

GI SPECIAL 4K11:



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

Sorry You Chumps, Fooled You Again; Conyers Says No Impeachment, Ha Ha Ha

November 10th 2006 Kurtnimmo.com [Excerpts]

John Conyers, Ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, didn't mean it.

"The incoming speaker has said that impeachment is off the table. I am in total agreement with her on this issue: Impeachment is off the table," Conyers declared after the Democrats stormed the House and Senate.

But wait a minute. Didn't Conyers seek to create a select committee to investigate Bush crimes and make recommendations regarding grounds for impeachment?

Last December, Conyers, along with Senator Barbara Boxer and Congressmen John Lewis, said Bush committed impeachable offenses by illegally ordering the National Security Agency to eavesdrop inside the country without a court warrant.

Now?

“In this campaign, there was an orchestrated right-wing effort to distort my position on impeachment,” Conyers declared. “To be sure, I have substantial concerns about the way this administration has abused its authority, but impeachment would not be good for the American people. The country does not want or need any more paralyzed partisan government—it wants a check and balance and real progress on the issues that matter to their lives.”

Regrettably, it now appears Conyers’ mock Judiciary Committee hearing last June was little more than theater. If you thought Conyers was a principled man, think again; he is looking at the chairmanship of the House Judiciary Committee, after all, and he certainly does not want to jeopardize this by doing the right thing.

[Wrong. He’s doing the right thing, from his Party’s point of view, and there is nothing whatsoever new about that. The Democratic Party is as committed to maintaining the U.S. Empire as the Republican Party. It always has been. Enough delusional bullshit about that. Quit smacking Conyers around. He’s just doing his job, sucking in the chumps until the election is over. It’s the pathetic big name anti-war leaders who betrayed us, kissing his ass and pissing their pants with delight and acting oh-so-important at his fake hearings. Meanwhile, they don’t have the first minute to reach out to the troops who can stop the war. They have other priorities, like getting quoted in the media. T]

Meanwhile, Back In The Real World:

**“There Is A Growing, If
Silent, Anti-War
Sentiment Among The
Troops”**

“I Have Received Overwhelming Praise From Friends And Families, And More Support Than Criticism From My Fellow Marines”

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

11 November 2006 By Simon Assaf, Socialist Worker (UK) [Excerpts]

The rising toll of human suffering and violence has led millions of Americans to question the reasons for the invasion - and many now believe that the US is losing the war.

This shift in attitude has penetrated into the US army.

Serving soldiers have found an unlikely spokesperson in Liam Madden, a 22 year old Marine Corps sergeant.

Madden considers himself a patriot, but faced with the disaster in Iraq he has begun campaigning openly for the withdrawal of US troops.

“We should not be in Iraq. The war has been badly conducted and poorly executed. The war is not winnable and can no longer be justified,” he told Socialist Worker by telephone.

Madden served in the Anbar province of Iraq from September 2004 until February 2005.

During his deployment in Iraq, “we only really cared about coming home and helping our friends to come home, all other opinions were put on the back burner,” said Madden.

“However there is a growing, if silent, anti-war sentiment among the troops. But as professionals we felt we had a job to do and just wanted to get home in one piece.

“Some marines began to oppose the war through personal experience, often the tragic circumstances that you face in Iraq. Others, like myself, questioned the political reasons for the war from the beginning and I became more convinced during my time there.

“I was infuriated at how long we have been in Iraq, and how much longer we were going to stay in a country where people don’t want us.

“I am grateful that I survived with no physical or psychological harm.”

His opposition to the war grew on his return to the US. Madden and a fellow soldier launched their campaign after they went to a meeting on resistance among US troops during the Vietnam War.

Madden made public his opposition to the war. He spoke to the army newspaper, local press and national news.

For a serving soldier to openly campaign for an end to the war carries enormous risks.

“I was expecting hostility, but I have received overwhelming praise from friends and families, and more support than criticism from my fellow Marines,” he said.

“Some things are worth fighting for, I just don’t feel Iraq is one of them.

“The more people who die there, and the longer we stayed there, the more I opposed the war. The more I know, the easier it is to support withdrawal.”

Madden took his campaign, Appeal for Redress, to the anti-war GI Special, a daily newsletter for soldiers.

He wrote, “How long can either the incompetence of our policy makers or, possibly worse, their deceit be tolerated?”

“When will we decide to do what we do best, stand up and defend our principles?”

He feels the only option is to withdraw.

“If our staying makes the situation worse, and provokes more anti-US sentiment, then it is undoubtedly justified and logical for service members to advocate the withdrawal of US forces.”

**The Appeal For Redress:
www.appealforredress.org**

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special 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 or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine Killed In Western Iraq

Nov. 10, 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20061110-07

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: One Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team 7 died today from non-hostile causes while operating in Al Anbar Province.

13th SC(E) Soldier Killed In Al Anbar, Another Wounded

Nov. 10, 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20061110-06

LSA Anaconda, Iraq: One Soldier assigned to the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) was killed and another wounded Nov. 10 during a combat logistics patrol when their truck was hit by an improvised explosive device west of Hadithah.

