime Pissing Pants Over British Truce With Afghan Resistance

He also went on to criticize the continued refusal of several European nations with troops serving in quiet parts of Afghanistan to commit their troops to the fighting in the south. "We need more troops in the south of Afghanistan," he said.

Oct 28, IRNA

America's ambassador to Afghanistan Friday expressed deep unease over the British military's ceasefire with the Taliban and its subsequent withdrawal from a flashpoint town.

British troops moved out of the town of Musa Qala in north Helmand province last week after a truce negotiated by tribal elders acting as intermediaries with the militia.

According to the Daily Times, both the original decision to send troops to outpost platoon houses and the deal proved highly controversial.

US envoy Ronald Neumann said that there was "a lot of nervousness about who the truce was made with, who the arrangement was made with, and whether it will hold." He said the jury is out over whether the deal can be seen as a positive move.

Neumann said repercussions of the takeover by local forces must be rigorously tested to ensure that Musa Qala had not simply metamorphosed into a sanctuary for an area governed by the Taliban. **[Idiot. Most of the country is a "sanctuary" for the resistance. You got a nation of 31 million that hates being occupied by foreigners, and a few thousand troops. It's a mission for suicide soldiers.]**

Neumann said that US and NATO analyses earlier in the summer indicated that in areas of the south such as Helmand, local tribes were siding with the Taliban because of grievances over local bad governance.

"If you just say anyone who is sympathetic to the fight on the other side is forever outside the pale of negotiations you rather shoot yourself in the foot," he said.

"But at same time, if you have an area that is under the Afghan government flag but is not under the actual authority of the Afghan government then you are losing in a very big way," he added. [What, he just discovered that the occupation has been "losing in a very big way"? The whole world knows that by now.]

It (the truce) certainly shouldn't be replicated until those questions have been answered, Neumann said.

He also went on to criticize the continued refusal of several European nations with troops serving in quiet parts of Afghanistan to commit their troops to the fighting in the south.

"We need more troops in the south of Afghanistan," he said.

TROOP NEWS

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



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

**Yes, This Is For Real:
“The Head Of The Australian Army
Has Personally Intervened To Stop
Bureaucrats Blocking Soldiers’
Access To An Unofficial Website
Where They Can Vent Their
Anger”**

[Thanks to Max Watts who sent this in. About Max Watts: LEFT FACE, Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies, By DAVID CORTRIGHT AND MAX WATTS; Contributions in Military Studies, Number 107; GREENWOOD PRESS, New York • Westport, Connecticut • London]

22.10.06 SYDNEY Sun Herald

THE head of the Australian Army has personally intervened to stop bureaucrats blocking soldiers' access to an unofficial website where they can vent their anger and concerns about military life.

Army chief General Peter Leahy is fighting Defence Department officials for the right of military whistleblowers to complain about poor conditions and shoddy equipment.

Defence technical officers suddenly blocked all Defence Department computers from the website, called Fire Support Base.

General Leahy, who was reading the website at the time, immediately stepped in and ordered the ban be lifted.

He stunned website members by posting a message under his own name explaining he had not ordered the ban, that it had been a decision of "the geek system" and he had ordered that access be restored.

The website has served for more than a year as an underground forum for military personnel to discuss grievances about equipment and controversial issues.

There are about 600 members of <http://www.firesupportbase.com>. They have to give their real names to join, but post online using nicknames.

Members were shocked to find that the head of the army was also a member and had been quietly reading their gripes. General Leahy posted under his real name without mentioning his rank.

"I have been working my way through the sites over the last few weeks and have found them very informative and in most instances constructive and useful," he wrote after members complained they had been locked out.

"I have certainly not ordered the geeks to block access. My ego is not bruised, I have actually learned a lot. I will try and find out tomorrow what is going on and if the site has been banned I will ask to have access restored immediately. Peter Leahy."

The response was immediate. "Is this for real ?" asked Ballistician. "I find it hard to believe he would look at what we yobbos have to say!"

General Leahy wrote back: "Yes it is me. With regard to the site being barred, I have asked some questions this morning. From what I can see the geek system has barred the site themselves. I have asked why and at the same time requested that the site be restored. Peter Leahy."

