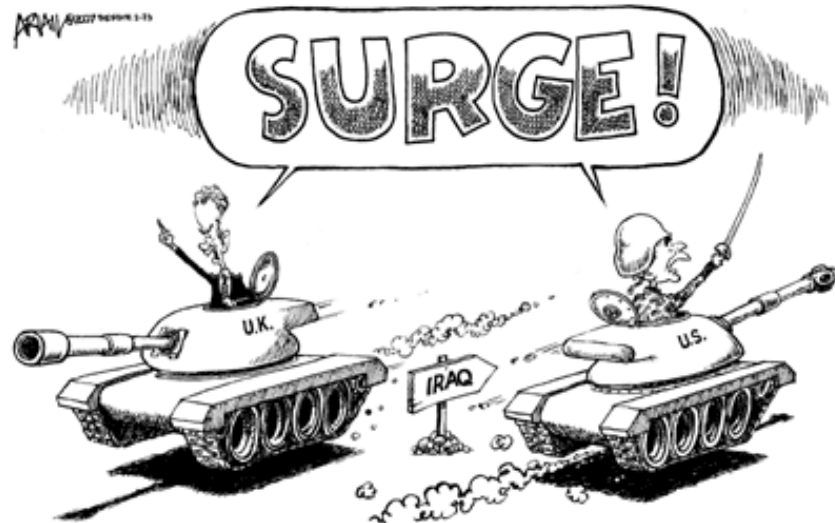


GI SPECIAL 5C1:



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

US SOLDIERS AGAINST IRAQ WAR SEEKING WAY OUT:

**“No One Wanted Evers’s Men
There, And He Could See Why”
“I Couldn’t Be The Tool To Enforce
Policy That I Thought Was
Fundamentally Wrong, If Not A Little
Evil”**



Sgt. Bob Evers

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

February 27, 2007 By Mary Wiltenburg, Der Spiegel [Excerpts]

As criticism of the Iraq war grows at home, some US soldiers abroad are rejecting Bush's mission. On military bases across Germany, many are now seeking a way out through desertion or early discharge.

When he goes underground, he won't tell his mom.

"John," a rangy young soldier with arresting eyebrows, has planned each step carefully. He will spend his leave from an Army base in Germany at home in the northeastern United States, snowboarding, visiting friends, and hanging out with his teenage siblings.

Then he'll disappear. When the military police call his mother and stepfather, the hard-line Bush supporters will be able to say honestly that they don't know where their son is.

Last weekend, shortly before his return to the States, John let DER SPIEGEL in on his plan over cocoa and ham sandwiches in a Berlin cafe. He is one of a growing number of American service members now going AWOL (absent without leave) from units stationed overseas.

Though the US Department of Defense does not keep figures on such cases, a strong indication of their frequency is the number who receive "Chapter 11" discharges through Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and Fort Knox, Kentucky, the main processing centers for those who go missing overseas and turn themselves in, or are arrested, back home.

Between October 2002 and September 2005, the two made an annual average of 1,546 such discharges. Last year the number grew to 1,988, or more than five per day.

John didn't start out a quitter. When he joined the military, he loved the idea of seeing the world. Family members were thrilled by his choice. His stepfather works for an oil company, his uncle for a weapons manufacturer.

In training, though, he had serious qualms. From inside, the Army struck John as brutal, controlling, "like a slavery contract." Iraq, his first war zone, did nothing to quiet his doubts. The communications specialist was sent to a base near Baghdad to repair a phone and Internet hookup that allowed communication between US facilities. John found himself holding a faulty fiberoptic cable labeled "Abu Ghraib."

"I really felt like part of something bad at that point," he says. "I didn't directly have blood on my hands, but I was part of it."

President George W. Bush's call to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq is not only providing ammunition to his political opponents; it is fueling doubts among those doing the fighting.

