

GI SPECIAL 5B4:



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

**“Soldiers Already There
Say It’s A Lost Cause”**

**“What Is Victory Supposed To
Look Like?”**

**“Every Time We Turn Around And Go
In A New Area There’s Somebody
New Waiting To Kill Us”**

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Army 1st Lt. Antonio Hardy took a slow look around the east Baghdad neighborhood that he and his men were patrolling. He grimaced at the sound of gunshots in the distance.

A machine gunner on top of a Humvee scanned the rooftops for snipers.

Some of Hardy's men wondered aloud if they'd get hit by a roadside bomb on the way back to their base.

"To be honest, it's going to be like this for a long time to come, no matter what we do," said Hardy, 25, of Atlanta. "I think some people in America don't want to know about all this violence, about all the killings. The people back home are shielded from it; they get it sugar-coated."

While senior military officials and the Bush administration say the president's decision to send more American troops to pacify Baghdad will succeed, many of the soldiers who're already there say it's a lost cause.

"What is victory supposed to look like?

"Every time we turn around and go in a new area there's somebody new waiting to kill us," said Sgt. 1st Class Herbert Gill, 29, of Pulaski, Tenn., as his Humvee rumbled down a dark Baghdad highway one evening last week.

"Sunnis and Shiites have been fighting for thousands of years, and we're not going to change that overnight."

"Once more raids start happening, they'll (insurgents) melt away," said Gill, who serves with the 1st Infantry Division in east Baghdad. "And then two or three months later, when we leave and say it was a success, they'll come back."

Soldiers interviewed across east Baghdad, home to more than half the city's 8 million people, said the violence is so out of control that while a surge of 21,500 more American troops may momentarily suppress it, the notion that U.S. forces can bring lasting security to Iraq is misguided.

Lt. Hardy and his men of the 2nd Brigade of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Carson, Colo., patrol an area southeast of Sadr City, the stronghold of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

A map in Hardy's company headquarters charts at least 50 roadside bombs since late October, and the lieutenant recently watched in horror as the blast from one killed his Humvee's driver and wounded two other soldiers in a spray of blood and shrapnel.

Soldiers such as Hardy must contend not only with an escalating civil war between Iraq's Sunni and Shiite Muslims, but also with insurgents on both sides who target U.S. forces.

"We can go get into a firefight and empty out ammo, but it doesn't accomplish much," said Pvt. 1st Class Zach Clouser, 19, of York, Pa. "This isn't our war - we're just in the middle."

Almost every foot soldier interviewed during a week of patrols on the streets and alleys of east Baghdad said that Bush's plan would halt the bloodshed only temporarily.

The soldiers cited a variety of reasons, including incompetence or corruption among Iraqi troops, the complexities of Iraq's sectarian violence and the lack of Iraqi public support, a cornerstone of counterinsurgency warfare.

“They can keep sending more and more troops over here, but until the people here start working with us, it's not going to change,” said Sgt. Chance Oswald, 22, of Tulsa, Okla.

Bush's initiative calls for American soldiers in Baghdad to take positions in outposts throughout the capital, paired up with Iraqi police and soldiers.

Few of the U.S. soldiers interviewed, however, said they think Iraqi forces can operate effectively without American help.

Their officers were more optimistic.

[The reader is spared the inane bullshit babbled by the ass-kissing, promotion seeking liars in command. T]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

California Sgt. Killed In Bayji



Sgt. William M. Sigua, 21, of Los Altos Hills, Calif., who died Jan. 31, 2007, of wounds he suffered when his unit came in contact with small arms enemy fire during combat

operations in Baiji, Iraq. Sigua served as an infantry squad leader with the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

U.S. Marine And Sailor Killed In Anbar

2.2.07 Reuters

ANBAR PROVINCE - A U.S. Marine and a U.S. sailor died on Thursday from wounds sustained in an attack by insurgents in Anbar, the U.S. military said.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



11.25.06: US soldiers inspect the site where a car bomb exploded close to a police station in Mosul. (AFP/Mujahed Mohammed)

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed In Anbar

2/3/2007 U.S. Department of Defense News Release 07-01-03C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - Two Soldiers assigned to Multi-National Force - West died Feb. 2 from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

OSU Grad Dies In Iraq



Sgt. Sean Patrick Fennerty

January 22, 2007 By THERESA HOGUE, Gazette-Times reporter

An Oregon State University graduate was killed Saturday in Iraq when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle. Sgt. Sean Patrick Fennerty of Portland died near Al Anbar Province during combat operations.