The website manager, a former soldier who did not want to be named, told The Sun-Herald General Leahy joined the site two months ago, but this was the first time he had posted a message.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

WELCOME TO RAMADI: HAVE A NICE DAY



Insurgents patrol a road in Ramadi October 22, 2006. REUTERS/Stringer (IRAQ)

“Parliament Members And Tribal Leaders Took The Podium To

Demand That The Americans Go Away”

October 30, 2006 By John Ward Anderson and Ellen Knickmeyer, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

On Sunday, U.S. troops searched every car going in and out of Sadr City. Even donkey carts were searched; an American female MP patted a donkey as Iraqi troops sorted through the junked engine parts and cardboard piled on his back.

A woman cloaked in black robes declared over loudspeakers booming across a square that food and medicine were running short because of the near-blockade.

Parliament members and tribal leaders took the podium [at a mass demonstration against the occupation] to demand that the Americans go away. Men pumped their fists but heeded appeals to remain calm.

"The Americans are trying to pull the Sadr movement into war with the U.S.," one speaker in brown robes exhorted. "Do not fall for their tricks. Keep calm, keep cool."

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

Assorted Resistance Action: Prime Minister's Convoy Attacked

[Thanks to John Gingerich for some of this information.]

Oct 29 CNN & Reuters & By STEVEN R. HURST, Associated Press Writer

Sunday, guerrillas fired on Iraq Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's convoy, wounding one guard, in one of the capital's southern suburbs Sunday, an Iraqi government spokesman said. Al-Maliki was not present in the convoy, the spokesman said.

Guerrillas killed 23 policemen Sunday, including 17 in one attack in Basra, signaling the possible start of an intensified insurgent campaign against Iraq's security forces.

Police have been targeted throughout the insurgency in an effort to destabilize the U.S.-supported government, but the number of attacks Sunday was a sharp step-up in attacks aimed at security services.

In the southern city of Basra on Sunday, insurgents dragged 15 policemen and two translators, instructors at the police academy, off a bus at the edge of town. Their bodies were found dumped throughout the city beginning about four hours later.

Gunmen killed two Iraqi police officers in Baquba when they attacked their patrol Sunday morning, a Diyala Joint Coordination Center official said.

A car bomb in Binoog district of Baghdad killed two policeman and wounded two, an Interior Ministry source said.

Gunmen in a car also killed two policemen in central Baghdad.

The bullet-riddled body of a captured policeman was found, dumped in FALLUJA.

Gunmen killed three Iraqi soldiers in Tal al-Thahab village near Balad.

A roadside bomb killed five soldiers in an army patrol in southern Baquba, and gunmen in a car killed two policemen on patrol, police said. On Saturday, gunmen in the city wounded a police major.

A roadside bomb killed one policeman in the town of al-Shirqat, police said.

Gunmen killed Maitham Taqi al-Asadi, a translator working with U.S. forces, in Diwaniya on Saturday.

KUT: A policeman was shot dead near a checkpoint,

KIRKUK: A roadside bomb seriously wounded a policeman, in the centre of Kirkuk, police said.

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

**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)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

“STAY THE COURSE”



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: October 27, 2006
Subject: "STAY THE COURSE"

"STAY THE COURSE"

Torture is kind of a fickle thing--the U.S. declares

it illegal, but you continue doing it anyway.
It was a drag in Vietnam, especially behind an APC.
In war, you blow up things, nobody gets tucked in.
When my Dad was in North Africa during WWII,
he and other soldiers ate their C-rations with dead
German soldiers nearby.
War is about body parts.
College is for recruits who think they have a future.
Parts are flown in, and parts are flown out.
Some are in card board boxes.
Some are in aluminum boxes.
It's World Series Time, so fuck the war.
When I took my In-Country R and R in Vietnam,
Miss America showed up.
As Bob Hope use to say, "Thanks For The Memories."
We live in an adolescent culture.
America is on a time-released acid trip.
God help a country that is killing as fast as it can.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
October 27, 2006

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

OBITUARY: GILLO PONTECORVO **“One Of Those Judgments That Was Proved Wrong Was That The Oppressed Would Endure Their Oppression”**

October 27, 2006 By Joe Allen , Socialist Worker

GILLO PONTECORVO, one of the great revolutionary film directors of all time, recently passed away at the age of 86.

