

GI SPECIAL 4L20:

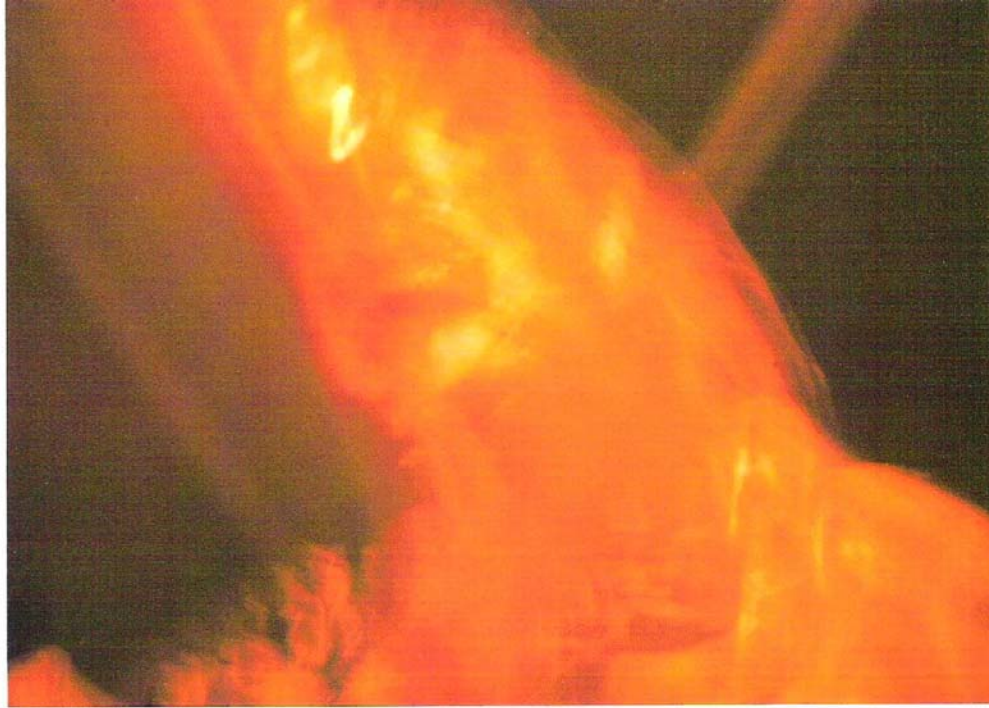
**GEORGE BUSH AND
THE U.S. EMPIRE SEND
HOLIDAY GREETING
AND GIFTS TO THE
PEOPLE OF IRAQ:**

FOR THE KIDS:



FOR THOSE SPECIAL GROWNUPS

(Some assembly required: gasoline + gel ingredients included.)



(Mike Hastie photo)

AND HERE'S SANTA!



**Merry Christmas And
Thank You President Bush!
Happy Iraqi Children Cordially
Welcome Their Liberator With Big
Smiles And Friendly Gestures!**



A U.S. Army soldier in New Baghdad, an eastern neighborhood in the Iraqi capital. Dec. 24, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**70% Of Iraq Attacks
Target Occupation
Troops**

[So Much For That “Civil War” Bullshit The Bush Regime Propagandists Spew Out]

December 20, 2006 By Gordon Lubold and Rick Maze, Army Times Staff writers
[Excerpt]

In the grim report, released Nov. 30, the Pentagon said that in the past three months, the total number of attacks has increased by 22 percent — *and that U.S. and coalition forces were the target of that violence nearly 70 percent of the time, the report said.*

Three U.S. Troops Killed In Baghdad

Dec 24 The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - A roadside bomb killed three American soldiers in Baghdad. The soldiers, from the 89th Military Police Brigade, were killed Saturday in east Baghdad when the explosive detonated, the U.S. military said.

One Soldier Killed, One Wounded In Diyala Province

Dec. 24, 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20061224-14

A Task Force Lightning Soldier assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, died Saturday as a result of an explosion while conducting operations in Diyala Province.

A second Soldier from this unit was wounded and was transported to a Coalition Forces' medical treatment facility for treatment.

Iowa Marine Killed In Iraq

December 13, 2006 DES MOINES (AP)

A Marine from Iowa was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq, his family said Tuesday.

Marine Lance Cpl. Clinton Jon "C.J." Miller, 23, of Greenfield died Monday morning while he was on a mission, said his mother, Susan Miller of Des Moines.