Fennerty, 25, was a history major and a 2004 graduate of OSU. He was also a member of Sigma Pi Fraternity, where he was known as a peacekeeper and a steady friend.

“Our fraternity was deeply saddened to hear the news of our brother Sean’s death,” said fellow Sigma Pi member Collin Brooks. “He was a good man and very well respected.”

Fennerty was born Feb. 2, 1981 in San Diego into a military family. After spending his childhood traveling with his family, he graduated from Jesuit High School in Portland in 1999.

After graduating from OSU, he joined the U.S. Army as an airborne soldier and was stationed at Ft. Richardson, Alaska, with the 25th Infantry Division.

On his MySpace page, which was filled with loving tributes from friends and family members, Fennerty talked about his future after the Army. He said he was torn between pursuing a master’s degree and becoming a history teacher, or running off to Colorado to be a ski bum. He also considered becoming an officer.

“A simple quiet life is all I hope to achieve and I’m well on my way to achieving it,” he wrote. “After doing a bit of studying and traveling, I decided to join the Army and don’t

know whether it's a lifelong thing or just another stint I get bored with and move on to the next challenge."

Friends described Fennerty as fiercely loyal, with a memorable smile. He loved skiing, fishing and spending time with his friends.

He is survived by his mother, Mo, father, Brian, sisters Kelly and Colleen and brother Conor.

TROOP NEWS

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



U.S. Army Pfc. Shawn Falter is buried with full military honors in Homer, N.Y., Jan. 31, 2007. Falter and three other soldiers were killed in Iraq Jan. 20, 2007. (AP Photo/Kevin Rivoli)

Iraq Veterans Against the War hosts... A BENEFIT HAPPY HOUR

Come support your local chapter of IVAW and hear about the amazing work we are doing to bring the troops home now!

WHEN:
Sunday, February 18th 5pm-Midnight
(President's Day weekend)

WHERE:
Rocky Sullivan's at 129 Lexington.
Between 28th and 29th Street, a block away from
the 6 train.
212-725-3871

ADMISSION: Donation of \$15 at the door includes happy hour prices all night.

PROGRAM:

John McDonagh Host of Radio Free Eirean and periodic veterans show on WBAI.
Iraq veterans speak out.
Iraqi testimonial read by a member of Adalah-NY Middle East Crisis Committee.
Political comedy - Randy Credico and others.

Music at 8pm.

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

**“Without Examining The Evidence
That These Laws Were Violated, How
Can Lt. Watada Be Charged With
Making Disparaging Statements?”**

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

Lt. General James Dubik
Commanding General Fort Lewis
1 Corps Building 2025 Stop 1
Fort Lewis, WA 98433

Phone 253-967-1110

Lieutenant General Dubik,

I am compelled to write to you once again on behalf of 1st Lt. Ehren Watada and the Constitution of the United States.

I have followed his case with some interest and am troubled to see that he is being denied his legal rights as defined in the law.

The first is the right to freedom of speech.

It can hardly be described as conduct unbecoming of an officer to make statements, public or private, against a war for which there is substantive evidence of its illegality.

On the contrary, according to the oath he has taken, the statements and actions for which Lt. Watada is being charged are rightly regarded as in keeping with that oath to defend the Constitution, which indisputably takes precedence over loyalty to the commander-in-chief.

There is irrefutable evidence that members of the Bush administration, chiefly the Vice President and perhaps the President himself, lied to the Congress in order to secure a resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq. As you know, the sole power to declare war rests with the Legislature, not the Executive.

Therefore, presenting disinformation to the Congress in order to obtain a resolution authorizing military force is an illegal act.

We are also bound by international law not to initiate a war unless authorized by the U.N. Security Council or facing an immanent national security threat.

Without examining the evidence that these laws were violated, how can Lt. Watada be charged with making disparaging statements?

The ruling to deny the defendant witnesses is also a denial of his constitutional rights. Amendment V of the Constitution of the United States explicitly states that no person shall be "deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

Article VI further delineates this, specifying that "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense."

The prosecution has argued that the political nature of Lt. Watada's argument is irrelevant to the case, but in fact this is misleading.

His argument is not of a political nature but is rather a legal challenge.