He is best known for two classic films about the struggle against colonialism, The Battle of Algiers (1966) and Queimada/Burn! (1969).

Born in 1919 to a wealthy Italian Jewish family, Pontecorvo grew up and came to political consciousness under Mussolini's fascist dictatorship. In the late 1930s, he and his family members were forced to leave Italy for France after anti-Semitic laws made daily life unbearable.

Pontecorvo returned to Italy during the Second World War and became a member of the Communist Party's underground apparatus fighting Mussolini's fascists and Hitler's armies in Northern Italy. His experiences would prove invaluable in the making of his future films.

While he left the Communist Party in the mid-1950s, his political sympathies remained on the left and with the world's oppressed people. In the early 1960s, major Hollywood and British film studios were still making silly and racist homages to the British Empire, such as *Zulu* and *Lawrence of Arabia*.

He and his writing partner, Franco Solinas, struggled for years to get a major studio interested in the Algerian struggle against French colonialism. When they approached an Italian film producer with their idea, he responded, "Why do you think Italians would care about Negroes!"

Finally, with the help of the Algerian government, but with a small crew and budget, Pontecorvo created *The Battle of Algiers* about the 1957 general strike against French rule and the ensuing battle between the fighters of the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the French army's elite paratrooper units for control of the city.

Using a grainy, newsreel-like film technique, whole sections of the film seem like actual events rather than a movie. "I was mainly interested in showing this unstoppable process of liberation, not only in Algeria, but throughout the entire world," Pontecorvo said in a 1999 interview.

While the film focuses on the terrorist tactics of the NLF against the French army and settlers, showing them to be products of necessity and repression, there is also an implicit criticism of such tactics.

The film ends with a mass uprising that breaks French rule.

"Wars aren't won with terrorism, neither wars nor revolutions," said Pontecorvo. "Terrorism is a beginning but afterward all the people must act."

Popular interest in the film was renewed after it was revealed that top Pentagon brass screened the film when the insurgency in Iraq gained momentum in the summer of 2003.

The parallels between the U.S.-British occupation of Iraq and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza with events documented in *The Battle of Algiers* are obvious.

Queimada, released as *Burn!* in the U.S., was Pontecorvo's other classic film, starring Marlon Brando as Sir William Walker, an agent of the British Admiralty.

Walker is sent to the mythical Portuguese sugar colony of Queimada in the 1830s to steal the island for Britain. To do this, he must foment a slave rebellion, led by the freed Black slave Jose Dolores, while simultaneously convincing the island's businessmen that the future is with wage labor and British protection.

While he initially succeeds and leaves Queimada smug and rich, Walker is called back 10 years later to repress a new revolutionary movement.

Queimada is a tutorial on the dynamics of historical change. On his second tour of duty, Walker once again has to tutor the island's narrow-minded businessmen, who remind him that "he has only been gone 10 years," on the historical drama unfolding before their very eyes.

"I want to explain," says Walker. "Very often 10 years can reveal the contradictions of a whole century and prove our judgments wrong."

One of those judgments that was proved wrong was that the oppressed would endure their oppression.

For many people, Pontecorvo comes second only to Russian director Sergei Eisenstein in capturing the full human drama of revolution on film. It will take another era of revolutionary struggle to produce another filmmaker equal to Pontecorvo.

OCCUPATION REPORT

***When Thieves Fall Out:* Head Of Collaborator Government Attacks Bush Regime**

October 28, 2006 Borzou Daragahi, Los Angeles Times

Baghdad -- The Iraqi prime minister sharply criticized U.S. policy during a private meeting with the U.S. ambassador Friday, pointing to American failure to either reduce violence or give his government authority over security matters.

The criticism in private is the latest example of tension between the two governments and stands in stark contrast with a joint public statement issued after the meeting.

In the statement, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and the U.S. Embassy said they had agreed to unspecified "timelines" to make tough political and security decisions on the country's future.