One Polish And One Slovak Soldier Killed By Al Kut IED; Pole And Armenian Wounded.

11.11.06 (Reuters)

Two soldiers, a Pole and a Slovak, were shot dead after gunmen attacked them moments after a bomb targeted their military humvee, the U.S. military said in a statement.

Two other soldiers, a Pole and an Armenian, were wounded.

The bomb exploded near the town of Al Kut in Wasit province as a multinational convoy was returning to base, PAP news agency quoted a military spokesman as saying.

Mi'kmaq Soldier Buried

November 02, 2006 (CP)

FREDERICTON:



Theresa Seeley, right, follows her son U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Seeley's coffin from Our Lady of Fatima Roman Catholic Church in Fredericton, Canada, Nov. 9, 2006. Seeley, a member of the Mi'kmaq First Nation, was killed in a bomb attack on Oct. 30 while on duty with the U.S. Army in Iraq. (AP Photo/CP, Andrew Vaughan) Canada

A Mi'kmaq mother whose son was killed in action with the U.S. Army in Iraq says he never questioned the controversial war or his participation in it.

Cpl. Michael Seeley, 27, of Fredericton was killed by insurgents while on patrol in Iraq earlier this week just a few days before he was due to return home.

His mother, Theresa Seeley, said yesterday she just found out her son was being promoted to sergeant in recognition of his dedication and hard work during two tours of duty in the country.

She called her son a true warrior. "He fully believed in it," she said in an interview from her Fredericton home. "He fully believed that people were being hurt who shouldn't be hurt and it was their job to protect them," she added. "He believed Saddam Hussein had to be stopped and that's what he did."

Seeley said her son prepared the family, including father, Lorne, and five siblings, for the possibility that he would not survive Iraq.

"He knew the risks," she said.

"He knew his job was dangerous. He always preached to me, 'Be ready if it does happen. If it doesn't, that's great, but be ready.'

"I would try to brush it off because you don't want to hear that from your children . . . but he would insist."

Seeley said her son's body was in Kuwait yesterday and was to be flown to Delaware for an autopsy.

The body then will be flown to New Brunswick, but funeral arrangements had not been finalized.

Since Canadian aboriginals have dual citizenship and are considered citizens of North America, there is a long-standing tradition of First Nations people crossing the border to join the U.S. military.

Aboriginal leaders say there is a strong attraction for young people from Canada's high-unemployment reserves to look to the U.S. military for a career.

Chief Terry Nelson of the Roseau River First Nation, about 90 km south of Winnipeg, said the American military is more attractive than the Canadian Forces.

"The U.S. Army treats you a lot better," said Nelson, an Ojibway.

"They're better equipped. I mean the Canadian army is not that well equipped," he added. "It kind of defeats the purpose of having a machine gun when you're only allowed a few bullets.

"In the States, you're well-trained, and the spirit is different.

"It's difficult to find a Canadian flag on a Canadian reserve," noted Nelson. "But in the U.S., all of the American reservations celebrate the fourth of July and there are flags everywhere."

Mortars Strike U.S. Occupation Office In Hillah; Building On Fire

11/11/06 Reuters

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The U.S. government's office in central Iraq came under mortar fire early Saturday, an attack that touched off a blaze in part of the complex, Iraqi police said. There was no immediate word on damage or casualties.

The mortar attack was at least the second reported in recent weeks against the U.S. office in Hillah, which oversees government and diplomatic interests in the central Euphrates region, about 60 miles south of Baghdad.

Nine of the 10 mortar bombs fired landed inside the complex, police Capt. Muthanna Khalid Ali said.

U.S. diplomats usually refuse to comment on such reports to avoid releasing sensitive information to insurgents **[translation: everybody within 5 miles knows exactly how the attack went, including the number of shells that hit the target, but we want to**

keep this a big secret from U.S. citizens]. Calls and e-mail seeking confirmation were not immediately returned by U.S. Embassy spokesmen in Baghdad.

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



A U.S. soldier stops a motorist at a checkpoint in Baghdad, October 24, 2006. (Namir Noor-Eldeen/Reuters)

TROOP NEWS

***Bring Them Home Now!*
Massachusetts Votes For
Immediate Withdrawal From Iraq**

November 10, 2006 Karen Dolan, Tompaine.com [Excerpts]

This election, 162 communities in Wisconsin, Illinois and Massachusetts voted on ballot measures calling for the U.S. to end the Iraq War. In every one of those communities, the measures swept to victory.

In Milwaukee, fully 72 percent of those voting supported the "orderly, rapid and comprehensive withdrawal" U.S. troops from Iraq. Citizens in Springfield, Ill., citizens passed their "Bring the Troops Home" ballot measure with at least 60 percent approval.

Massachusetts had 139 communities all voting yes to an immediate end to the Iraq war with a directive to bring all of the troops home now.

Paul Shannon, of the Massachusetts American Friends Service Committee, knows well the hearts and minds of his neighbors in Massachusetts where the peace ballot measure passed in each one of the 139 communities.