As noted earlier, substantive evidence is openly available to defend the argument that the Bush administration's decision to go to war was based on lies rather than inaccurate intelligence. In my last letter I cited first-hand references for this, including Scott Ritter,

former Marine intelligence officer and U.N. weapons inspector; Karen Kwiatkowski, an Air Force officer who worked in the Vice President's Office of Special Plans (OSP), which was used to filter manipulated intelligence to the Congress; Tyler Drumheller, former head of CIA covert operations in Europe, et al.

You are legally obligated to examine this evidence for yourself before determining his innocence or guilt.

Denying him his constitutional right to defense witnesses and charging him with conduct unbecoming of an officer without examining the veracity of the statements for which he is being charged would be a travesty of justice.

Understandably you have an interest in maintaining good order and discipline in the military and statements questioning the legality of a war the U.S. military is involved in is inherently prejudicial to that.

I would argue that denying the defendant his rights is more likely to inspire further skepticism and dissent rather than suppress it.

I reiterate that your overriding duty is to the Constitution.

It may not be your responsibility to challenge the legality of the war but it is your duty to give your soldiers a fair and impartial trial, regardless of the political pressure exerted on you.

Sincerely,

**Thomas B[XXXX]
United States Air Force**

**5 SHORT ONE-ACTS DEPICTING THE
EFFECT OF
THE WARS IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ
ON OUR TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES
PLAY READING**

**Friday, February 16, 2007, 7-9 pm
Manhattan Plaza
400 W. 43rd St.
The Ellington Room (2nd Floor)**

Written by

Alan Stolzer

**Directed by
Martin Treat***

PLAYS:

SISTERS OF A SORT

**Read by: Margaret Montgomery, Ellen Martin
& Sally Davidson**

PROSTHESIS

Read by: Gina Musumeci & Sam Masotto

ISSUES OF A SERGEANT

Read by: Ellen Martin & Martin Treat

Intermission

EGGCRACKER

Read by: Gina Musumeci & Sally Davidson

HOMEFOLKS

Read by: Gina Musumeci, Martin Treat & Sam Masotto

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Guerrillas Stage Armed Show Of Force In Beiji

MSNBC News Services 02/03/07

In Beiji, 155 miles north of Baghdad, a convoy of 15 cars carrying guerrillas brandishing weapons and banners declaring the establishment of an "Islamic State" drove through the town while businessmen quickly closed their stores for fear of trouble.

The show of force followed the Iraqi government's announcement on Tuesday that it had arrested a provincial resistance leader and broken a major cell in the area.

Resistance Storms Security Checkpoints At Samara

1.2.07 (Xinhua)

Guerrillas stormed two security checkpoints outside the Iraqi City of Samarra early on Saturday, killing ten security members and wounding nine others, provincial police source said.

A group attacked a police checkpoint on the northern entrance of Samarra city, killing six policemen and wounding six others, said a police source from the Salahudin province where the city located.

Meanwhile, another group of armed men attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint on the southern entrance of the city and traded fire with the soldiers, killing four soldiers and wounding three others, the source added.

Three attackers were also killed, according to the source.

The city authorities have imposed curfew on the city while hundreds of soldiers and policemen deployed in and around the city searching for the attackers.

Survivors Of Deadly Truck Bombing Stone Collaborator Cops

03/02/2007 BAGHDAD (AFP) & VOI

A bomber blew up his Mercedes truck in a Baghdad market killing at least 130 people in the second deadliest attack since the US-led invasion of 2003.

An AFP photographer said survivors threw stones at police who prevented ambulances from reaching the scene.

Police transported the victims in all available police vehicles, but one policeman who was evacuating wounded in his blood-spattered pick-up truck was beaten by survivors.

Assorted Resistance Action

02/03/07 MSNBC News Services & Reuters

In Mosul, northwest of Kirkuk, armed insurgents and Iraqi forces fought for several hours and authorities imposed a temporary curfew on the city.

Police said insurgents killed two Iraqi soldiers. Police spokesman Brig. Abdul Karim al-Jubouri said Iraqi security forces backed by U.S. air power were moving in.