"The way we got it was either a bomb hit his Humvee. He was part of an IED team, an improvised explosive device team to where they go in and secure the area or when they find these devices," Miller said. "We don't really know exactly yet whether they were actually bombed or if one exploded when they were out on a mission."

Susan Miller said her son's unit was based about 40 miles west of Baghdad.

"There's just no reality to it. It's just like it isn't real," Susan Miller said.

C.J. Miller, who graduated from Nodaway Valley High School in Greenfield in 2001, joined the Marines about 18 months ago.

He was based in San Diego and was deployed to Iraq in September, his mother said.

She last saw her son in August. They had a party for him at his mother-in-law's home in Orient before he was shipped to Iraq.

Miller and his wife, Jackie, celebrated their first anniversary in July.

Miller's father, Kerby Miller of Greenfield, said his son was on his first tour of duty in Iraq and "felt like he had to serve."

Sniper Wounds Soldier In New Baghdad



U.S. Army soldiers from Company B of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, under cover of a smoke grenade, hunt for a sniper that wounded one of their compatriots in New Baghdad, an eastern neighborhood in the Iraqi capital Dec. 24, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

**UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH;
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. army soldiers take cover while being under fire on the outskirts of Baqouba, Dec. 19, 2006. (AP Photo)

TROOP NEWS

**Faced With End Of Limit On
Deployments, Intelligent Reservists
Implement Their Own Exit Strategy:
Get The Fuck Out Now!**

12.21.06 Miami Herald

As the Pentagon seeks to increase the burden on the Army's two reserve components, the Reserve and National Guard, many reservists, torn between family and the call to duty, are taking a hard look at their military commitment and choosing family when reenlistment time arrives.

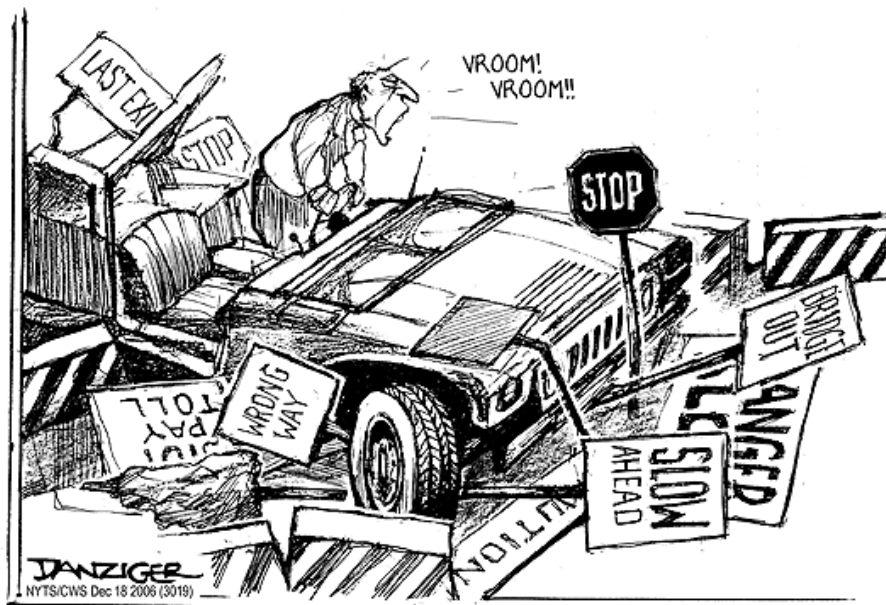
Those deciding whether to remain in the Guard and Reserve must take into account the possibility that they would have to serve longer and more frequently on active duty than they do now.

Under current mobilization policies, part-time troops can be called to serve involuntarily on active duty for no more than 24 months during a five-year period.

Army officials want the Pentagon to lift those restrictions so that Guard and Reserve troops can be pressed into service more often.

Joint Chiefs Tell White House That Sending More Troops To Iraq Is A Stupid Idea

The Road Ahead



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

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in. He writes: Thieves fall out.]

December 19, 2006 By Robin Wright and Peter Baker, Washington Post Staff Writers
[Excerpts] & December 20, 2006 Washington Post & Christian Science Monitor

The Bush administration is split over the idea of a surge in troops to Iraq, with White House officials aggressively promoting the concept over the unanimous disagreement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, according to U.S. officials familiar with the intense debate.

Sending 15,000 to 30,000 more troops for a mission of possibly six to eight months is one of the central proposals on the table of the White House policy review to reverse the steady deterioration in Iraq.