"Since Bush's speech, we've been swamped with new calls," says Michael Sharp, director of the Military Counseling Network, a non-profit organisation near Heidelberg that helps American soldiers who are considering leaving the service. Last month the group took on 30 new clients, three times its previous average.

Service members say it stands to reason that many people desert overseas. A foreign posting -- 65,000 troops are now stationed in Germany -- is often a major reality-check for soldiers. Many are abroad for the first time, and being far from family, in a country that opposes the war, and halfway to the battlefield "forces you to think about things a lot closer," says former Army Sgt. DeShawn Reed.

In the US, too, groups like Iraq Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Peace are growing.

Nearly 1,600 enlisted soldiers have signed an appeal to the US Congress that reads: "Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price."

There are other ways to break a military contract. Some enlistments end in felonies: drunk driving, illegal drugs. Other service members are discharged for illness, injury, or homosexuality. (Gays and lesbians may not legally disclose their sexual orientation if they wish to serve in the US military.)

Increasingly, soldiers with distinguished records, some a few years from retirement, are seeking discharge or choosing not to re-enlist, forfeiting the opportunity for generous pensions.

These career military men and women say neither money nor pride can justify continuing to fight such a war.

"I knew when I came back that I couldn't do this anymore. I couldn't be the tool to enforce policy that I thought was fundamentally wrong, if not a little evil," says Sgt. Bob Evers, a 14-year Army and Navy veteran now living in the Bavarian hamlet of Schnackenwerth.

"It is absolutely devastating to me to see what we're doing and what we have become."

Evers, 37, is a thoughtful Nebraskan with the manner and historical insights of a political science professor. This was his second Iraq War. As a recent high school graduate, he spent 1991 on a battleship in the Persian Gulf. A decade later, in Kosovo, he saw how people welcomed American troops. "It was what I thought being in the military was all about," he says; one home he visited had photos of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair on the wall.

The Sunni Triangle was an ugly contrast.

No one wanted Evers's men there, and he could see why. Escorting oil trucks up and down roads where families lack electricity and water, "you're doing more harm than good," he says, "and to me that stings."

The son and grandson of military men, Evers joined up to defend his Constitution. Initially, he supported the invasion of Iraq. Before the United Nations, US Secretary of State Colin Powell had staked his reputation on the claim that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

Evers admired the statesman, "and I thought, if Colin Powell said it, it's good enough for me."

But on the ground, where he was responsible for the lives of eight men, where he zipped his best friend up in a body bag and saw things that made him wake up screaming at night, it ceased to be enough.

There were no WMDs, just scared and angry Iraqis.

By the time Evers was wounded on a raid in November 2004 and sent to a military hospital in Landstuhl, he felt the terrible futility of what he had been sent to do.

In the hospital he picked up a biography of Gen. Ludwig Beck.

The former chief of staff of the German Armed Forces publicly resigned five years after the Nazi takeover; he was put to death after an attempt on Hitler's life.

Evers read Beck's words -- "A soldier's duty ends where his knowledge, conscience, and responsibility forbid him to follow a command" -- and thought: Yes it does. He began to criticize the war to trusted friends.

Sympathetic superiors pushed through his medical discharge. Today Evers can walk again, but painfully; his right leg lags behind.

He has started to speak publicly about his experiences. "I believe in all the hokey stuff we tell ourselves about what it means to be American," he told a crowd of expats, activists, and high school students at the German-American Institute in Tübingen recently, "and a democracy doesn't work, and a republic doesn't last, if the public doesn't inform itself."

But soldiers looking for a way out rarely feel heroic. More often, they say, it is a painful choice: the kind you wrestle with alone, in the dead of night, when people who have never had to cut off a friend's legs to get him out of an exploded Humvee are sound asleep.

Chris lies awake most nights. "I just don't know how I'm going to get past this, my whole life," he says, six months back from Iraq. The young California medic lost a great deal in this war. His wife, who got tired of waiting for him to come home; friends who died before his eyes; an untormented mind.