Guerillas killed a policeman in the small town of Dhuluiya, 70 km (45 miles) north of Baghdad, 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

A General With A Grip On Reality: [Ret'd Of Course]

**“No Doubt A Withdrawal Will Leave A
Terrible Aftermath In Iraq, But We
Cannot Avoid That”
“We Can Only Make It Worse By Waiting
Until We Are Forced To Withdraw”**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. **He writes: I can see why this guy is retired. He actually knows what the fuck is going on (from a ruling class perspective) and the rest of his class is still in total denial.**]

To date, I have seen no awareness that any political leader in this country has gone beyond tactical proposals to offer a different strategic approach to limiting the damage in a war that is turning out to be the greatest strategic disaster in our history.

January 24, 2007 By Lt. General WILLIAM E. ODOM (US Army Ret.), Text of testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 18 January 2007, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

In addition to the president, a number of people and groups have supported increased US force levels.

Just for purposes of analysis, let us suppose we had unlimited numbers of US troops to deploy in Iraq. Would that change my assessment?

In principle, if two or three million troops were deployed there with the latitude to annihilate all resistance without much attention to collateral civilian casualties and human rights, order might well be temporarily reestablished under a reign of US terror.

The problem we would then face is that we would be opposed not only by 26 million Iraqis but also by millions of Arabs and Iranians surrounding Iraq, peoples angered by our treatment of Muslims and Arabs.

I never cease to be amazed at our military commanders' apparent belief that the "order of battle" of the opposition forces they face are limited to Iraq.

Once the invasion began, Muslims in general and Arabs in particular could be expected to take sides against the United States.

In other words, we went to war not just against the Iraqi forces and insurgent groups but also against a large part of the Arab world, scores and scores of millions.

Most Arab governments, of course, are neutral or somewhat supportive, but their publics in growing numbers are against us.

Training the Iraqi military and police force has been proposed repeatedly as a way to bring stability to Iraq and allow US forces to withdraw.

Recently, new variants, such as embedding US troops within Iraqi units, have been offered. The Iraq Study Group made much of this technique. I know of no historical precedent to suggest that any of them will succeed.

The problem is not the competency of Iraqi forces. It is political consolidation and gaining the troops' loyalties to the government and their commanders as opposed to their loyalties to sectarian leaders, clans, families, and relatives.

For what political authority are Iraqi soldiers and police willing to risk their lives?

To the American command? What if American forces depart?

Won't they be called traitors for supporting the invaders and occupiers?

What about to the leaders of independent militias?

Here soldiers can find strong reasons for loyal service: to defend their fellow sectarians, families, and relatives.

And that is why the government cannot disband them. It has insufficient loyal troops to do so.

An infusion of new funds for reconstruction: A shortage of funds has not been the cause of failed reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Administrative capacity to use funds effectively was and remains the primary obstacle. Even support programs carried out by American contractors for US forces have yielded mixed results. Insurgent attacks on the projects have provoked transfers of construction funds to security measures, which have also failed.

A weak or non-existent government administrative capacity allows most of the money to be squandered.

Moreover, a large part of that money will find its way into the hands of insurgents and sectarian militias. That is exactly what happened in Vietnam, and it has been happening in Iraq.

New and innovative counterinsurgency tactics: The cottage industry of counterinsurgency tactics is old and deceptive. When the US military has been periodically tasked to reinvent them the last great surge in that industry was at the JFK School in Fort Bragg in the 1960's it has no choice but to pretend that counterinsurgency tactics can succeed where no political consolidation in the government has yet been achieved.

New counterinsurgency tactics cannot save Iraq today because they are designed without account for the essence of any “internal war,” whether an insurgency or a civil war.

Such wars are about “who will rule,” and who will rule depends on “who can tax” and build an effective state apparatus down to the village level.

Providing funding and forces to give an embattled regime more “time” to gain adequate strength is like asking a drunk to drink more whiskey in order to sober up.

The Iraq Study Group: The report of this group should not be taken as offering a new or promising strategy for dealing with Iraq.

It does not concede that the war, as it was conceived and continues to be fought, is not “winnable.” It rejects the rapid withdrawal of US forces as unacceptable.

No doubt a withdrawal will leave a terrible aftermath in Iraq, but we cannot avoid that.

We can only make it worse by waiting until we are forced to withdraw.

In the meantime, we prevent ourselves from escaping the paralysis imposed on us by the war, unable to redefine our war aims, which have served Iranian and al Qaeda interests instead of our own.

Any new strategy that does realistically promise to achieve regional stability at a cost we can prudently bear, and does not regain the confidence and support of our allies, is doomed to failure.