But the Joint Chiefs think the White House, after a month of talks, still does not have a defined mission and is latching on to the surge idea in part because of limited alternatives, despite warnings about the potential disadvantages for the military, said the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the White House review is not public.

The chiefs have taken a firm stand, the sources say, because they believe the strategy review will be the most important decision on Iraq to be made since the March 2003 invasion.

At regular interagency meetings and in briefing President Bush last week, the Pentagon has warned that any short-term mission may only set up the United States for bigger problems when it ends.

The service chiefs have warned that a short-term mission could give an enormous edge to virtually all the armed factions in Iraq -- including al-Qaeda's foreign fighters, Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias -- without giving an enduring boost to the U.S. military mission or to the Iraqi army, the officials said.

The Pentagon has cautioned that a modest surge could lead to more attacks by al-Qaeda, provide more targets for Sunni insurgents and fuel the jihadist appeal for more foreign fighters to flock to Iraq to attack U.S. troops, the officials said.

The informal but well-armed Shiite militias, the Joint Chiefs have also warned, may simply melt back into society during a U.S. surge and wait until the troops are withdrawn -- then reemerge and retake the streets of Baghdad and other cities.

Even the announcement of a time frame and mission -- such as for six months to try to secure volatile Baghdad -- could play to armed factions by allowing them to game out the new U.S. strategy, the chiefs have warned the White House.

A senior administration official said it is "too simplistic" to say the surge question has broken down into a fight between the White House and the Pentagon, but the official acknowledged that the military has questioned the option.

Rep. Ike Skelton, the incoming chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, questioned the purpose of sending an additional 20,000 U.S. troops into Baghdad, the surge option being mentioned as one strategy change in Iraq being considered by President Bush.

"What is the military mission?" Skelton said.

"I don't think it will change a thing," he said, adding: Would the added troops "exacerbate the problem by being more targets?"

"Is there something to go after that we don't know?"

When it comes to force levels, finding 15,000 to 30,000 additional troops for Iraq is not the real problem, say officers and experts outside the government.

More difficult is deciding how long to keep those extra units there and supplying them with scarce equipment.

MORE:

Generals Tell Gates That Sending More Troops To Iraq Is A Stupid Idea; “Abizaid Argues That Foreign Troops Are A Toxin Bound To Be Rejected By Iraqis”

12.21.06 New York Times & Philadelphia Inquirer & December 20, 2006 New York Times

Defense Secretary Robert Gates, visiting Iraq on his second day in office, said that senior commanders had expressed their concern to him that sending more American troops to Iraq might delay the Iraqi government from taking responsibility for its own security.

Gates found American commanders wary of a proposal to rush more U.S. troops to Iraq as he visited the war-ravaged country.

After meeting with top U.S. generals at Camp Victory, Gates acknowledged concerns that rushing in thousands more troops could allow the Iraqis to slow their effort to take control of the country.

[General] Abizaid argues that foreign troops are a toxin bound to be rejected by Iraqis, and that expanding the number of American troops merely puts off the day when Iraqis are forced to take responsibility for their own security.

“Remember The Sons And Daughters Of America Who Will Not Be Coming Home – Ever”

“We Do Not Want Our Sons And Daughters To Continue To Die In This Ill-

Planned, Immoral, Misbegotten War Without End”

[Thanks to Johanna Pettit, who sent this in.]

12/20/2006 BuzzFlash

By Amy Branham, Mother of Sgt. Jeremy R. Smith, Nov. 1981 - Feb. 2004,

President Bush and Members of Congress,

As you enjoy your holiday vacations with your families, I strongly urge you to also remember the sons and daughters of America whom you have sent to fight in a bloody war that has taken them so far away from their families, their lives and their homes.

I urge you to remember the sons and daughters of America who will not be coming home -- ever.

In November We, the People of the United States of America voted for change. We voted for an end to the war in Iraq.

We do not want to continue fighting a war that was never officially declared a war and we do not want our sons and daughters to continue to die in this ill-planned, immoral, misbegotten war without end.

We want you to bring them home and to bring them home now.

You have so far ignored our pleas and our cries to end this war.

It does not touch your lives and it does not affect you on an hourly basis. But, while you sit in your comfortable homes and offices, safe from harm, there are hundreds of thousands of American citizens who are not comfortable and who are affected.

They are either fighting in this war or worrying about their loved ones who are fighting for their lives every day.

There are families who are living in dreadful fear of that knock on the door.

They watch the news shows and wonder, with every announcement of yet another death of American military members, whether theirs is still alive or one of the dead.

This month alone there have been 61 of America's sons and daughters killed.