He tells it this way, "This war was sold to us based on lies; and in community after community across the nation that reality has hit home."

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



10-29-06 NEW ORLEANS (AP)

Family and friends have said goodbye yesterday to a 25-year-old New Orleans soldier killed in Iraq when a roadside bomb exploded.

Army Specialist Joseph Claude Dumas Junior was killed, along with three others in his unit, on October 18th in Baghdad. He joined the Army in August 2003 and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood.

Top National Guard Commander Announces Plan To Encourage Mutiny And Armed Insurrection By National Guard Troops: He Plans To Break The Limit On Deployments To Iraq; General Goes Raving Mad In Public; Says Guard Units “Willing” To Go Back

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

11.10.06 By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press Writer

The nation's citizen soldiers, already strained by long tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, could be tapped again under new plans being developed by the Pentagon.

National Guard combat brigades that have already served in Iraq may be called for a second tour, likely breaking the 24-month deployment limit initially set by the Pentagon, the Guard's top general said.

While active-duty soldiers and smaller Guard units and members have returned to Iraq for multiple tours, the new plans would, for the first time, send entire Guard combat brigades back to the battlefield. Brigades generally have about 3,500 troops.

The move, which could include brigades from Arkansas, Florida, Indiana and North Carolina, would force the Pentagon to make the first large-scale departure from its previous decision not to deploy reserves for more than a cumulative 24 months in Iraq.

For some units, a second tour would mean they would likely exceed that two-year maximum.

The planning was described by Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, who commands the Guard, in an Associated Press interview this week.

The North Carolina brigade, he said, is being considered since it was one of the first to go to Iraq after the war began in 2003.

Blum also said defense officials have been discussing whether they need to adjust their policy that limits the deployment of reserves in the war to 24 months.

"When that policy was originally formulated, I seriously doubt anyone thought we would be where we are today, at the level of commitment that is necessary today," he said. [

Under the authority by which Bush ordered a call-up of the Guard and Reserve after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, troops could be mobilized an unlimited number of times as long as each mobilization is no longer than 24 consecutive months. Until now, Pentagon officials have interpreted that as 24 cumulative months.

Blum said he believes that Guard combat brigades are prepared and willing to make a second trip to Iraq if needed.

He said the first units to deploy in the war — such as the 30th Infantry Brigade from North Carolina, the 76th Infantry Brigade from Indiana, the 53rd Infantry Brigade from Florida and the 39th Infantry Brigade from Arkansas — would probably be among those first called for a second tour.

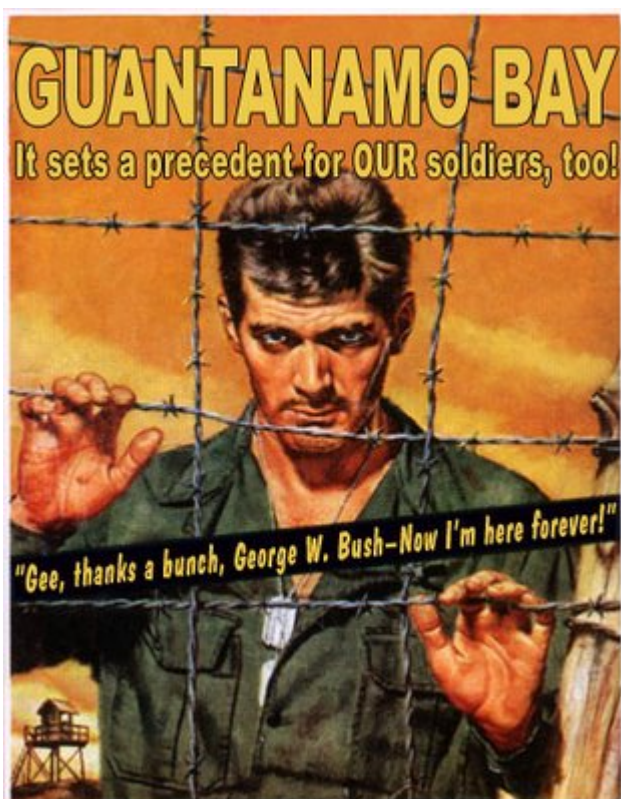
"Logic would lead you to go back to the ones that went first, and start going around again," said Blum.

"But that's probably not exactly how we'll do it" because the decision will depend partly on what types of units are needed.

[And whether they decide to go. Or resist. One way or another. T]

U.S. Government Admits 55% Of The Guantanamo Prisoners Committed No Overt Hostile Act Toward The U.S. Or Its Coalition Allies;

**“In The Government’s Bizarro World,
Fleeing An Attack By The U.S. Is A
Hostile Act Against The U.S.”**



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

Many of the prisoners are detained merely on allegations of being affiliated with certain organizations, only 22% of which appear on the Department of Homeland Security's terrorist watch list.

By Matthew T. Clarke September 2006 Prison Legal News [Excerpts]

In February 2006, a report on the status of 517 prisoners being held in the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba compiled by Seaton Hall law professor Mark Denbeaux, seven of his law students and attorney Joshua Denbeaux, was made public.