To date, I have seen no awareness that any political leader in this country has gone beyond tactical proposals to offer a different strategic approach to limiting the damage in a war that is turning out to be the greatest strategic disaster in our history.

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.

“Improve The Morale Of All Americans”

“Let’s Start A Campaign To Send The Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld Team To Iraq In 2008”

[Thanks to John Gingerich, who sent this in.]

6/16/2006 By Bill Ferguson, Knight Ridder-Newspapers Salt Lake Tribune

Every great career eventually comes to an end, and when you're the president of these United States, you only get eight years (at most) to accomplish everything you set out to do.

Then you're an ex-president for the rest of your life.

I'll bet that ex-presidents, like most retired people, find it to be something of a shock to have all that time on their hands when they leave the working world.

So they find things to do. They work on their memoirs. They build libraries. They give speeches. They support their favorite charitable causes.

But what about our current president? His term will be up before he knows it, and then it's back to private life.

I'm afraid the transition will be especially difficult for George W. He is a man of action, and I worry about how he'll adjust to a life out of the spotlight.

I think that we, as a nation, owe Bush more than the customary parting gifts of an enormous pension and round-the-clock Secret Service protection when he leaves office. I think we can do better for him.

I think we should put him to work, and I know just where he ought to go.

Iraq.

There is no question that Iraq will be the legacy of President Bush's tenure, and there is also no doubt that there will still be a lot of work to do there when he leaves office.

I believe we should allow Bush an opportunity to stick with the job even after his term expires.

The next president should appoint George W. Bush to be a special envoy to Iraq and charge him with the responsibility to oversee all American interests there, advise the new Iraqi government, and maintain the morale of American troops who are carrying out the war effort.

The position should be a permanent one, and he would not leave until the "hard work" of helping Iraq to establish a working democratic government has been accomplished. Or until he leaves this mortal coil. Whichever comes first.

But surely he needs some trusted advisors by his side at all times, and the first two names that immediately spring to mind are Dick Cheney and Don Rumsfeld.

These men have been instrumental in the planning and execution of the Iraq campaign from the beginning, and I can only imagine how much more effective their work could be if they were onsite 24/7 right where the action is, getting their hands dirty in the cause of spreading freedom to that dark corner of the world.

I know this assignment would be dangerous. The three senior freedom fighters would be huge targets for the forces of evil in Iraq, and there is a real possibility that one or more of them might meet with an untimely demise in that chaotic environment.

But as Bush has reminded us time and again, the price is high but our cause is just. Freedom is not free.

I expect that all three men would be ready and willing to undertake their assignments in the battle zone despite the extreme danger they would face.

This would be a chance to show the world that they are willing to put their own lives, and not just the lives of others, on the line for what they know to be right.

So let's start a campaign to send the Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld team to Iraq in 2008. They deserve the opportunity to "finish the job" in Iraq, and I think that the sight of the three of them tooling around the streets of Baghdad in a lightly armored Humvee would do a lot to improve the morale of all Americans.

This Jargon Disease Is Choking Language: In The Military Sex-Speak Of The Pentagon, Iraq Would Endure A 'Spike' Of Violence

13 January 2007 By Patrick Cockburn, The Independent (UK)

I once received an invitation to lecture at "The University of Excellence". I forget where this particular academy was located - Jordan, I think - but I recall very clearly that the suggested subject of my talk was as incomprehensible to me as it would, no doubt, have been to any audience.

Invitation rejected.

Only this week I received another request, this time to join “ethics practitioners” to “share evidence-based practices on dealing with current ethical practices” around the world.

What on earth does this mean? Why do people write like this?

The word “excellence”, of course, has long ago been devalued by the corporate world - its favourite expression has long been “Quality and Excellence”, invariably accompanied by a “mission statement”, that claim to self-importance dreamed up by Robin Cook when foreign secretary - swiftly ditched when he decided to go on selling jets to Indonesia - and thereafter by every export company and amateur newspaper in the world.

There is something repulsive about this vocabulary, an aggressive language of superiority in which “key players” can “interact” with each other, can “impact” society, “outsource” their business - or “downsize” the number of their employees.

They need “feedback” and “input”. They think “outside the box” or “push the envelope”. They have a “work space”, not a desk. They need “personal space” - they need to be left alone - and sometimes they need “time and space”, a commodity much in demand when marriages are failing.

