

GI SPECIAL 5A29:

The United States Congress



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: January 27, 2007
Subject: The United States Congress

The United States Congress

**Day after day after day...
They know nothing about
brotherly love in time of war.
They do not serve.
They do not get it.
They do not understand
the same blood that
flows between soldiers.
They do not see them
take their last breath.
They never put a dead teenager
on a chopper.
They never saw a dead soldier
put in the back of a lonely truck,
after the Medevac helicopter landed.**

They never saw a soldier shoot
himself in the head with his M-16,
because he couldn't take it anymore.
He saw too much, too often, too many tours.
Congress never saw the splattered blood,
and brains inside the tent.
They never saw his urine soaked uniform.
They never had a Vet friend hang himself in
a motel room, because he couldn't take it anymore.
They never had a Vet friend die homeless.
They never had a Vet friend die from Agent Orange.
Congress really doesn't know that goes on.
They never met a veteran who was ordered to
take part in murdering over 50 innocent civilians.
They know nothing about being hated in another
country, because you are the invader.
Congress knows nothing about war.
Except
Funding
It.
Day after day after day...

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
January 27, 2007

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)

Active Duty Troops Join March Against War In Los Angeles Too

From: Ed Pearl
Sent: January 28, 2007
Subject: January 27th

[Excerpt from his report on the demonstration against the wars in Los Angeles. Reports from Washington DC also noted the presence of active duty troops. T]

The rule of thumb count is 1,000 marchers per massed block, and not counting those still around the corner marching from Figueroa, suggests a total between 10 and 15,000.

And, aside from the 5 men mentioned by ABC, I saw exactly one person expressing opposition and complete support from the mobs on Broadway, some joining us.

And it wasn't only the Iraq vets there, but Families of Military in Iraq in significant numbers, active duty guys - I took a chance and spoke to a couple of crew-cuts who confessed while staying out of camera range, Vietnam vets, many people who'd never before marched, etc.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

IED Kills Soldier North Of Baghdad

Jan. 28, 2007 Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070128-06

BAGHDAD - An improvised explosive device detonated near a Multi-National Division - Baghdad patrol north of the Iraqi capital, killing one Soldier Jan. 27.

The unit was conducting a route reconnaissance when the roadside bomb detonated, killing the Soldier.

Marine Killed In Anbar

Jan. 28, 2007 Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070128-03

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - One Marine assigned to 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, died Saturday from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

US Chopper Shot Down Near Najaf: Two Dead, As Resistance Formations “Dressed In Camouflage Uniforms And Well Organized And Fighting In Small Formations” Attack Collaborator Troops



Smoke rises from the site where a US helicopter was shot down near the town of Zarqa, north of the central Iraqi city of Najaf. (AFP/Qassem Zein)

28 January 2007 By Ross Colvin, Reuters

A U.S. helicopter was shot down in the fighting near Najaf, Iraq security sources said. The U.S. military declined comment. A Reuters reporter saw a helicopter come down trailing smoke.

The governor of Najaf province said Iraqi troops fought a fierce day-long battle with up to 200 militants holed up in orchards on the northern outskirts of the holy city, seat of Iraq's most powerful Shi'ite clerics.

A Reuters reporter about 1.5 km (one mile) from the fighting said he heard intense gunfire and saw U.S. helicopters rocket groves sheltering militants. He saw smoke trailing from one chopper before it came down in the midst of the fighting.

He was unable to see what had happened to the helicopter, but officers in Iraq's 8th Army Division and policemen said it had crashed and that the two crew members were dead.

One of the army officers said the militants were dressed in camouflage uniforms and appeared to be well organized and fighting in small formations.

Several had said under interrogation they belonged to the Army of Imam Ahmed al-Yemeni, a group not previously heard of. By late afternoon, there were reports that some were trying to break out northwards toward Kerbala.

The Reuters reporter said he had earlier seen two wounded Iraqi soldiers with a dead comrade in the back of a truck outside an Iraqi military base.

He said troop reinforcements from the nearby city of Hilla had been summoned and at one point in the battle he heard radio communications in which soldiers in the midst of the fighting were asking for fresh ammunition supplies.

IED Kills Soldier In Northern Baghdad

28 January 2007 Reuters

A U.S. soldier in the 89th Military Police Brigade died on Saturday from wounds suffered when a roadside bomb hit his vehicle in northern Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

Jammers That Defeat IEDs Also “Cause The Loss Of All Communications” For U.S. Troops

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes: This reminds me of when troops called in airstrikes in Vietnam and got hit themselves...]