Privately, however, al-Maliki criticized what he called the patronizing U.S. tone toward the Iraqi government and warned U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad to respect Iraq's sovereignty, according to two of the prime minister's advisers.

Al-Maliki had vehemently rejected the notion of deadlines for his government to achieve key goals, but the statement said, "The Iraqi government has made clear the issues that must be resolved with timelines for them to take positive steps forward on behalf of the Iraqi people."

The statement said "Iraq and the United States are committed to working together to respond to the needs of the people." It affirmed that America "will continue to stand by the Iraqi government" amid rumors Washington may be seeking alternatives to Baghdad's current Shiite-led administration.

Al-Maliki's supporters downplayed the reference to timelines as insignificant, saying they were meant as rough guidelines to hand security over to Iraqis.

After days of back-and-forth recriminations, the contrast between private criticism and the public statement brought into sharper focus a dispute that may have already undermined the Shiite-led government and increased friction between the United States and the country's majority sect.

The U.S. government, undertaking a massive nation-building project while fighting off a ferocious insurgency, has little choice but to back al-Maliki's Iranian-influenced Shiite government.

Any U.S. move against al-Maliki could spark even greater violence and anti-American animosity.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

Audit Finds Many Missing U.S. Weapons In Iraq: Government Report: About 14,000 Weapons (1 In 25) Unaccounted For

10/29/06 AP

Nearly one of every 25 weapons the U.S. military bought for Iraqi security forces is missing and many others cannot be repaired because parts or technical manuals are lacking, a government audit said Sunday.

The Defense Department cannot account for 14,030 weapons: almost 4 percent of the semiautomatic pistols, assault rifles, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and other weapons it began supplying to Iraq since the end of 2003, according to a report from the office of the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction.

The missing semiautomatic pistols, assault rifles, machine guns and other weapons will not be tracked easily: The Defense Department registered the serial numbers of only about 10,000 of the 370,251 weapons it provided, less than 3 percent.

Missing from its inventory books were 13,180 semiautomatic pistols, 751 assault rifles and 99 machine guns, according to the audit requested by Sen. John Warner, R-Va., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The audit says there was no way of knowing whether the missing weapons were ever issued to Iraqi security forces, which also lack many needed spare parts, technical repair manuals and arms maintenance personnel.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON



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

Israeli Soldier Exposes Abuse of Palestinians By Israeli Military: “I Started To Speak With Some Of My Soldiers. I Discovered That We All Felt The Same, But We Didn’t Have The Courage To Speak About It”

[Thanks to JF, who sent this in.]

Responsibility is to every human being in the world, and for sure for Americans, because in the end of the day for all what Israel does, there is only one country in the world that, you know, the chief of staff and the prime minister of Israel has to report in the end of the day, and that’s the United States of America.

October 27th, 2006 Democracy Now! [Excerpts]

A leading Israeli human rights organization accused Israel on Thursday of breaking international humanitarian law by holding thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israel.

According to B'Tselem, international law prohibits the transfer of civilians, including prisoners, from the occupied territories to Israel.

On Thursday B'Tselem issued a 53-page report outlining how Israel's prison policies has made it nearly impossible for Palestinians to regularly visit relatives in jail.

Meanwhile, a former Israeli soldier named Yehuda Shaul has just begun a tour of the United States to give an inside look at how the Israeli military treats Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Shaul is a co-founder of Breaking the Silence, a group of former Israeli soldiers committed to exposing human rights abuses by the Israeli military.

Last year the group revealed that Israel soldiers had been ordered to open fire on unarmed Palestinians.

The group has also gathered photographic evidence that proved Israeli soldiers have abused Palestinian corpses.

Yehuda Shaul, former Israeli soldier and co-founder of Breaking the Silence:

JUAN GONZALEZ: Yehuda Shaul joins us now from San Francisco. Welcome to Democracy Now!

YEHUDA SHAUL: Good morning.

AMY GOODMAN: Could you talk to us a little bit about what you're hoping to accomplish on your tour?

YEHUDA SHAUL: I'm here in the United States, because, I would say, we in Breaking the Silence see the act of breaking the silence as an act of taking responsibility.