These lies and obfuscations are infuriating.

“Downsizing” employees means firing them; “outsourcing” means hiring someone else to do your dirty work. “Feedback” means “reaction”, “input” means “advice”. Thinking “outside the box” means, does it not, to be “imaginative”?

Being a “key player” is a form of self-aggrandisement - which is why I never agree to be a “key speaker”, especially if this means participation in a “workshop”.

To me a workshop means what it says. When I was at school, the workshop was a carpentry shop wherein generations of teachers vainly tried to teach Fisk how to make a wooden chair or table that did not collapse the moment it was completed. But today, a “workshop” - though we mustn't say so - is a group of tiresome academics yakking in the secret language of anthropology or talking about “cultural sensitivity” or “core issues” or “tropes”.

Presumably these are same folk who invented the UN's own humanitarian-speak. Of the latter, my favourite is the label awarded to any desperate refugee who is prepared (for a pittance) to persuade their fellow victims to abide by the UN's wishes - to abandon their tents and return to their dangerous, war-ravaged homes.

These luckless advisers are referred to by the UN as “social animators”.

It is a disease, this language, caught by one of our own New Labour ministers on the BBC last week when he talked about “environmental externalities”.

Presumably, this meant “the weather”. Similarly, an architect I know warned his client of the effect of the “aggressive saline environment” on a house built near the sea.

If this advice seems obscure, we might be “conflicted” about it - who, I ask myself, invented the false reflexive verb? - or, worse still, “stressed”.

In northern Iraq in 1991, I was once ordered by a humanitarian worker from the “International Rescue Committee” to leave the only room I could find in the wrecked town of Zakho because it had been booked for her fellow workers - who were very “stressed”. Poor souls, I thought. They were stressed, “stressed out”, trying - no doubt - to “come to terms” with their predicament, attempting to “cope”.

This is the language of therapy, in which frauds, liars and cheats are always trying to escape.

Thus President Clinton’s spokesman claimed after his admission of his affair with Monica Lewinsky that he was “seeking closure”. Like so many mendacious politicians, Clinton felt - as Lord Blair of Kut al-Amara will no doubt feel about his bloodbath in Iraq once he leaves No 10 - the need to “move on”.

In the same way, our psycho-babble masters and mistresses - yes, there is a semantic problem there, too, isn’t there? - announce after wars that it is a time for “healing”, the same prescription doled out to families which are “dysfunctional”, who live in a “dystopian” world.

Yes, dystopian is a perfectly good word - it is the opposite of utopian - but like “perceive” and “perception” (words once much loved by Jonathan Dimbleby) - they have become fashionable because they appear enigmatic.

Some newly popular phrases, such as “tipping point” - used about Middle East conflicts when the bad guys are about to lose - or “big picture” - when moralists have to be reminded of the greater good - are merely fashionable.

Others are simply odd. I always mixed up “bonding” with “bondage” and “quality time” with a popular assortment of toffees.

I used to think that “increase” was a perfectly acceptable word until I discovered that in the military sex-speak of the Pentagon, Iraq would endure a “spike” of violence until a “surge” of extra troops arrived in Baghdad.

All this is different, of course, from the non-sexual “no-brainers” with which we now have to “cope” - “author” for “authoress”, for example, “actor” for “actress” - or the fearful linguistic lengths we must go to in order to avoid offence to Londoners who speak Cockney: as well all know - though only those of us, of course, who come from the Home Counties - these people speak “Estuary” English.

It’s like those poor Americans in Detroit who, in fear and trepidation, avoided wishing me a happy Christmas. “Happy Holiday!” they chorused until I roared “Happy Christmas” back.

In Beirut, by the way, we all wish each other “Happy Christmas” and “Happy Eid”, whether our friends are Muslim or Christian. Is this really of “major importance”, as an Irish television producer once asked a colleague of a news event?

I fear it is.

For we are not using words any more.

We are utilising them, speaking for effect rather than meaning, for escape.

We are becoming - as The New Yorker now describes children who don't care if they watch films on the cinema screen or on their mobile phones - "platform agnostic".

What, Polonius asked his lord, was he reading? "Words, words, words," Hamlet replied.

If only...