1/23/2007 By Tom Vanden Brook, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has launched an urgent effort to develop radio systems immune to the jamming signals that troops use to foil homemade bombs planted by insurgents in Iraq.

The jammers, which block signals that detonate improvised explosive devices (IEDs), have become so powerful they can "cause the loss of all communications" for U.S. troops, a Pentagon solicitation to contractors says.

Communication has been a historic advantage for the U.S. military, allowing it to send troops where they're needed most and to avoid "friendly fire" casualties. The jammers that protect troops from roadside bombs can keep them from knowing the location of enemies and allies. In close-quarters urban warfare, ensuring communication can be a life-or-death matter.

"It is a nightmare," said John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, a military think tank. "Any part of the spectrum we can use to communicate is part of spectrum that the enemy can use to detonate an IED."

Adding 21,500 U.S. troops — as President Bush has announced — would be complicated by poor communication.

"Twice as many combat troops means twice as big a problem," Pike said.

Suicide Soldiers Wanted: **For U.S. Commanders Baghdad Sitting** **Duck Plan:** **Apply Now So It Can Be Too Late**



US soldiers from the 20th Engineer Battalion visit a Joint Security Station, where American and Iraqi troops will be staked out as bait during upcoming security operations in Baghdad, , Jan. 28, 2007. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

Jan 25, 2007 By Pepe Escobar, Asia Times [Excerpt]

With Baghdad to be divided into nine military districts, each with its dedicated Iraqi army/police and its embedded US battalion, the muqawama [resistance] is also more than relishing the prospect of laying siege to the sitting-duck Fort Apaches that will spring up in each of these districts.

What happened in Karbala last Sunday will be quite common in Fort Apache land: attacks by guerrilla commandos disguised as American soldiers, driving in a convoy of GMCs.

And Black Hawk Down will be endlessly replayed - just like last Saturday, when a helicopter was shot down by a clumsy Russian SA-7 shoulder-fired missile.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



Sergeant Christian Ramos, 22, from Elizabeth, NJ, a US soldier stands watch as his comrades search a car in north of Baghdad, Iraq, Nov. 10, 2006. (AP Photo/Lauren Frayer)

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Bush Regime Attacks Somalia Again; “Officials” Can’t Get Their Lies Straight About Why

1.25.07 New York Times

The United States government has conducted a second airstrike in Somalia, American officials confirmed.

One official said the targets this week were Islamist fighters, who once controlled much of Somalia but were defeated in a two-week war that started in late December.

A second source said the target was an al-Qaida operative.

TROOP NEWS

Marine Sgt. Says: “We Will Not Tolerate The Rhetoric That We Must Support The Troops By Funding A War That Puts Them In Harm’s Way”

16-Jan-2007 by David Welna, Npr.org [Excerpt]

Marine Sgt. Liam Madden, 22, who, two years, ago did combat duty in Iraq's turbulent Anbar province dressed in a civilian coat and tie in a chilling wind outside the Capitol to formally present the 1,028 Appeals For Redress from other active-duty forces, 60 percent of them fellow Iraq veterans.

"We will not tolerate the rhetoric that we must support the troops by funding a war that puts them in harm's way," Madden said.

"If you are funding a war that puts them in harm's way, you are not supporting them.

"You are endangering their lives for a war that cannot be justified, has not been justified and will not work."

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.

Iraq Veterans Against The War Plan To Reach Out To Active Duty Troops: “Please Consider Making A Donation To IVAW”



[Photo by Jeff Paterson, Courage to Resist: jeff [at] paterson.net]

Our unique power as veterans and military members is our ability to reach out and connect with other veterans and active duty men and women. A key to ending the carnage in Iraq is to organize within the ranks to resist this illegal, immoral war.

January 24, 2007 Iraq Vets Against the War Updates!! [Excerpts]

I wanted to inform all of you of new developments and upcoming projects being undertaken by our IVAW members. Our much anticipated strategy retreat took place in Philadelphia Jan 12-14. We had over 30 veterans from around the country who are leaders in our organization come together for a weekend to develop a clear, strong IVAW strategy.

We are currently taking all that we learned from our time together to compile a strategy and messaging document that will be crucial to our eventual success to end the war.