As ex-Israeli soldiers, who've served as combat soldiers in the Occupied Territories and were there and committed all what we're talking about, we're part of the occupation. After we were discharged and realized what we were doing and what was going on around us, there was only two options, as I see it. There's or to lock ourselves in the room, cry and ask forgiveness, or to stand up and take responsibility and demand from others to take responsibility.

So, in my eyes, breaking the silence, standing up and telling the stories and trying to bring people to know and to realize and to understand what it means, occupation, on a daily basis, through these testimonies that we publish and the pictures that we had in the exhibition, is demanding from Israeli society to take responsibility for it, for what is being done in their behalf.

And in my eyes, in our eyes, responsibility doesn't end with ex-soldiers who served there or with Israelis, or the idea if our army as Israelis is doing all these things.

Responsibility is to every human being in the world, and for sure for Americans, because in the end of the day for all what Israel does, there is only one country in the world that, you know, the chief of staff and the prime minister of Israel has to report in the end of the day, and that's the United States of America.

For that reason, I think that people of America must know what's going on there and must break their own silence and take civil responsibility, human responsibility, to what is being done there.

AMY GOODMAN: Yehuda Shaul, tell us your story. How did you end up in the military? How did you decide to leave?

YEHUDA SHAUL: In Israel, every Jewish Israeli is obligated by law to serve in the military -- men for three years, women for two years. I served as a combat soldier and a commander. Two years out of my three years were in the Occupied Territories, and fourteen months were in Hebron.

And during my service in the Occupied Territories, I just did whatever I had to do, whatever were my missions, fulfilling my missions, leading my soldiers, doing all sorts of things -- what it means, occupation -- and suddenly like three months before I was discharged, I was sitting down and trying to imagine myself as a civilian.

I told myself, you know, in three months, I'm going to give back my weapon, my uniform, stop being a combat soldier, and again going back to civilian life. And for me, that same

moment, you know, the exact moment of stop thinking as a professional combat soldier was a moment of -- maybe I can call it an enlightenment, you know?

It's a moment of stop seeing things through the eyes of a soldier and start seeing things through an eye of a civilian. It's like, again, stop seeing things from in the system and start observing it from outside.

And when I suddenly looked at myself from the outside and looked backwards, you know, to what I've done in the past two years and ten months in the Occupied Territories as a soldier, I was totally shocked.

I realized that something mad was going around me.

Suddenly I realized that the situation that I took part in brought me to do stuff that, you know -- I wanted to believe that it wasn't me. But, you know, I couldn't escape it. It was me. And when I realized that, I felt that I can't continue my life without doing something about it.

And that's when I started to speak with some of my soldiers, some of my comrades, and I discovered that we all felt the same, but we didn't have the courage to speak about it.

You know, it was something that we didn't -- it was somewhere in the back of the mind, but we didn't open it inside the unit.

And because we all felt the same, we all felt that something wrong is going on around us, we decided to break the silence.

And I was discharged in March 2004. In June 2004, we started our activities with a photo exhibition and video testimonies from our service in Hebron. As I said, I served fourteen months in Hebron, so it was obvious that we're going to start from there.

And the idea of the exhibition, we called it then, is to break the silence surrounding what's going on in the Occupied Territories, in what we called "Bringing Hebron to Tel Aviv," because you must understand that, you know, what's going on in the Occupied Territories is like the biggest secret in Israeli society. It's like the taboo.

You never talk about it. It's like something that happens in the backyard. It's the dirt from the back yard that no one wants to have it in the front. And for that reason --

JUAN GONZALEZ: I'd like to ask you about all of these thousands of Palestinian prisoners. From your perspective, as someone who's obviously had to participate in the capturing and imprisonment of some of these Palestinian civilians, what is this doing to Palestinian society, to have so many people locked up for such a long period of time under Israeli control?

YEHUDA SHAUL: I have no idea. I'm not a Palestinian. Just, you know, looking from the outside, seems like breaking all the family structure.

I don't know, just trying to think of, you know, all the people that we arrested, bumping in the middle of the night through the windows, through the doors, through the roofs, waking up the family, taking people.