That's 61 families whose holidays are ruined, who will forever have their Christmas tainted by the death of someone they love in this horrendous war. Thousands upon thousands of Iraqis are also dead.

While you sit in your homes, waiting to make up your minds what to do, lives are being forever changed.

This war may not affect you or your family, but it does affect hundreds of thousands of people across this country and in Iraq. Every second, every minute, every day and every week that you take to "think" about the war, lives are changed or forever ended.

Last weekend, I put up my Christmas tree and was rocked with the memories of the last Christmas I spent with my only son, who died a month and a half later, in February 2004.

He was home on an unexpected leave. My husband and I had no money as he had been laid off from work and I was the only one keeping us afloat then. We had barely enough to make ends meet. But Jeremy was coming home and we were determined to make the holiday a good one for him, knowing that this could very well be his last Christmas ever.

I got a PayDay Loan. Then, because all of our holiday decorations were in storage in another city, I went out and bought a small silk tree and decorated it. I bought small, inexpensive gifts and food for our traditional Christmas Eve feast.

And when my son came home, I hugged on him, kissed him and spent as much time as I possibly could with him. In the end, it was a good Christmas.

Now, I put that little tree up every year in remembrance of my only son, my beloved boy whose voice I will never hear again, the young man I will never again hug or kiss. And I cry tears of sorrow for the senseless end of his life.

Please, I beg of you, do not hesitate one more hour, one more week to end this war.

Do not send more troops to Iraq, do not extend tours of duty, and do not continue in this war.

The Iraqi's do not want us in their country and the American people want their sons and daughters to come home.

Please, listen to us and bring them home.

We cannot afford to waste another day while you are enjoying your holidays. Today the death toll is 2,950.

How many more will die before you make up your minds to end this war?

Sincerely,
Amy Branham
Houston, TX
Mother of Sgt. Jeremy R. Smith
Nov. 1981 - Feb. 2004

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



The casket containing the remains of Marine Lance Corporal Brent E. Beeler arrives at the church for Beeler's funeral in Jackson, Michigan December 19, 2006. Beeler was killed in combat near Falluja, Iraq. REUTERS/Rebecca Cook (UNITED STATES)

Lt. Col Goes Psycho During Meeting With SecDef

December 22, 2006 By Lolita C. Baldor, The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Friday that he hopes to give a report to President Bush this weekend on what he learned during his three days of meetings with military and political leaders here.

Lt. Col. Bob Morschauer, who was among those who met with Gates, said the Iraqis are improving and gaining confidence.

He said the U.S. troops are hoping the Iraqis will be able to operate on their own in less than a year.

Yeah, It's Vietnam

December 22, 2006 Washington Post,

In his blog, "Duty in the Desert," Lt. Col. Patrick writes: "You can easily tell the folks that have been here awhile from the newer arrivals.

"New guys tell you how they're doing and what they're feeling. The old heads, deployed longer, start off every sentence with how many days remaining in their tour."

No Time For “Garrison Things” Bullshit In War Zone

December 25, 2006
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

The writer of “Soldiering includes PT” (Letters, Oct. 23) either hasn’t been deployed to Iraq or had all the time in the world.

Sixteen hour-plus days, and then having a couple of hours to contact family, unwind from a mission or call home shouldn’t be cut short just to go and do physical training as a company, and then have the added stress of a PT test while deployed.

Iraq is a war zone.

One should be worrying about staying alive and keeping his fellow soldiers alive — not about a PT test or other garrison things.

**Sgt. Eric N. Johnson
Fort Hood, Texas**

Pentagon Poisoning America And Doesn’t Give A Shit

12.20.06 San Diego Union-Tribune

Thanks to an age-old legal theory and inaction by Congress, the military and other federal agencies can sidestep fines for violating the Clean Water Act of 1972. One result is that the Defense Department has lagged in complying with clean-water rules, attorneys for several states say.

Pollution cops, environmentalists and legal experts watch in frustration as military bases and other federal facilities disobey the primary law aimed at protecting the country’s waters.

Enforcement agents are reduced to writing stern letters or, in rare cases, going through the costly and time-consuming process of suing the government.

Retired Admiral Caught War Profiteering

12.20.06 Washington Post

The Defense Department's inspector general has concluded that the former head of the Institute for Defense Analyses violated conflict-of-interest rules when he failed to distance himself from two reports that could have affected companies in which he had a financial interest.