Our unique power as veterans and military members is our ability to reach out and connect with other veterans and active duty men and women. A key to ending the carnage in Iraq is to organize within the ranks to resist this illegal, immoral war.

Iraq Veterans Against the War continues to grow in strength and numbers and your support is crucial to help us continue our fight to end the war.

Please consider making a donation to IVAW either online at www.ivaw.org, or by mail at IVAW, PO Box 8296, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Thank you for your solidarity and support!

Peace,
Kelly Dougherty
Executive Director
Iraq Veterans Against the War

Pentagon Troop-Killers Still At It: Iraq Troops Using Unarmored Humvees “Despite Heated Criticism In 2004 And 2005 Over The Lack Of Armored Vehicles”

January 22, 2007 By DAVID WOOD, Baltimore Sun

WASHINGTON - After nearly four years of war in Iraq, the Pentagon's effort to protect its troops against roadside bombs is in disarray, with soldiers and Marines having to swap access to scarce armored vehicles and the military unsure whether it has the money or industrial capacity to produce the safe vehicles it says the troops need.

On Jan. 10, The Baltimore Sun reported that most of the 21,500 troops President Bush has ordered to Iraq as reinforcements will not have access to specialized blast-resistant armored vehicles because they are in such short supply.

But the problem runs deeper than that. In congressional testimony and interviews last week, senior Army and Marine Corps officers acknowledged that they are struggling just to meet the needs of service members already in Iraq.

The Army acknowledged last week, for example, that it is still 22 percent short of the armored Humvees it needs in Iraq despite heated criticism in 2004 and 2005 over the lack of armored vehicles. Army officials said it will be another eight months before that gap can be filled.

Accordingly, the Army is shipping 71,000 sets of fire-resistant uniforms to Iraq so that soldiers will have a better chance of surviving the fires that often consume Humvees that hit roadside bombs. **[Assuming they're still alive after an IED hits a defenseless Humvee, that is.]**

“My Husband Is Currently Deployed In Iraq” “Please, For Our Families’ And Country’s Sake, Stop, End The Escalation And Get Our Men And Women Out Of Iraq”

23 Jan 2007, Sally B Davidson, NY MFSO

Emma's Army Reservist husband has been deployed to Iraq since Sept. 2006. (FYI - Emma told me that she did NOT write "President" Bush in the letter she submitted to the Times, but "Mr." Bush and the NYT edited it, and she just "let it go." Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting. Oy.)

To the Editor:
The New York Times

Re “U.S. Toll in Iraq Is 27 for Deadly Weekend” (front page, Jan. 22):

There were 27 more unwelcome knocks at the door in the United States this past weekend, following more than 3,000 others since this war began.

Each one revealed to a loving family the devastating death of an American soldier, and to the nation a painful yet significant opportunity to stop, reassess what’s gone wrong in Iraq and do whatever possible to prevent a bad situation from becoming much, much worse.

President Bush, can you hear the knocking?

The sound reverberates constantly, dreadfully and with deafening force in those of us with loved ones in Iraq.

My husband is currently deployed in Iraq. Please, for our families' and country's sake, stop, end the escalation and get our men and women out of Iraq.

Emma Greenwood
New York, Jan. 22, 2007

More American Soldiers Seeking To Escape To Canada Since “Surge” Announced

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

2007.01.11 Toronto Daily News.

As U.S. President Bush announced his plans to send more troops to Iraq bloodshed, a surge in the number of calls from American military during the past week has prompted a Canadian war resistance group to ask for help in housing soldiers leaving the U.S. for Canada, Toronto Star reported.

"We have noticed an uptick since the summer, but this is much more intense," said Lee Zaslofsky, who went AWOL in 1970 and, like many during that time, crossed the border into Canada.

He became co-ordinator of the War Resisters Support Campaign, a Canada-wide organization that supports U.S. soldiers seeking asylum in Canada because they refuse to fight in the war in Iraq.

Zaslofsky says the group has received calls from at least 24 concerned U.S. soldiers after U.S. President George W. Bush's call for more troops in Iraq.

The soldiers, he says, include both reserves and those returning from past deployment.

"If you have room where you can house a resister for a few days, a few weeks or longer, please get in touch with us," the group said. The campaign has been running since 2004 and is based in cities across Canada.