No one knows when they're going to get back, why they were taken.

You know, this is -- just, you know, almost every night in the Occupied Territories, you do an arrest operation.

Every night you come back with what we saw in the pictures before, or you see now, of handcuffed, blindfolded Palestinians, who are just, you know, were now arrested, waiting to be taken to interrogations at the secret services.

But also, there's another kind of Palestinians, as you see now in the picture, and that's kind of what we call in Hebrew, or I will translate it, what we called "dry outs," or if I would professionally translate it, "detainees."

And these are Palestinians, you know, when you stand in the checkpoint and you ask from all the Palestinians to stand in a very nice one line, and suddenly one of them starts screaming or leaves the line, so you must educate him, right? They must know who's the boss.

So you detain the man aside. You took him, handcuff, blindfold -- five, six, seven hours, it could be more, it could be less.

Or you call a Palestinian in the checkpoint, you ask from him his ID. He smiles too much. You must educate them.

And all the system is built on fear.

It's built of just oppressing, I don't know, of not being able to treat Palestinians as equal human beings to you, because the job is to do things that you don't do to equal human beings, you know, to bump in the middle of the night to a family from the roof and wake up all the family, separate men from women and just search all the house.

It's something that you don't do to an equal human being to you.

It's something that I never done in Israel, but in the Occupied Territories, as a combat soldier, as an occupier, that's my daily job, 24/7, house after house.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

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

That is not a good enough reason.



US troops on patrol in Baghdad, October 3. (AFP/File/Dave Clark)

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Showdown Looms As Mexican
Riot Police Move In On City
Occupied By Protesters:**

Machine Guns And Water Cannon Face Plaza Sit-In; Governor Told To Quit



Riot police look on as a protester waves a national flag during demonstrations in the Mexican city of Oaxaca yesterday. Photograph: Mario Vazquez/AFP/Getty

[Thanks to J, who sent this in.]

October 30, 2006 Jo Tuckman in Oaxaca, The Guardian & 10.28.06 Diego Cevallos, (IPS)

Thousands of federal riot police backed by armoured trucks and helicopters pushed into the Mexican city of Oaxaca yesterday as a protest that began over teachers' pay spiralled into a major confrontation.

Police wearing body armour and carrying riot shields and submachine guns were accompanied by water cannon and helicopters as they moved from the outskirts of the city towards the central plaza that has been occupied by a leftwing movement for months.

The Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO), which is demanding the removal of Governor Ruiz, who they accuse of corruption and authoritarianism, declared itself on maximum alert and called on its members to put up resistance to any violent actions of which they are the target.

APPO, made up of 350 Oaxaca social organisations, emerged in June after Ruiz sent police to break up a protest by teachers who went on strike in May for better salaries.

Hundreds of protesters shouted their fury as the wall of police advanced, sometimes managing to push it back a few inches. Housewives, workers, students, teachers and others chanted: "The people united will never be defeated" as they were pushed back.

The protesters have occupied the city's central plaza, seized radio and television stations, and blocked main roads. To reach the movement's stronghold in the central square, police will have to get through dozens of barricades made from pieces of corrugated iron, burnt-out buses and lorries driven across the road.

The protesters' main demand is the removal of the governor of Oaxaca state, Ulises Ruiz, whose failed attempt to evict the teachers in June led to the radicalisation of the movement.

Appo, which has made it impossible for Mr Ruiz to appear in public in Oaxaca, says the governor has set up paramilitary groups to attack its members.

Ten protesters had been killed so far, but Friday was the most violent day since the conflict began, bringing the total number of victims to 14.

APPO blames the 14 deaths on paramilitary groups made up of police officers and hired killers allegedly contracted by Ruiz.

The [U.S.] embassy also said the men who shot at the protesters may have been local police.

The federal government of President Vicente Fox stayed out of the conflict for a few months, claiming it was a local matter. When it failed to go away, the interior ministry sponsored talks, which led to a deal with teachers' leaders.

In the first real sign that a peaceful end to the conflict might be possible, most of the teachers voted last week to go back to work today.