The report, entitled *The Guantanamo Detainees: The Government's Story*, is solely based upon documents regarding the Guantanamo prisoners released by the U.S. government.

The Guantanamo Detainees report calls into question the government's criteria for designating captured persons "enemy combatants" and sending them to Guantanamo.

According to the report, the government has determined that 55% of the Guantanamo prisoners committed no overt hostile act toward the U.S. or its coalition allies.

Only 87 were designated al Qaeda fighters, while 40% had no definitive connection with al Qaeda and .18% had neither a definitive connection with al Qaeda nor the Taliban.

Many of the prisoners are detained merely on allegations of being affiliated with certain organizations, only 22% of which appear on the Department of Homeland Security's terrorist watch list.

Sixty percent of the prisoners are designated as being "associated with" groups the U.S. considers terrorist organizations; 30% are allegedly "members of" such groups, and 2% have no connection to any such group.

Most striking is the low percentage of prisoners captured by the U.S. military: a mere 5%.

Eighty-six percent were captured by Pakistani or Northern Alliance Afghan forces and turned over to the U.S., which paid large bounties for the capture of suspected Taliban or al Qaeda members and associates.

Most of the persons determined not to be enemy combatants are Uighers, a Muslim Turkish-speaking Chinese ethnic minority, many of whom fled to Pakistan or Afghanistan to avoid arrest by the Chinese government.

The report calls into question the government's designation of the Guantanamo prisoners as the "worst of the worst" enemies of the U.S.

Much of the report is based on Combat Status Review Board Letters, government documents summarizing the evidence that a prisoner is an enemy combatant that are presented to a Combat Status Review Tribunal (CSRT). This is essentially a summary of the proof the government used to support a finding of "enemy combatant" status.

"Enemy combatant" is defined by the government as "an individual who was part of or supporting the Taliban or al Qaeda forces, or associated forces that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners. This includes any person who committed a belligerent act or has directly supported hostilities in aid of enemy forces."

This allows an enemy combatant designation to apply, for example, to people who gave to a charity that in turn gave food or medical supplies to a group the government claims is a terrorist organization.

Furthermore, Evan Kohlman, the government's expert on al Qaeda membership, has indicated that merely having been selected for membership would qualify a person as a "member" of al Qaeda under the government's definition, even if that person never swore an oath to al Qaeda, never met Osama bin Laden and never attended a training camp.

This means that the 60% of prisoners designated as "associated with" rather than "members of" a group did not have even this minimal level of contact with al Qaeda.

In analyzing whether a prisoner has committed a hostile act against the U.S. or coalition members, the government readily admits that only 45% of the prisoners meet that criteria; however, closer examination of the government's definition of "hostile act" reveals that the level is probably much lower.

For instance, it is considered a “hostile act” if a prisoner fled when the U.S. bombed his camp, or if he is Uigher and was captured in Pakistan along with other Uigher fighters.

In the government’s bizarre world, fleeing an attack by the U.S. is a hostile act against the U.S.

Of the prisoners designated enemy combatants, the government alleges 32% to be al Qaeda, 28% to be al Qaeda and Taliban, 22% to be Taliban, and 7% to be al Qaeda or Taliban. Ten percent have no identified affiliation and 1% are listed as “other.”

The report assumes that four years was an adequate amount of time to determine whether an enemy combatant was either Taliban or al Qaeda, and concludes that 40% of them are not affiliated with al Qaeda and 18% are affiliated with neither al Qaeda nor the Taliban.

The report acknowledges that the evidence against some of the prisoners was formidable. Eleven percent had met with Bin Laden, and some were high-ranking Taliban or al Qaeda officials.

However the evidence against the vast majority of the prisoners held at Guantanamo was much less solid. Notable is the absence of Taliban regional governors, mayors, police chiefs, senior administrators and secretaries of national governmental departments among the prisoners at Guantanamo.

Instead, the prison camp’s rolls are replete with many young, conscripted Taliban soldiers with no decision-making authority.

The report concludes that these prisoners have been afforded no meaningful opportunity to put the U.S. government proof that they are enemy combatants to the test.

She Took The Military Anthrax Shot; Now Her Brain Is Shrinking: ““These Are Young People Who Are Essentially Done For In Life,’ Holcomb Said”

November 13, 2006 By Gayle S. Putrich, Army Times Staff writer

As the Defense Department prepares to resume mandatory anthrax shots after a nearly two-year hiatus, opponents once again are raising questions about medical and legal issues related to the vaccine.

Although the Pentagon insists the vaccine is safe and effective, with a safety profile comparable to other common vaccines, its reported side effects range from mild rashes and sores to severe, irreversible damage.

Potential side effects were a prime topic of discussion among anthrax vaccine opponents at a daylong seminar held Oct. 28 in Washington to review safety concerns and legal issues related to the vaccine.

Retired Air Force Capt. Kelli Donley, a former military lawyer, told seminar attendees she contracted idiopathic spinal cerebellar ataxia, a shrinking of the brain's cerebellum, after taking three doses of the six-shot anthrax vaccine regimen in 2000.