Guard Response To Home Disasters Wrecked By Iraq War

1.25.07 Los Angeles Times

President Bush's troop buildup in Iraq and the demands of the 4-year-old war are causing concern at the Pentagon that the conflict could hamper the military's response to domestic crises.

The head of the National Guard said that his troops lacked necessary equipment, which could hurt their ability to respond to natural or man-made disasters.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GET THE MESSAGE?



Students hold an Iraqi national flag as they walk over Israeli and U.S. flags during a memorial service for victims of a bomb attack, at Mustansiriya university in Baghdad January 25, 2007. A car bomb and a suicide bomber killed 60 people and wounded 110 more, including many students blown up as they waited for cars to take them home at the entrance of Mustansiriya university in Baghdad, police said. REUTERS/Mahmoud Raouf Mahmoud (IRAQ)

Assorted Resistance Action

28 January 2007 Reuters

Guerrillas ambushed the director general of Iraq's Industry Ministry in Baghdad's western Yarmouk district, Adel Abdul-Mehsun al-Lami as he drove to work, killing him, his daughter, and two others, police and the ministry said.

A ministry spokesman said Lami's daughter had worked as an engineer in the ministry. The other two killed were his driver and a second unidentified employee.

Guerrillas attacked an Iraqi army patrol, killing two soldiers and wounding three on a road south of Baghdad.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Fuck The Useless, Worthless Democrats, It's Time For "Citizen-Activists Fed Up With The Status Quo"

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

January 25, 2007 By BOB HERBERT, The New York Times [Excerpts]

The Democrats, delighted by the wounded Bush presidency, believe this is their time. Like an ostentation of peacocks, an extraordinary crowd of excited candidates is gathering in hopes of succeeding Mr. Bush.

But such a timid crowd!

Ask a potential Democratic president what he or she would do about the war, and you'll get a doctoral dissertation about the importance of diplomacy, the possibility of a phased withdrawal (but not too quick), the need for Iraqis to help themselves and figure out a way to divvy up the oil, and so on and so forth.

A straight answer? Surely you jest. The Democrats remind me of the boxer in the Bonnie Raitt lyric who was "afraid to throw a punch that might land."

There's a hole in the American system where the leadership used to be. The country that led the miraculous rebuilding effort in the aftermath of World War II can't even build an adequate system of levees on its own Gulf Coast.

The most effective answer to this leadership vacuum would be a new era of political activism by ordinary citizens. The biggest, most far-reaching changes of the past century — the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the women's

movement — were not primarily the result of elective politics, but rather the hard work of committed citizen-activists fed up with the status quo.

The candidates for the most part are listening to their handlers and gurus and fat-cat contributors, which is the antithesis of democracy. It's not easy for ordinary men and women to be heard above that self-serving din, but it can be done.

Same Old Bullshit Then As Now

In the 1960s, U.S. leaders believed that the fall of South Vietnam to communism would have terrible consequences, so they decided to prevent such an outcome by whatever means necessary. Gideon Rose, Jan. 22, 2007, Slate

Reality Check

25 January 2007 By Patrick Cockburn, The Independent (UK) [Excerpts]

Mr Bush's speech is likely to deepen sectarianism in Iraq by identifying the Shia militias with Iran. In fact, the most powerful Shia militia, the Mehdi Army, is traditionally anti-Iranian.

It is the Badr Organisation, now co-operating with US forces, which was formed and trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

Neither the US nor Iraqi government has the resources to eliminate the Shia militias.

Mr Bush's supposedly new strategy is less of a strategy than a collection of tactics unlikely to change dramatically the situation on the ground.

Gotcha

January 25 Edward L. Peck, Council for the National Interest Foundation [Excerpt]

When our CNI delegation (www.cnionline.org) met with Syrian President Bashar Al Assad last January, after observing the Palestinian elections in Gaza, he told us that American officials always demand that he stop, right now!, people crossing the border into Iraq.

He said he replies by asking for the Border Patrol to come over and explain how they did it with Mexico, so he can apply the same successful approach.

Heavy silence follows, as it should.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Democratic Party Senators: World Class Empire-Loving Hypocritical Shit Bags; Babbling About Some Resolution Opposing Surge, They Vote For General Who Is For The Surge To Lead The Surge, And Who Says Their Resolution Gives "Comfort To The Enemy"

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes: The height of hypocrisy: voting for NON-BINDING resolutions against the surge and then voting UNANIMOUSLY for the man who is going to execute that surge.]