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



An Iraqi citizen is forced at gunpoint and stand outside in winter as foreign occupation soldiers the U.S. search her home near Youssifiyah, 12 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq

Feb. 3, 2007. Iraqi citizens can be arrested, beaten or killed by the foreign troops if they resist the searches. They have no right observe the search to see what the foreign troops take from their homes. This is called "building democracy." (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]



1-17-07 THE PHOENIX COURIER, INVERTED PRESS/SYGMA

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Senators Unite To Bash Surge and
Fund It Simultaneously:**

Democrat Leaders Agree With Bush: Kill More U.S. Troops And Iraqis

[Thanks to Phil G, Pham Binh, and Andrew J.

[Andrew J writes This is a very concrete example of the Democrats' strategy – instead of going forward with the lame non-binding resolution opposing the surge as it was first drafted, they decided to mute the language even more and agree to protect funding for those very troops they say should not go to Iraq.]

February 2, 2007 by Aaron Glantz, Inter Press Service & February 1, 2007 By Shailagh Murray and Jonathan Weisman, Washington Post Staff Writers

Senior Congressional Democrats are brushing off questions about cutting off funding for the Iraq war, and indicate they will do little to forcefully stop President George W. Bush from sending 21,500 additional U.S. troops to Iraq.

On Wednesday, after returning from a trip to Iraq, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi sidestepped questions over whether she would try to scuttle Bush's plan to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq, calling it "the one last chance" that the U.S. war in Iraq will "succeed".

Likewise, Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid of Nevada said he would focus his energies on passing a bipartisan, symbolic resolution opposing the so-called "surge" -- a move President Bush has already said he would ignore.

Democratic and Republican opponents of President Bush's troop-buildup plan joined forces last night behind the nonbinding resolution with the broadest bipartisan backing: a Republican measure from Sen. John W. Warner of Virginia.

The revised resolution would express the Senate's opposition to the troop increase but would vow to protect funding for the troops. The resolution does not include the Democratic language saying the Bush plan is against the national interest, but it also drops an earlier provision by Warner suggesting Senate support for some additional troops.

In both the House and the Senate, Democratic leaders decided to get the largest possible vote, even if it means embracing weaker language than the original Democratic resolution.

Warner revamped his original proposal, both to win over many reluctant Republicans who thought it was too tough and to reassure Democrats who complained he was not being tough enough on the administration.

He added language specifically opposing a cutoff of funding for U.S. troops in a targeted appeal to Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), who had offered an identical separate measure.



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

Lying Rats At Work; **Pretending To Be Against The** **War, Imperial Democrat Feingold** **Says U.S. Troops “Must Remain”** **In Iraq “To Conduct Targeted** **Counter-Terrorism And Training** **Missions”**

February 02, 2007, From a statement by Senator Russ Feingold, Imperial Democrat from Wisconsin

[Feingold is only doing his job, protecting the Empire. The disgusting leaders in the supposed to be anti-war movement pissing their pants with delight over his lying words are doing their job too: making sure the killing of U.S. troops and Iraqis never ends. They are nothing more, nor less, than a pack of foul traitors. T]

Yesterday, I introduced legislation that will prohibit the use of funds to continue the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq six months after enactment. By prohibiting funds after a specific deadline, Congress can force the president to bring our forces out of Iraq and out of harm's way.

This legislation will allow the president adequate time to redeploy our troops safely from Iraq, *and it will make specific exceptions for a limited number of U.S. troops who must remain in Iraq to conduct targeted counter-terrorism and training missions and protect U.S. personnel.*

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)

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Struggle And Progress Go Hand In Hand;

“We Deserve A Strategy Of Confrontation That Connects The Struggle Of Union Members With The Struggle Of All Americans”

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in. UAW stands for United Auto Workers union.]

By Soldier Of Solidarity Gregg Shotwell, Live Bait & Ammo #87,
www.soldiersofsolidarity.com/

Stage whispers about the UAW managing a health care trust fund for GM sent shivers up the spines of the faithful and tears of rage to the eyes of the cynical.

The business of a union is organizing. As it is, UAW bureaucrats couldn't organize a table and four chairs if you gave them a blueprint and a hint: (the legs should touch the floor).

Do we want the sons of hacks administering health care concessions to retirees for GM?

Office rats in union hats will not alter the fact that another layer of bureaucracy will only siphon off more dollars that could go directly to health care.

The buy off would give UAW officials an incentive to support the inefficient status quo at any cost. Any cost to the rank and file, that is. Their own jobs would depend on maintaining private health insurance rather than universal health care.