The IDA is a government-funded independent organization that evaluates defense programs for the Pentagon. Its former chief, Retired Navy Adm. Dennis C. Blair, served on the boards of two subcontractors to the F-22 program-EDO and Tyco International.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

23 Dec 2006 Reuters & AP & Dec. 24, 2006 (AP) & Reuters & BBC

Guerrillas killed an Iraqi intelligence officer in the southern Iraqi city of Diwaniya.

A policeman was shot dead by insurgents in the town of Samarra, police said.

An Iraqi soldier was killed by insurgents in the small town of Dour, near Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, north of Baghdad, police said.

In Muqdadiyah — about 55 miles northeast of the capital — a suicide bomber killed at least seven policemen and wounded 30 others at a police station. Insurgents then launched six mortar rounds at the station.

Sunday's bombing happened at a police parade ground. The bomber is reported to have detonated his explosive vest as the officers were assembling.

In the south, at least five police have been killed in Samawah, where Shiite fighters attacked police headquarters and other government buildings with rocket-propelled grenades. Police have been battling the fighters since Friday.

The death toll from fighting since Saturday between Iraqi security forces and Shiite fighters in Samawa, 270 km (170 miles) south of Baghdad, rose to eight, including four policemen, and 32 more people were wounded, a hospital source said.

Insurgent fighters attacked police headquarters and other government buildings with rocket-propelled grenades. Police have been battling the fighters since Friday. The city was under a vehicle curfew on Sunday as sporadic clashes continued.

Khalaf said tribal leaders were trying to intervene in an effort to stop the violence in Samawah, the capital of Muthana province, about 230 miles southeast of Baghdad.

Muthana was under control of British forces until July, when it became the first province to revert to Iraqi control.

A roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol, wounding two policemen in Tal Afar, about 420 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol killed two and wounded three soldiers on Saturday in Nahda district in central Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.”

Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

How It Was, And Can Be Again

From: WORKING CLASS WAR, by Christian G. Appy, U. Of North Carolina Press, 1984

“While the domestic anti-war movement is properly credited with pushing the government to withdraw U.S. forces from Vietnam, the resistance of GIs within Vietnam was an often overlooked but crucial factor in moving American leaders to the conclusion that the American ground war had to come to an end.”

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 email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

Happy Anniversary: December 25, 1921



Peace History December 25-31 By Carl Bunin

President Harding released Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs from prison, commuting his sentence to time served.

He had been imprisoned for his vocal opposition to U.S. participation in World War I.

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)

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

Remember Do'a...

...Martyred By The Zionist Occupiers On Her Way From School



[Thanks to JM, who sent this in. She writes: **I've just received this from Palestine. Another little school girl murdered on her way home from school. This is what the glorious Bush and Blair support so valiantly. They don't even class Palestinian children as human beings. If there's a hell these murders, and those who protect them, will need to fear death.**]

Dec. 22, 2006 StoptheWall.org Special News

Fara'on - On Wednesday 20th of December, Do'a Abdel Khader Naser, a 13 year old girl from Izbet Naser close to Fara'on village south of Tulkarem, was killed by bullets from the Israeli occupation. Do'a was shot in the chest and hand as she walked past the Apartheid Wall north of Fara'on.

The people of the village witnessed the Israeli occupiers firing a torrent of bullets toward Do'a and her ten year old friend Rasha as they walked by the Wall on their way back from school. When ambulances and doctors rushed to the scene they were prevented from entering by the occupation forces and while Rasha escaped physically unharmed, Do'a was left, untreated, to bleed to death.

Doa's coffin was carried through the streets of Tulkarem district yesterday afternoon as hundreds of people marched behind it in anger. Joining in the march were Doa's friends and students from many other schools in Tulkarem. Doa was laid to rest in Tulkarem graveyard.

During the march, people called for national unity and asked for Palestinian political parties to stop fighting each other and to unite in fighting the Occupation.

Do'a's father is one of more than 10 000 Palestinians jailed in Israeli prisons and was prevented by the occupation from seeing his daughter for the last time.

Fara'on, encircled from three sides by the Apartheid Wall, has had much of its land isolated or destroyed by the Wall or stolen and polluted by the Israeli chemical factory Gheshuri.

[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



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

GEORGE BUSH: POLITICAL GENIUS The Commander-in-Chief Speaks

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

20 December 2006 By Peter Baker, The Washington Post

President Bush acknowledged for the first time yesterday that the United States is not winning the war in Iraq.

As he searches for a new strategy for Iraq, Bush has adopted the formula advanced by his top military adviser to describe the situation. "We're not winning, we're not losing," Bush said in an interview with The Washington Post.