Jan 26 By ANNE FLAHERTY, Associated Press Writer & 1.24.07 Washington Post

The Senate on Friday voted unanimously to confirm the nomination of Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus to command U.S. troops in Iraq at a time when President Bush is building up American forces there.

Petraeus' 81-0 approval was in contrast to the widespread public and congressional opposition to Bush's plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq.

Congress is moving toward votes in coming weeks on nonbinding resolutions opposing the troop build up.

In testimony to Congress this week, Petraeus said the situation in Iraq is "dire" but said he believed Bush's strategy would work - assuming the Iraqi government provided additional troops and helped crack down on militias.

Petraeus voiced confidence in a new approach that would shift the focus to protecting the population by pushing tens of thousands of additional U.S. and Iraqi troops deep into Baghdad neighborhoods, one aimed at allowing Iraq's government to "come to grips with" what he called an "exceedingly difficult situation."

Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman asked Army Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus during his confirmation hearing if Senate resolutions condemning White House Iraq policy "would give the enemy some comfort."

Petraeus agreed they would, saying, "That's correct, sir."

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

Cheney Says Talk Of Blunders In Iraq Is Hogwash; The Loony Piece Of Shit Says Biggest Mistake Was Not Realizing How Submissive Iraqis Are [This Is Not A Parody]

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

[He writes: WOLF, THIS NOTION THAT I HAVE A BALD SPOT ON MY HEAD OR THAT I SHOT MY FRIEND IN THE FACE ON A HUNTING TRIP, IS JUST PINKO LIBERAL HOGWASH THAT GIVES COMFORT TO THE TERRORISTS WHO HAVE BEEN SAYING THE SAME THINGS FOR YEARS.]

January 25, 2007 WASHINGTON (CNN)

Vice President Dick Cheney on Wednesday dismissed as "hogwash" the suggestion that blunders may have hurt the administration's credibility on Iraq and led members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to question President Bush's plan to send more troops to Baghdad.

In an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer, conducted a day after Bush delivered his State of the Union address, Cheney was asked to respond to some Republicans in Congress who "are now seriously questioning your credibility, because of the blunders and the failures."

To that, Cheney answered, "Wolf, Wolf, I simply don't accept the premise of your question. I just think it's hogwash."

Asked to describe the biggest mistake made by U.S. war planners, Cheney said, "I think we underestimated the extent to which 30 years of Saddam's rule had really hammered the population, especially the Shia population, into submissiveness. It's very hard for them to stand up and take responsibility, in part because anybody who's done that in the past have had their heads chopped off."

TYPICAL IRAQI BUSY BEING SUBMISSIVE



An insurgent armed with a heavy machinegun stands at a street in the centre of the Iraqi town of Ramadi December 8, 2006. REUTERS/Stringer (IRAQ)

CRAZY AS A SHITHOUSE RAT



(AFP/File/Paul J. Richards)

A Foreign Policy Contrived By Incompetent Idiots

1.24.07 Washington Post

Our plan for stability in Iraq is to bolster whichever Shiite administration governs the country, no matter its closeness to Iran, in the groundless hope that it will establish nonsectarian order.

Our plan for stability in the region is to enlist Sunni states to contain Iran.

These plans cancel each other out.

We are stuck backing an Iran-friendly Shiite sectarian regime in Iraq, even as we plan to spend hundreds of millions in aid to the Lebanese army to fend off the Shiite sectarian forces of Hezbollah, and even as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice scuttles from one Sunni state to the next in an attempt to build a firewall around Iran.

This is foreign policy as nonsense, as the American people have apparently figured out.

Cornered Rats: Approach And Apprehend With Care



**The traitors Bush and Cheney walk to the Oval Office upon return to the White House.
(AFP/File/Mandel Ngan)**

Conservative Think Tank Says Bush A Lying Stack Of Shit About Risk Of Al-Qaida Basing In Iraq

1.26.07 San Diego Union-Tribune

The notion of al-Qaida using Iraq as a sanctuary if the United States withdraws is a specter — a canard that the perpetrators of the current catastrophe use to frighten people into supporting a fatally flawed, and seemingly endless, nation-building debacle, writes a Cato Institute officer and a co-author of "Exiting Iraq: Why the U.S. Must End the Military Occupation and Renew the War against al-Qaeda."