Her speech slowed and slurred, she said, and she became clumsy in her movements and experienced numbness in the arm in which she received the shots. After returning to the U.S. from South Korea, she underwent tests that showed her cerebellum was shrinking.

"It was a bittersweet relief; I wasn't imagining this," she said.

Also at the seminar were Air Force Reserve Maj. Margaret McFann, a nurse still on active duty who was diagnosed with lupus after receiving the vaccine, and former Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Frank Fisher, a physician who contracted Still's disease and became disabled after taking the shots.

Still's disease is a rare disorder marked by high, spiky fevers, rashes and joint pain that may lead to chronic arthritis.

The seminar was held in the shadow of the Pentagon's Oct. 16 announcement that it will resume mandatory anthrax vaccinations within 30 to 60 days.

But Byron Holcomb, a lawyer who organized the event, said it was not prompted by the Pentagon's policy change.

The seminar had been in the works since July, he said, with an underlying goal of trying to "see what we can do ... to get us yoked together to do the right thing."

"These are young people who are essentially done for in life," Holcomb said.

Some service members have died after taking the shots, but none of the deaths has been conclusively linked to the vaccine.

The Food and Drug Administration issued a report on adverse reactions to the anthrax vaccine last December, about the same time that it made a final ruling on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

From July 1990 through March 2005, the government-sponsored Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System logged 4,279 reports of health problems as a result of the anthrax vaccine, 390 of which were classified as "serious."

But critics claim the number of adverse events is higher, and even the FDA acknowledged the voluntary nature of VAERS may lead to underreporting.

Dr. Mark Geier, a Maryland-based physician who previously worked as a researcher at the National Institutes of Health for 10 years and has studied vaccines for more than 30 years, told seminar attendees that his review of available data shows the anthrax vaccine has “a safety profile significantly worse than almost any civilian vaccine.”

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia shut down the military’s mandatory anthrax vaccine program in December 2004 with an injunction.

Defense officials then launched a voluntary vaccination program. About half the troops offered the vaccine have taken it, officials said.

In December 2005, the FDA finalized its approval of the vaccine and a federal appeals court dissolved the injunction, clearing the way for the Pentagon to resume mandatory shots late this year or early next year.

Mark Zaid, one of the lawyers representing the six anonymous military and civilian plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit, said he will file a new suit in the coming weeks challenging a resumption of the mandatory program on the grounds that, in addition to being potentially extremely harmful, the vaccine’s effectiveness is questionable at best.

“You can’t show it’s effective in humans from the studies,” said Zaid, who gave a legal history of the vaccine at the seminar.

The suit will question the science behind the FDA’s approval of the vaccine, he said, which has been a pillar of the opposition’s strategy all along.

“The Defense Department is just exploiting the weakness of the FDA,” Zaid said.

Geier noted that the only study of the anthrax vaccine in humans was published in 1962 based on a clinical trial of 1,133 millworkers who handled animal hides.

That study, he said, was geared specifically toward the skin form of anthrax — not the inhalation variety troops might encounter on the battlefield — and the vaccine in that trial had a different formula from the current one.

When the inoculation program resumes in 30 to 60 days, the shots will be mandatory for all service members, defense civilian employees and contractors going for more than 15 days to South Korea or anywhere within the U.S. Central Command area of operations, including Afghanistan and Iraq.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

10 Nov 2006 Reuters & ASSOCIATED PRESS & Reuters & 11/11/06 Reuters & (KUNA)

A car bomber hit an army checkpoint, killing a colonel and five soldiers, and wounding 10 soldiers in Tal Afar, about 240 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

Tal Afar has suffered scattered insurgent attacks, even after Bush in March declared the city an example of progress made in bringing security to Iraq.

A bomber drove a car rigged with explosives into the police station in the northern town of Zaganya on Saturday, killing the police chief, burning four vehicles, and badly damaging the building, the provincial police information office said.

Guerrillas abducted a police lieutenant colonel in northern Baghdad and shot dead an intelligence officer in southern Baghdad's Bayaa district.

A roadside bomb exploded near an Iraqi army patrol, wounding two soldiers in northern city of Kirkuk, police said.

A police officer was killed when a booby-trapped car blew up earlier today near a police station in Diyala province northeastern Baghdad.

Iraqi police Saturday said four policemen and a civilian were wounded when an explosive device blew up near their patrol in the center of Kirkuk, northern Iraq.

A booby-trapped vehicle blew up last Friday in the afternoon near the Iraqi army's checkpoint in Al-Qadsia area killing Colonel Karim Jassem and five other soldiers, and seriously injuring six soldiers and four other citizens.

Two policemen, one soldier and two civilians were killed during a clash with insurgents near Baquba, police said.