The assessment was a striking reversal for a president who, days before the November elections, declared, "Absolutely, we're winning."

Asked yesterday about his "absolutely, we're winning" comment at an Oct. 24 news conference, the president recast it as a prediction rather than an assessment. "Yes, that was an indication of my belief we're going to win," he said.

Rice Says Bush Has "The Right Strategy"



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

12.20.06 USA Today

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that President Bush would announce new Iraq policies soon, but she suggested they would not be a radical departure from current U.S. strategy. "One doesn't shift strategy every week if you believe you have the right strategy," Rice said. The

“Seeing Troops With Amputated Limbs And Other Serious Wounds, The President Asked Them How They Were Feeling”

MIKE LUCKOVICH
THE WASHINGTON JOURNAL - CONSTITUTIONAL ©
APR. 06 12-11-06



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

December 22, 2006 By Deb Riechmann, The Associated Press

President George W. Bush visited injured troops at their bedsides on Friday, continuing an annual pre-Christmas tradition of comforting soldiers that he began after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Bush and first lady Laura Bush traveled to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, visiting with 38 patients among those being treated there for injuries suffered mostly in Iraq, but also in Afghanistan.

Seeing troops with amputated limbs and other serious wounds, the president asked them how they were feeling.

New Leader Of House Intelligence Committee A Worthless,

Dimwitted, Incompetent Piece Of Shit; [He'll Fit Right In]

[Thanks to Katherine GY, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

December 20, 2006 By MAUREEN DOWD, Op-Ed Columnist, The New York Times
[Excerpts]

The only sects that may be more savage than Shiites and Sunnis are the Democratic feminist lawmakers representing Northern and Southern California.

After Nancy Pelosi and Jane Harman had their final catfight about who would lead the House Intelligence Committee, aptly enough at the Four Seasons' hair salon in Georgetown, the new speaker passed over the knowledgeable and camera-eager Ms. Harman and mystifyingly gave the consequential job to Silvestre Reyes of Texas.

Mr. Reyes promptly tripped over the most critical theme in the field of intelligence. Jeff Stein, interviewing the incoming chairman for Congressional Quarterly, asked him whether Al Qaeda was Sunni or Shiite.

“Predominantly — probably Shiite,” the lawmaker guessed.

As Mr. Stein corrected him in the article: “Al Qaeda is profoundly Sunni. If a Shiite showed up at an Al Qaeda clubhouse, they'd slice off his head and use it for a soccer ball.”

Mr. Stein followed up with a Hezbollah question: “What are they?” Again, Mr. Reyes was stumped.

“Hezbollah,” he stammered. “Uh, Hezbollah. Why do you ask me these questions at 5 o'clock? Can I answer in Spanish?” (O.K. ¿Que es Hezbollah?)

Sounding as naked of essentials as Britney Spears, the new intelligence oversight chief pleaded that it was hard to keep all the categories straight. Thank heavens Mr. Stein never got to Syrian Alawites.

If Mr. Reyes had been reading the newspaper, he might have noticed Mr. Stein's piece on The Times's Op-Ed page two months earlier, in which, like a wonkish Ali G, he caught many intelligence and law enforcement officials, as well as members of Congress, who did not know the difference between a Sunni and a Shiite.

Once they have the job, the incentive of politicians to study is somewhat dulled.

One possibility is that Mr. Stein's questions were just too darn hard. He should have pitched a few warm-ups, like: How many sides are there in the Sunni

Triangle? Or: Which religious figure, Muhammad or Jesus, has not been the subject of a Mel Gibson film?

Perhaps the questions could be phrased Jeopardy-style, as in: "The name shared by two kings in Jordan and Saudi Arabia." (What is Abdullah?)

A multiple choice might be easier on harried policy makers. For instance, which of the following quotes can be attributed to Dick Cheney?

- a) "So long as the Arabs fight tribe against tribe, so long will they be a little people, a silly people: greedy, barbarous and cruel."
- b) "Don Rumsfeld is the finest secretary of defense this nation has ever had."
- c) "Certain things are not known to those who eat with forks."

Or this: Is the Shiite crescent a) a puffy dinner roll, b) a new Ramadan moon, or c) an arc of crisis?

Once our leaders get a grasp of the basics, we can hit them with a truly hard question:

Three and a half years after the invasion of Iraq, with nearly 3,000 American troops dead and the Iraqis not remotely interested in order or democracy, what on earth do we do now?