However, the tension rocketed on Friday again when a day of violence throughout the city left two protesters dead, along with a US journalist sympathetic to their cause who was shot in the chest twice as he filmed an attack by armed men on one of the barricades.

A national newspaper later identified the gunmen as police in civilian clothes.

The protesters accuse Mr Ruiz of stepping up the attacks in order to force the federal government into quashing their movement in the name of restoring order. If so, the strategy appears to have succeeded, with the government announcing it was sending in the police on Saturday.

"Shame on President Fox," said a retired builder Arbedo Cortez. "How can it be that the job of one governor is worth more than the entire population of Oaxaca?"

But the claim that the entire state backs the movement is belied by some residents who are frustrated by the closed schools and the occupation that has devastated the local economy.

However, Appo does have significant support among ordinary people, who responded to calls on a radio station controlled by the movement to provide non-violent resistance to the military-style police operation to retake the city.

Elsewhere there were reports of protesters stockpiling stones and petrol bombs for a more active resistance to any police advance.

"They will be able to get through, what can we do, we don't have the weapons to stop them, we are peaceful," said 33-year-old Rosa Jiménez as she stood a few metres from the police frontline.

"But while we can't stop them going in, perhaps we can stop them getting out."

APPO said several of its members had been arrested Friday, and that no one knows where they are being held.

For the past few months, Ruiz has governed from a luxury hotel in the Mexican capital.

Human rights organisations say the security forces in Oaxaca work against social movements in the state through repression, bribes or threats.

Ruiz, who blames the crisis in Oaxaca on APPO, belongs to the most conservative wing of the PRI. While the party, which governed Mexico from 1929 to 2000, has lost its hold over most of the states and at a national level, it remains all-powerful in Oaxaca.

MORE:

Fierce Street Battles In Oaxaca

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

Oct 29 2006

By MARK STEVENSON, Associated Press Writer

Federal police armed with assault rifles and riot shields stormed this normally picturesque tourist destination Sunday, bypassing barricades and touching off fierce street battles as they tried to end five months of protests and violence.

Officers in black helmets entered the city from several sides, reinforced by armored vehicles, trucks mounted with high-pressure water cannons and bulldozers. Helicopters roared overhead.

Police marched up to a metal barrier blocking the historic city center, which has served as home base for the protests since late May, but pulled back as protesters armed with poles and sticks attacked them from behind, hurling burning tires.

Protesters could be seen readying Molotov cocktails and other homemade bombs, but had yet to use them against police, who fired tear gas canisters. The area filled with black smoke from burning cars. Some protesters used syringes to pierce their arms and legs, then paint signs decrying the police in blood.

"I think their strategy isn't working," said protest organizer Hugo Pacheco, leading a group against a column of police holding a position three blocks from the city center. "I don't think this has worked for them because the people, we, the people, are right."

Before the police closed in on the plaza, which they have not taken back from the protesters, they had to climb over burned-out vehicles and move past hijacked tractor-trailers, buses and sand bags blocking streets.

Some residents emerged from their homes to cheer and wave white flags, others fought the police to beat back their advance.

On one major street, police buses had most of their windows shattered by protesters hurling rocks and massive chunks of concrete.

While some protesters retreated as federal forces advanced, others fortified their blockades, pledging a street-by-street defense against police.

In Mexico City, several hundred supporters of the Oaxaca protests converged on a hotel where Ruiz was rumored to be staying, damaging the grounds around the entrance and screaming "Murderer! Murderer!"

The government news agency Notimex reported that a vehicle transporting federal police to Oaxaca crashed Sunday, killing one officer and injuring 12. Federal officials could not confirm the report, but protesters cheered wildly as it circulated Oaxaca.

Authorities are not saying many officers were sent to Oaxaca, but protesters have estimated there are at least 4,000 in the city.

Late Saturday, protesters gathered to mourn Bradley Roland Will, a 36-year-old from New York who was killed Friday during a shootout between protesters and men they claim were local police on Oaxaca's outskirts.

Will, whose body was laid out in a white shirt and a glass-topped coffin at a funeral parlor near the central square, was remembered as a video and documentary-maker devoted to the protesters' cause.

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