At best, al-Qaida could hope for a tenuous presence in predominantly Sunni areas of the country while being incessantly stalked and harassed by government forces — and probably hostile Iraqi Sunnis as well. That doesn't exactly sound like a reliable base of operations for attacks on America.

Reports From Iraq Says Bush A Lying Stack Of Shit About Iranian “Advanced Weaponry” Going To Iraqi Resistance

1.23.07 Los Angeles Times

In his speech this month outlining the new U.S. strategy in Iraq, President Bush promised to "seek out and destroy" Iranian networks that he said were providing "advanced weaponry and training to our enemies." He is expected to strike a similar note in tonight's State of the Union speech.

For all the aggressive rhetoric, however, the Bush administration has provided scant evidence to support these claims.

Nor have reporters traveling with U.S. troops seen extensive signs of Iranian involvement.

During a recent sweep through Diyala, a rugged province along the border between the two nations and a stronghold of Sunni insurgents, a single Iranian machine gun turned up among dozens of arms caches U.S. troops uncovered.

Out Of Control Bush Traitor Says There Is No Right To Habeas Corpus In The Constitution

"If there's no habeas corpus, and if the government wants to pick you or me off the street and hold us indefinitely, how do we get our release?"

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes: Pretty soon they'll say the Constitution doesn't guarantee free speech.

January 24, 2007 Bob Egelko, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer [Excerpts]

One of the Bush administration's most far-reaching assertions of government power was revealed quietly last week when Attorney General Alberto Gonzales testified that habeas corpus -- the right to go to federal court and challenge one's imprisonment -- is not protected by the Constitution.

"The Constitution doesn't say every individual in the United States or every citizen is hereby granted or assured the right of habeas," Gonzales told Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing Jan. 17.

Gonzales acknowledged that the Constitution declares "habeas corpus shall not be suspended unless ... in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it." But he insisted that "there is no express grant of habeas in the Constitution."

Specter was incredulous, asking how the Constitution could bar the suspension of a right that didn't exist -- a right, he noted, that was first recognized in medieval England as a shield against the king's power to dispatch troublesome subjects to royal dungeons.

Later in the hearing, Gonzales described habeas corpus as "one of our most cherished rights" and noted that Congress had protected that right in the 1789 law that established the federal court system.

But he never budged from his position on the absence of constitutional protection -- a position that seemingly would leave Congress free to reduce habeas corpus rights or repeal them altogether.

But critics on both ends of the ideological spectrum said the attorney general was claiming a broader and more chilling power.

"This is the key protection that people have if they're held in violation of the law," said Erwin Chemerinsky, a Duke University law professor who has criticized the administration's actions on civil liberties.

"If there's no habeas corpus, and if the government wants to pick you or me off the street and hold us indefinitely, how do we get our release?"

If Gonzales' view prevailed, Kmiec said, "one of the basic protections of human liberty against the powers of the state would be embarrassingly absent from our constitutional system."

Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Says Bush Regime Lied About Halt To Spying On U.S. Citizens

1.24.07 Los Angeles Times

The new chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee rejected the Bush administration's claim that it had brought a controversial domestic spying program into compliance with the law, saying he wanted strict new rules requiring the government to obtain a separate warrant every time it places a wiretap on a U.S. resident.

Bush's Spies Running Out Of Electricity

January 26, 2007 Baltimore Sun

The National Security Agency's impending electricity shortfall is "sort of a national catastrophe," Sen. John D. Rockefeller, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said.

NSA, which spies on American citizens, expects its power demands to exceed its supply within the next two years — an issue it has been aware of since the late 1990s.

The State Of Maine Overwhelmingly Defies The Bush Regime: No National ID Cards For Them;

Other States Moving Into Opposition Also

Jan 26 2007 By Declan McCullagh, CNET Networks, Inc.

Maine overwhelmingly rejected federal requirements for national identification cards on Thursday, marking the first formal state opposition to controversial legislation scheduled to go in effect for Americans next year.

Both chambers of the Maine legislature approved a resolution saying the state flatly "refuses" to force its citizens to use driver's licenses that comply with digital ID standards, which were established under the 2005 Real ID Act. It asks the U.S. Congress to repeal the law.

The vote represents a political setback for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Republicans in Washington, D.C., which have argued that nationalized ID cards for all Americans would help in the fight against terrorists.