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

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

WHEN COMEDY EXPOSES THE PAIN



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: November 08, 2006
Subject: WHEN COMEDY EXPOSES THE PAIN

WHEN COMEDY EXPOSES THE PAIN

**WHEN YOU TAKE SUITS OFF OF LAWMAKERS,
IT'S LIKE REMOVING THE FEATHERS.
WHEN SOLDIERS ARE LIED TO ABOUT WAR,
THEY USE THEIR STEEL POTS FOR REVENGE.**

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
November 7, 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)

Veterans Day 2006 [#1]

From: Clancy Sigal
To: GI Special
Sent: November 10, 2006
Subject: Veterans Day
NPR 'Morning Edition' commentary

Veterans' Day was called Armistice Day when I was a boy.

It honored the end of shooting in the First World War – precisely at the 11th minute of the 11th hour on November 11th, 1918. It was a day for mixed emotions...of pride, sadness and some bitterness.

Because so many men were blown to bits in the muddy trenches of the western front, there's no reliable count of casualties. Of the sixty million men mobilized, over half were killed, wounded, missing or taken prisoner. The world had never seen slaughter on this scale.

But I was in love with the idea of heroic combat. I made a wooden rifle out of an orange crate and stuck a toy rubber knife on the end as a bayonet. Battles like Meuse-Argonne and Passchendaele, that were butchering grounds for a whole generation of young men, were sacred names to me.

And always, at 11 minutes past eleven o' clock in the morning on November 11th, I stood at attention. Everything in Chicago seemed to stop dead. Policemen halted traffic and saluted. Streetcars screeched to a sudden stop. Pedestrians froze with hands over their hearts. Across the street from my house, the bells at St Agatha's church tolled mournfully, and for the next two minutes, all was silence in the city, as if the earth stood still.

In the 1930s, my Chicago neighborhood was full of World War One veterans. A few had amputated limbs. Some were still shellshocked and needed help in crossing the street.

One afternoon I poked my nose into the back room of the barbershop next door where my dad was playing pinochle with some pals. Some of them like Mr Ginsburg the barber, Manny the bookie and Mr Rosen the drug store owner had been 'doughboys' – American soldiers.

But Mr Klein, the tailor, was German. Before he came to America, he'd been one of the Kaiser's spike-helmeted soldiers. And Mr Stuponsky, who strolled the neighborhood twirling a goldknobbed cane, had been an Austrian cavalry officer, another enemy. My dad had been a conscientious objector, and was denied United States citizenship for that reason.

Yet here they were, all playing cards around the same table, joking and wisecracking. How could this be?

That pinochle game upset my view of the moral universe. After all, Mr Klein might have been a sniper aiming at Manny the bookie from the German lines. And I could easily imagine Mr. Stuponsky waving his sabre while charging American soldiers at the Second Battle of the Marne.

Many years, and a few more wars later, I'm a veteran myself.

It's easier for me to understand that men who've been in combat...even on opposite sides ...have a special bond.

So on this Veterans Day, I think even further back than that pinochle game in the barber shop.

Back, to the cold bright November day, when the big cannons and Gatling guns fell eerily silent, and dazed men from both sides of no-man's-land wearily climbed out of their rat-infested trenches to stare in bewilderment at their enemies who looked, and felt, exactly as they did.

Veterans Day 2006 [#2]

From: Ron Jacobs
To: GI Special
Sent: November 11, 2006
Subject: veteran's day

Veterans Day.

When I was a kid and lived in the Washington DC area, this was one of the two days a year that my dad would take me to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The other day was Memorial Day.

We would stand there, my dad, a sibling or two, and myself, while the Marine guard did his stretch of time. Then there was a short changing of the guard ceremony. Afterwards, my dad would take us to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

Today, children probably still go to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and watch a changing of the guard before their father takes them to the Vietnam War Memorial or the Korean War Memorial or even the World War Two memorial. (None of those existed when I was a kid.) Even back when I was a little boy--knee high to a grasshopper as the expression goes--that tomb of the unknown soldier had me asking not only how could a soldier be unknown but why did such a thing happen.

When I lived on the streets (and even today, for that matter) I met (and meet) a good number of war veterans.

Back when I was homeless, most of the vets were from the Vietnam debacle. Since that time, the system in place in this country has added several thousand more vets from a number of other military adventures.

My friend Loren was one of those men from the Vietnam adventure. Like so many others, he had been drafted into the service against his will. When he got his orders to go to Vietnam he took a truck from the motor pool where he worked and ran it through

several gates and a couple of parked cars in the Officer's Club parking lot at the Colorado Army base he was stationed.

He did six months in the stockade and was thrown out of the Army. He celebrated by going to a rock festival and ended up in Berkeley. His father didn't speak to him for years, but it was worth it to Loren just to have avoided the war.

Loren had a campsite near the Berkley Marina. It wasn't in the marina proper since the cops patrolled there--they had to protect the boats.

It was in an undeveloped part of the acreage on the west side of the I-80 freeway in Berkeley and was the home to dozens of street people back in the mid-1970s. On rainy nights Loren graciously let me share the lean-two he had built. We would pick up a couple six-packs of beer with money we had earned from our day labor jobs and head down to our bayside camp.

One evening we were attacked by a guy on our way out of the beer store. There didn't seem to be any reason for the attack and the fellow's girlfriend apologized after the cops came and told us all to get the hell off the street.