We have been offered two solutions: shift the cost of health care onto workers or have the unions shift the cost of health care onto workers.

Corporations claim they can't afford the high cost of health care. What makes them think workers' pockets are so much deeper than theirs?

The plot to shift the cost of health care onto workers and retirees is not a cure, it's a symptom of terminal denial. A cost shift (like the robbing of Peter to pay Paul) won't suffice when we all live in the same house.

Privatized health care is a moral hazard neither we nor the companies can afford.

The growing inequality is a prescription for class warfare. Hence the corporations' desire to employ union officials to administer concessions.

While CEOs demand platinum health care plans for themselves and UAW International reps enjoy 100% reimbursement on all out of pocket medical expenses, workers and retirees are expected to shoulder the cost of medical inflation even as their wages decline and their pensions evaporate.

Why should those whose work entails the greatest health hazards receive unequal medical treatment?

Why are CEOs and UAW officials such privileged human beings?

Let them have the country clubs. We want equal access to the hospital, the doctor, and the pharmacy.

Our major competitors in Europe and Japan opted for socialized health care after WW2, but the United States chose to privatize medicine and make insurance dependent on employment.

This patronage system whereby employees received health benefits and pension promises in lieu of raises had a good will return on investment: loyalty. US employers experienced low turnover because of the social contract implicit in employer sponsored health and pension benefits.

But things have changed. The social contract is on a gurney in a deserted hallway one flight above the morgue.

We won't revive the social contract by making concessions. There is no incentive to change as long as employers can shift the cost onto workers. The UAW has advocated for a national solution to the health care crisis for years, but lip service is a poor excuse for thunder and lightning.

Struggle and progress go hand in hand.

Soldiers of Solidarity don't want health care just for ourselves, we want it for everyone.

Cooperation with the corporate agenda to cut benefits and shift the costs onto workers will not save jobs or advance the cause of social justice, it will only delay the inevitable: a health care system that serves everyone equally.

SOS wants everyone to have the same health care benefits that CEOs and union officials enjoy.

The Corporations will not join us in demanding universal health care as long as they can shift the cost onto workers and keep the perks for themselves and their junior partners.

Should workers volunteer to bankrupt themselves to save the company? Or should the companies and the unions together demand a solution that benefits all Americans by leveling the playing field with our European and Japanese competitors?

The UAW has bargained too narrowly for too long.

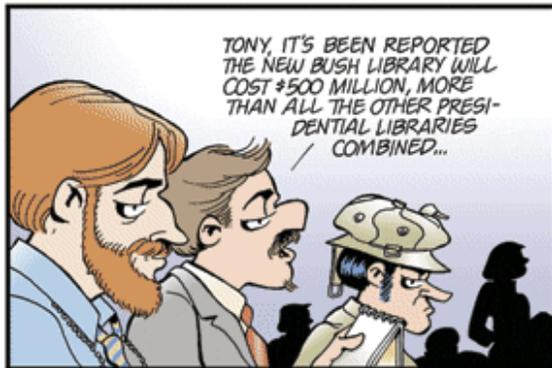
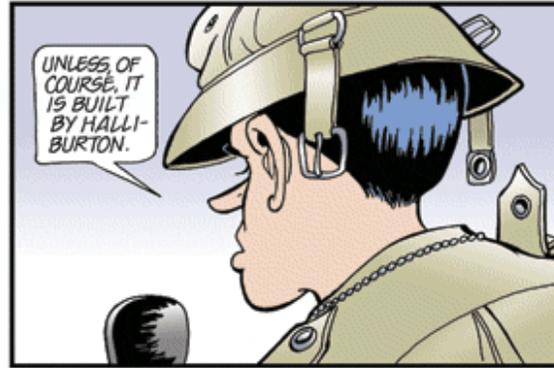
We will succeed in organizing when the needs of all workers and the goals of the union are one and the same.

We deserve a strategy of confrontation that connects the struggle of union members with the struggle of all Americans.

We deserve a strategy of concerted activity that ensures a victory for the union is a victory for everyone.

More concessions is not a comprehensive union solution, it's an unacceptable plea bargain.

"Workers Rights are not defined by Law or Contract. Workers Rights are defined by Struggle. You will Win what you are willing to Fight for. Nothing more."-- G. Shotwell



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

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