"I have faith that the Democrats in Congress will hear this from many states and will find a way to repeal or amend this in the coming months," House Majority Leader Hannah Pingree, a Democrat, said in a telephone interview after the vote. "It's not only a huge federal mandate, but it's a huge mandate from the federal government asking us to do something we don't have any interest in doing."

The Real ID Act says that, starting around May 2008, Americans will need a federally approved ID card--a U.S. passport will also qualify--to travel on an airplane, open a bank account, collect Social Security payments or take advantage of nearly any government service.

States will have to conduct checks of their citizens' identification papers, and driver's licenses likely will be reissued to comply with Homeland Security requirements.

The votes in Maine on the resolution were nonpartisan. It was approved by a 34-to-0 vote in the state Senate and by a 137-to-4 vote in the House of Representatives.

Other states are debating similar measures. Bills pending in Georgia, Massachusetts, Montana and Washington state express varying degrees of opposition to the Real ID Act.

Montana's is one of the strongest. The legislature held a hearing on Wednesday on a bill that says "The state of Montana will not participate in the implementation of the Real ID Act of 2005" and directs the state motor vehicle department "not to implement the provisions."



1-26-07 THE PHILADELPHIA MORNING NEWS. ONLINE PRESS SYNDICATE.

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

General Strike Against Bush Ally Closes Down Lebanon



A Hizbullah supporter brings a tyre to add to the burning blockade of a block a street in Beirut's southern suburbs. Photograph: Haitham Mussawi/AFP/Getty Images

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in. She writes: The Lebanese unions have taken action and there has been a big day of protests. Most of the fighting, injury, and death has occurred in Christian areas where there has been fierce fighting.

[Siniora, firm in the knowledge Bush is supporting him, refuses to resign.]

January 23, 2007 Clancy Chassay in Beirut, Guardian Unlimited & Al Jazeera & January 24, 2007 By Rym Ghazal, Daily Star staff

Dozens of protesters were wounded today as Lebanese opposition supporters took to the streets to impose a nationwide strike and effectively shut down the country in its latest attempt to force the government's resignation.

In Beirut, fires raged at many major junctions and thick plumes of smoke blackened the crisp winter sky above the city's largely silenced streets. Supporters of the mainly Shia and Christian opposition had gathered at dawn to set up roadblocks using parked cars and by setting fire to tyres and scrap vehicles.

At flashpoints throughout the country, strikers clashed with the army and pro-government supporters. Security sources reported a number of separate shooting incidents in various parts of Lebanon.

They said at least four people were wounded during a firefight between opposition and pro-government crowds in the northern Christian village of Halba, while in the ancient Christian town of Byblos, a gunman fired on protesters wounding three people before soldiers arrested him. Another three opposition protesters were wounded in separate shootings in other parts of the country, and more than 20 people were hurt in scuffles, especially in Christian areas.

The embattled cabinet had warned that the army, which has remained neutral since the start of the opposition's campaign, would fire on demonstrators if necessary. But pro-government leaders today denounced the strike today as a "coup attempt", and criticised the army and security forces for failing to prevent opposition supporters from shutting roads.

In some areas of Beirut and on a highway to the north, Lebanese soldiers, under strict orders not to use force, fired into the air to keep stone-throwing crowds apart.

Scuffles broke out between army and supporters of Christian opposition leader, Michel Aoun, along stretches of Lebanon's main highway in the north of the country as the army used sticks to clear crowds of protestors and let the traffic through.

Elsewhere, rigid lines of army and police forces faced off against angry protestors, many holding their hands over their noses and mouths against the acrid black smoke swirling around them.

Many of the clashes pitched Christians against each other. Protestors manning the makeshift roadblocks were supporters of Mr Aoun facing off against army troops and supporters of the government. Supporters of the Shia opposition parties Hizbullah and

Amal remained largely in areas under their control and conducted monitoring operations to ensure their constituents observed the strike.

On the outskirts of Beirut, opposition supporter Ali Jaffer held a rag to his mouth and nose and said the protestors would stay on the streets and keep the fires raging until the government resigned. "It has come to this, they (the government) will not listen to peaceful demonstration."

After a lull during Christmas festivities, the opposition, led by Mr Aoun and the Hizbullah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, resumed its campaign to secure a national unity government that would give them veto powers over key decisions.