Another time Loren was attacked at his campsite by a trio of young men that jumped into their car and drove away after Loren produced a machete he kept in his sleeping bag just for such incidents. I haven't seen Loren in more than twenty years. When I visit Berkeley I always try to find him on Telegraph Avenue, but have yet to run into him. I have run into mutual friends that tell me he is still alive, despite the fact that he was beaten badly by some other young men back in the mid-1990s.

Another buddy of mine, R, who spent a year in the Navy off the coast of Vietnam begrudgingly helping the US launch jet planes to strafe the people and countryside of Vietnam, joined the Vietnam Veterans Against the War as soon as he got his discharge papers.

He and I spent many an hour talking politics, books, and women before he met an untimely death last year.

One conversation particularly relevant to today occurred when he and I were somewhere in that state's Central Valley on Veterans' Day. We were stuck in the middle of whatever town it was (Salinas?) while the parade progressed.

As we sat in the shade of some trees and sipped surreptitiously on a quart of Rainier Ale, we joked that Loren should have been there with us. After all, noted R bitterly, this is our day.

He continued by noting how much better they treated vets when after they were dead.

Shit, he said, you even get a decent burial. And a freakin' American flag to go with it. When you're in their goddam uniform, you ain't no better than a maltreated dog who they're trying to kill.

If you get out alive, they just want you to go away. Especially if you have an ailment that can be attributed to their war.

There's a poem by Randall Jarrell called "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner."

If anyone ever had any doubt as to how the elites that send our brothers and sisters into war really feel about the "grunts" that wear their uniforms, let me reproduce it here for education's sake.

The Death Of The Ball Turret Gunner

*From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.*

Nothing but some waste to be disposed of.

Guess Who

Excerpts from: *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal*, By Anthony Arnove:
The New Press, 2006; Hardcover, 1-59558-079-4; \$19.95; 5 1/4" x 7 1/2", 208 pages

Guess Who's The Terrorists

BY NOW IT IS CLEAR that most Iraqis want the United States to leave. From mainstream media accounts, though, most observers could be forgiven for believing that only an isolated minority of senior Baathists, foreign fighters, and nihilists is standing up to the United States.

"As if to underline their misunderstanding of the world, American military spokesmen call Iraqis who are resisting their invasion 'terrorists.' Who else on earth would call a man who fights a foreign soldier in his own country a terrorist?" the journalist Charles Glass wrote presciently only weeks after the invasion.

Guess Who's The Redcoats

U.S. soldiers have also taken to quartering Iraqi homes and schools.
"Requisitioning homes or other buildings has been widespread in Iraq for U.S. troops on missions who stay far away from bases, sometimes for several days or weeks' the Associated Press reports.

“They broke into my house before Ramadan and they are still there,” Dhiya Hamid al-Karbuli recounted. “We were not able to tolerate seeing them damage our house in front of our very eyes. . . . I was afraid to ask them to leave.”

“Marines have been making camp in seized houses,” the New York Times reported from Husayba, the site of a major assault in November 2005, in which “fighter jets streaked overhead, dropping five hundred pound bombs” on the town.

Neither the Associated Press or the New York Times mentioned that quartering of troops was one of the primary complaints that the American colonists raised against King George and the British in the Declaration of Independence:

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States.

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

Guess Who’s The Primitive Tribal Leaders?

It is rare, however, for a government to say that it is sending soldiers to kill and be killed to protect profits or the control of oil.

While internal planning documents, when they are eventually declassified or are leaked, often reveal a glimpse into the real motives of elite planning, governments publicly describe their actions as defense against hostile enemies, protection of cherished values, and the spread of civilization.

Such claims of civilizing foreign peoples are not merely deceptive, however.

They are racist.

In discussions of Arabs and Muslims in Iraq today, for example, it is taken for granted that there is such a thing as “the Arab mind,” which we must somehow learn to influence, though its workings are generally said to be all but impossible to fathom.

This “Arab mind,” commentators sagely observe, is particularly susceptible to “antiAmericanism,” presumably because it cannot grasp all that “we” are doing to support Arab and Muslim people or because we have not found the right way to communicate our benevolence to them.

This is because, we are told, Muslims reject modernity and have no conception of democracy, preferring strong men to lead them or caring only about the needs of their own “tribe.”

Such ideas would be comical if they did not have such appalling consequences when applied in the real world.

In describing the development of the torture policy at Abu Ghraib, Seymour Hersh writes,

“One book that was frequently cited was The Arab Mind, a study of Arab culture and psychology, first published in 1973, by Raphael Patai. . . . The Patai book, an academic told me, was “the bible of the neocons on Arab behavior.” In their discussions, he said, two themes emerged: one, that Arabs only understand force and, two, that the biggest weakness of Arabs is shame and humiliation.”

This racist logic has informed not only the torture and humiliation of Iraqis, but also the idea that Iraqis are incapable of ruling themselves and therefore need an external power to impose order, to establish institutions of governance, and to guide them: the new white man’s burden.

Guess Who’s The Arrogant Elitists?

Any movement to end the war in Iraq will need to mount a direct challenge to both major parties and the whole ideological framework used to sell the war.