“We’ll Give Them The Same Old Bullshit About ‘Supporting The Troops’”



“OK babe, then it’s a deal; I get rid of Bolton and Rumsfeld and you guys take funding the war and impeachment off the table. Don’t worry; I’ll make it look good.”

"We'll give them the same old bullshit about 'supporting the troops'. Merry Christmas - love your Armani suit, ain't neoliberal economics great?" [December 23 by John A. Murphy; excerpt.]

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.

"No, Child The Democrats Will Not Stop The Slaughter"



No, child the Democrats will not stop the slaughter. The wonderful Bill Clinton and his Secretary of State Madeline Albright killed over one million mothers, fathers and children. They did it with bombs and sanctions and now they will help Mr. Bush continue killing us at the rate of 3,650 a month. [December 23 John A. Murphy]

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

War Is Good For Business: Invest Your Son Or Daughter; While Troops Die, Wall St. Enjoys A \$14,950 Bottle Of Champaign

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

Dec 19 By ADAM GOLDMAN, AP Business Writer

When Michael Aaron learned that Wall Street investment banks were going to be shelling out record bonuses this holiday season, the savvy wine merchant uncorked his own plan to make serious dough.

He paid for a double-page advertisement in The New York Times, boasting a rare bottle of 1995 Dom Perignon. The price tag - \$14,950.

"We thought we'd put this temptation out there," said Aaron, chairman of Sherry-Lehmann wine store on Madison Avenue.

The \$15,000 bottle of bubbly is just one example of how record Wall Street bonuses this year can trickle through New York City's economy. People are buying multimillion-dollar apartments. They are driving \$40,000 BMWs out of the showroom.

A report released Tuesday by the state comptroller said Wall Street is expected to pay out \$23.9 billion in bonuses, shattering last year's record by 17 percent.

The most jaw-dropping bonuses are being doled out by Goldman Sachs Group Inc., the world's largest investment bank.

The company reported a staggering profit last week of \$9.4 billion and said it was dedicating \$16.5 billion for salaries, bonuses and benefits at the end of the year.

The upper echelon of Goldman Sachs - called the "golden 25" - could get at least \$25 million each.

Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., and Bear Stearns Cos. said they would pay out about \$12 billion in compensation - more than \$300,000 per employee.

Morgan Stanley Inc., the second-largest U.S. investment house, gave chief executive John Mack \$40 million in stock and options for 2006, reflecting one of the largest bonuses awarded to a Wall Street CEO.

The bonus numbers are especially mind-boggling when compared with the salaries of average New Yorkers.

The comptroller estimated that bonuses will average \$137,580 in 2006, although most Wall Streeters make much more than that.

Excluding people working on Wall Street, the average New Yorker earned \$56,634 in 2005. Wall Street accounts for less than 5 percent of all the jobs in the city but more than 20 percent of the wages.

Real estate is a big beneficiary of bonuses, as plenty of bankers look to upgrade their digs or buy their first pad.

"A lot of my Wall Streeters have been pounding the pavement anticipating the bonuses," said Louise Phillips Forbes, of Halstead Property. "They're prepared to pay a tremendous amount of money."

Earlier this month, Forbes said she sold 11 apartments. More than half of those buyers worked on Wall Street. Forbes says she has about 200 apartments for sale ranging from \$500,000 to \$6 million. Many of those, she said, will go to bankers.

Jeff Falk, president of BMW of Manhattan, has an advantage over real estate brokers.

They can't bring their wares to doorstep of the investment and banking community, but he can.

In July 2005, BMW of Manhattan opened a second showroom on Wall Street. He said his company plans for bonuses, ensuring it has enough inventory to satisfy any urges to buy a sleek BMW.

Falk said he's running an ad that says: "My bonus is faster than your bonus."

And you can't forget that Wall Street essential - the fancy suit.

"It definitely means business," said Phil Kornblatt, director of retail for Hickey Freeman, a maker of fine suits that are popular on Wall Street and routinely cost \$1,500. "We noticed a big increase in sales, and I believe most of it is due to the bonuses."

So far, nobody has snapped up Aaron's "Methuselah," a 6-liter bottle of champagne.

But he's hoping. Hoping some Wall Street executive with multimillion-dollar bonus buys it for a New Year's party, making it the most expensive bottle of any wine he's ever sold.

"It would be one hell of a New Year's party," Aaron said. And one heck of a bonus for Aaron.

Richest 2 % Own Half The World's Wealth

December 22, 2006 by Aaron Glantz, OneWorld

The richest 2 percent of adults in the world own more than half the world's wealth, according to a new study released by the Helsinki-based World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University.