The strike comes days before Lebanon's prime minister, Fouad Siniora, is due to appear at a major international donors conference in Paris to secure much needed aid for a country struggling to recover from last summer's devastating war with Israel.

The opposition rejects the planned aid package, insisting it will worsen the country's \$40bn (£20.1bn) debt and push more of the country's utilities into foreign hands.

The opposition suspended the strike and lifted roadblocks across Lebanon on Tuesday evening, according to a senior opposition source.

The source said the decision to suspend the action came after agreement from "various opposition forces" including Hezbollah, the country's leading Shia party.

Rula Amin, Al Jazeera's correspondent in Beirut, said the opposition's decision to end the strike did not necessarily mean that future action could be ruled out.

She said: "The opposition is sending out a very strong message that government should understand.

"If things are not resolved they can expect more protests and more of an escalation."

Amin said the Lebanese army's failure to control the protests undermined the power of the government.

"The fact that (the) army could not or would not intervene sent a strong message to the government that it cannot rely on the army to stop any unrest in the future.

Naim Kasseem, Hezbollah's deputy leader, told Al Jazeera: "We will do our utmost to maintain control of ourselves and our supporters but I share with you the concern about the other side, which has no such controls."

"Our campaign will escalate day by day," Suleiman Franjeh, an opposition Christian leader, told al-Manar television. "As long as they won't listen to us, we will not let them rest."

The western-backed government, with support among Sunni and Christian parties, maintains it is legitimate and has said it would welcome back the ministers who resigned.

The US State Department released a statement blaming the opposition for the violence and saying it was "deeply concerned" about Lebanese factions "allied with Syria" that "are trying to use violence, threats and intimidation to impose their political will on Lebanon."

Black clouds billowed over parts of Beirut as opposition supporters set up burning roadblocks on main routes and at entrances to the capital, as well as in other major cities to enforce the strike.

Commuters were stranded and business came to a halt in many districts of the capital.

Security forces made sporadic efforts to open roads but made little headway because of the crowds of protesters.

The army, which has been guarding government offices in central Beirut since the opposition began protesting there has few extra troops to deploy. It is already stretched after moving thousands of men to south Lebanon and the Syrian border following Hezbollah's war with Israel last year.

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)

“The U.S. Could Have Provided Health Insurance For All Uninsured Americans For The Next Half-Century With The Amount It Is Spending In Iraq”

December 26, 2006 by Gary Dorrien, Christian Century [Excerpts]

Today the U.S. is spending \$2 billion per week in Iraq, nearly all of it from emergency spending bills that add up to \$380 billion thus far. The total for Afghanistan is \$100 billion. These figures do not include disability and health payments for returning troops, inducements for soldiers to serve additional deployments, extra pay for reservists and National Guard members, and additional foreign aid to supportive nations.

When these costs are included, along with the Pentagon's unprecedented dependence on expensive private contractors, the bill for five years of involvement in Iraq is expected to run at least \$1.5 trillion, all of it added to the federal debt. Economist Joseph Stiglitz and public finance specialist Linda Bilmes estimate that \$2 trillion is more realistic.

That comes to \$18,000 per household—a far cry from what Americans were told to expect at the outset, when Rumsfeld said the war would cost under \$50 billion, and Paul Wolfowitz said Iraq's oil would finance the nation's reconstruction.

The U.S. could have fixed Social Security or provided health insurance for all uninsured Americans for the next half-century with the amount it is spending in Iraq.

As it is, since the U.S. is borrowing to pay nearly the entire bill, it faces interest costs of approximately \$300 billion for an offensive war of choice.

Meanwhile the country is caught in the classic imperial dilemma of spending immense sums on the military yet lacking enough military to cover its foreign policy.

Received:



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

Current Events

From: goirish
To: GI Special
Sent: January 28, 2007 8:32 AM
Subject: GI Special 2#B33

Just read portions of your article. You desperately need to hire someone with knowledge of world politics and the military. You must also drop the pro-jihadi angle if you wish to be taken seriously. Anyone who follows current events and has a basic understanding of the military could easily discredit this article.

Which then begs the question why did you write this? Who are you hoping to fool?

REPLY

GI Special 2B#33 was issued 8.17.04. So much for following current events. And the articles in that issue were reprinted from other publications, as each one clearly shows. So much for "writing this."

Which then begs the question why did you write this? Who are you hoping to fool?

T

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

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