The antiwar movement needs to assert its independence from the Democrats and challenge the broad consensus that underlies the war on terror, especially U.S. exceptionalism, Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism, and liberal imperialism.

In addition, we need more politics in the antiwar movement, not less.

The common idea that people in “the heartland” or “Middle America” or in military families need to be protected from politics is elitist and misguided.

It is not just radicals or progressives who understand that there are connections between the U.S. occupation of Iraq and longstanding U.S. support for Israel and for numerous Arab regimes that repress their populations but preserve “stability” in the region.

Soldiers and military families themselves are raising questions about oil, imperialism, racism, and the real reasons behind the war.

Indeed, soldiers have also expressed empathy for the Iraqis who are resisting them. "If someone invaded Texas, we'd do the same thing' observed Lt. Col. Kim Kestlung.

The stronger the consciously anti-imperialist current in the antiwar movement, the stronger the movement to end the war will be, and the greater chance we will have to bring about the fundamental change needed to stop future wars.

The great satirist and novelist Mark Twain summed up the politics of anti-imperialism very effectively at the time of his opposition to the U.S. occupation of the Philippines: "I am opposed to having the eagle putting its talons on any other land."

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Hey george, If you were such a big-shot pilot, why didn't you know to take off your parachute harness like the other pilots? Then you wouldn't be so uncomfortable and your nut-sac wouldn't look like a freakin codpiece.

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

GATOR EATS

From: D
To: FIREBASEVOICE
Sent: November 08, 2006
Subject: GATOR EATS

Two alligators were sitting in the swamp talking.

The smaller one turned to the bigger one and said, "I cain't unnerstand how you kin be so much bigger'n me. We're the same age, we was the same size as kids. I just don't get it."

"Well," said the big 'gator, "What you been eatin' boy?"

"Politicians, same as you," replied the small 'gator.

"Hmm. Well, where do y'all catch 'em?"

"Down 'tother side of the swamp near the parkin' lot by the capitol."

"Same here. Hmm. How do you catch 'em?"

"Well, I crawls up under one of them Lexus and wait fer one to unlock the car door. Then I jump out, grab 'em on the leg, shake the shit out of 'em, and eat 'em!"

"Ah!" says the big alligator, "I think I see your problem. You ain't getting any real nourishment. See, by the time you get done shakin' the shit out of a Politician, there ain't nothin' left but an asshole and a briefcase."

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**10,000 Fight Police Over China
Land Seizure By Rich Government
Thieves:
87,000 Protests In 2005, Up 6%**

In January, China's Ministry of Public Security said there had been 87,000 "public order disturbances, obstructions of justice, gathering of mobs and stirring up of trouble" last year, a 6.6 per cent increase from 2004.

[Thanks to J, who sent this in.]

10/11/2006 Gulf News

Hong Kong: Thousands of Chinese villagers clashed with riot police after barricading officials and foreign businessmen in a warehouse they said has been built on illegally seized land, media reported on Friday.

The clash erupted on Wednesday near Shunde, in the southern province of Guangdong, during the opening of the warehouse, which villagers said had been built on land grabbed by officials and sold off to developers, Hong Kong's Apple Daily said.

The villagers only began to disperse the next morning when police used tear gas.

Hong Kong Cable TV showed footage of protesters in Sanzhou village in Guangdong province throwing rocks and sticks at the riot police on Thursday as clouds of tear gas blew through the crowd. An unspecified number of villagers were injured, the Ming Pao Daily News reported.

The villagers, who have been protesting corruption for months, on Wednesday surrounded a warehouse they said was built on land that was illegally seized and sold to developers, the South China Morning Post reported, quoting unidentified villagers.

China has struggled to smother rising flare-ups of social unrest in recent years, sparked by issues ranging from corruption, forced layoffs, land grabs without compensation, to disparities in wealth between the rich coastal belt and the impoverished hinterland.

Up to 10,000 blockaded the warehouse entrance in the village of Sanzhou, trapping 300 assembled dignitaries, including Guangdong officials and Hong Kong and foreign businessmen inside, Apple Daily said.

Around 1,000 police and riot police arrived to defuse the standoff, but the villagers stood their ground, refusing to leave unless the corrupt officials were investigated, the paper said.

It was only when police began firing tear gas the following morning that the crowds dispersed, according to witnesses quoted by the paper.

Photographs showed riot police standing on a wide highway, clasping transparent riot shields.

Ten people were arrested, the newspaper said. Villagers interviewed by the paper said of some 9,000 acres (3,650 hectares) of land in the village of Sanzhou, half had been sold off illegally by officials last year.

The demonstration highlights the growing discontent in China's poor countryside, where land disputes between farmers and local authorities often spark violent protests.

Many rural residents say they have lost their land and livelihoods to make way for factories and malls, and have not been given the compensation promised by officials

In January, China's Ministry of Public Security said there had been 87,000 "public order disturbances, obstructions of justice, gathering of mobs and stirring up of trouble" last year, a 6.6 per cent increase from 2004.

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)



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

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