The study's authors say their work is the most comprehensive study of personal wealth ever undertaken.

They found the richest 1 percent of adults owned 40 percent of global assets in the year 2000, and that the richest 10 percent of adults accounted for 85 percent of the world's total.

In contrast, the assets of half of the world's adult population account for barely 1 percent of global wealth.

“The Recovery In New Orleans Has Gone About As Well As The War In Iraq”

December 21, 2006 By BOB HERBERT, NY Times Op-Ed

New Orleans

It's eerie. The air is still. There is no noise. Night is falling. The five stone steps in front of me once led to a porch, or maybe directly to the front door of a house. There is no way to be sure. The house is completely gone.

All that's left are the five steps, one of which is painted with the address, 1630 Reynes St. The steps sit alone, like a piece of minimalist art, at the front of a small vacant lot full of weeds and rubble. Next door is a house that is completely capsized, fallen over on its side like a sunken ship.

Welcome to the Lower Ninth Ward. You won't find much holiday spirit here. In every direction, as far as it is possible to see, is devastation.

On another lot, piled high with the rubble of a ruined house, I saw a middle-aged man standing in the front yard weeping. He wore a dirty white baseball cap and he was sobbing like a child. I walked toward him to ask a question but he waved me away.

Whatever you've heard about New Orleans, the reality is much worse.

Think of it as a vast open wound, this once-great American city that is still largely in ruins, with many of its people still writhing in agony more than a year after the catastrophic flood that followed Hurricane Katrina.

Enormous stretches of the city, mile after mile after mile, have been abandoned.

The former residents have doubled-up or tripled-up with relatives, or found shelter in the ubiquitous white trailers of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or moved (in some cases permanently) to Texas, Mississippi, Georgia and beyond. Some have simply become homeless.

"This is a ghostly city, if you ask me," said Sheila Etheridge, a waitress whose home was destroyed and whose three children are staying with relatives near Atlanta. "It gets real spooky when the sun goes down. They let me sleep in the back of the restaurant. But I'll tell you the truth, we don't have too many customers. You see what those neighborhoods are like. They're empty. The people gone."

The recovery in New Orleans has gone about as well as the war in Iraq.

In mid-September 2005, with parts of the city still submerged and soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division on patrol, President Bush made a dramatic, flood-lit appearance in historic Jackson Square. In a nationally televised speech he promised not only to do all that he could to rebuild the Gulf Coast, but also to confront the terrible problem of deep and persistent poverty.

"That poverty," said the president, "has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America. We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action."

Now, more than a year later, the population of New Orleans is less than half what it was before the storm.

The federal government has allocated billions for the city's recovery but much of that money has been wasted or remains hopelessly tied up in the bureaucracy. Very little has gotten to the neediest victims, the people who were poor to begin with and then lost their homes and their livelihoods to the storm.

Many of the city's hospitals and schools remain closed. Some will never reopen. There is very little public transportation. The politicians have come up with a stunning array of post-Katrina initiatives, but one grandiose recovery plan after another has faltered.

The terrible experience of the flood and its aftermath has left an imprint on the minds of most residents that's as distinct as the water lines that stain so many of the city's buildings. A cabdriver's voice faltered as he told me about an obese woman who put pillows under her arms as the floodwaters were rising. She thought the pillows would help her float.

"She drowned," the driver said.

Emotional and psychological problems are rampant, but there is a drastic shortage of mental health professionals to treat them. People are suffering from severe anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and other illnesses. Doctors told me that large numbers of mentally ill individuals have gone more than a year without taking their prescribed medication.

Many of the poor residents in the city feel that they've been abandoned by the government and the rest of America, and that the president broke his promise to help.

"We're in terrible trouble down here," said a woman named Delores Goode, who stood outside the Superdome asking passers-by if they knew where she might find work as a baby sitter.

"We were all over the television last year. Now we're back to being nobody."

Received:

Looking For "Written Material Given To Troops Going To Iraq That Introduces Them To Iraq"

From: Nick Mottern: nickmottern@earthlink.net
To: GI Special
Sent: December 24, 2006

I wonder if you would have or could get for me any written material given to troops going to Iraq that introduces them to Iraq and describes why they are going, what the goals are for them.

When I went to Viet Nam in 1962, we all were given a pamphlet telling us that we were stopping the spread of communism, among other things, and I would like to see comparable material that is being given to the military now.

Thanks very much, and thanks for your great work,

Nick Mottern, ConsumersforPeace.org

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>;

<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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