In what feels like a former life, he voted for President Bush. He wouldn't do it again.

"I don't think we've done anything to improve Iraq," he says, "we've just wasted a lot of human lives."

Psychologically, Chris says, he won't make it through another tour in Iraq. Right now he is in a holding pattern, working on and off at his Rhineland base, waiting for his contract to end in March. Hoping to go home, finish school, and get his paramedic's license.

Fearing he will be "stop-lossed," one of the tens of thousands who have completed their service but now must stay another year or more.

If that happens, he doesn't yet know what he'll do.

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, inside the armed services and at home. 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

Baghdad Soldier Killed

2/28/2007 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 07-01-03C

On Feb. 27, an MND-B unit was conducting a joint patrol with the Iraqi national police in order to provide continuous security and reduce the levels of violence in a western urban district of the Iraqi capital when they received small arms fire, killing one Soldier.

British Soldier Killed In Basra

28 Feb 07 Ministry Of Defense

It is with deep regret that the MOD must confirm the death of a British soldier in Iraq as a result of an incident on the morning of 27 February 2007.

The soldier was serving with the 2nd Battalion The Rifles (formerly 1st Battalion Royal Green Jackets). He was on a routine patrol in the Al Maqil district of Basra which was attacked by small arms fire.

The soldier sustained very serious injuries and despite receiving the best possible medical care at a field hospital in theatre, he later died from his wounds.

Cheboygan Co. Man Killed While On Duty In Iraq



Pfc. Justin Paton

02/20/2007 BY SHERI McWHIRTER, Traverse City Record-Eagle

INDIAN RIVER — Sniper fire killed a local soldier in Iraq.

U.S. Army Pfc. Justin Paton, 24, died Saturday while on duty in the war zone, 40 miles north of Baghdad. His parents are Donald and Shelley Paton of Alanson, although they live in Cheboygan County, about halfway between Alanson and Indian River.

“I want everyone to know how wonderful he was,” said Stormy Dickinson, his sister. “We’ve lost someone so important to us, so full of life.”

Justin Paton graduated in 2000 from Inland Lakes High School in Indian River and played football his senior year. He was deployed to Iraq in October as a member of the Army’s 1st Cavalry Division, Delta Company.

Dickinson said her “baby brother” wanted to be a doctor and joined the Army for benefits he would receive under the GI Bill of Rights, which would have paid for his education after he was discharged.

Paton loved to go “two-tracking” and was an avid kayaker.

“He carried his kayak on his car and if he saw something interesting, he’d go right for it,” Dickinson said.

Paton volunteered and then was hired as a patient care technician at Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey before he joined the military.

“He was a fine young man, bright, honest and outgoing,” said Don Killingbeck, principal of Inland Lakes High School and Justin’s former social studies and driver’s education teacher. “He was all heart and he wanted to help people. He wanted to make a difference in people’s lives and he believed in what he was doing in Iraq.”

Paton corresponded with third-grade students at his former school, his nephew’s class. Those children were somber on Monday, Killingbeck said.

“They don’t really understand what happened,” he said. “This is the first time we’ve lowered the flag for one of our own sons.”

In a recent e-mail message Paton sent to a friend from the war zone, he talked about the joy of receiving letters from the schoolchildren and also his desire to come home.

“I am glad I am here. I would like to be home. But like I said before, if an American back home could look into the eyes of a child here, see the pain and horrors that they see daily, maybe their outlook would change,” he wrote.

Paton was a member of Walloon Lake Community Church, where no special services have yet been planned.

Paton also had a brother, Adam Parkey of Alanson, plus a large extended family.

A full military funeral will take place when Paton’s body returns to northern Michigan.

Roadside Bomb: ‘Soldier At Heart’ Killed In Iraq

February 18, 2007 The Charlotte Observer

Sgt. John Rode was a ‘soldier at heart’ who left South Mecklenburg High School early to join the Army. He loved golf, children and, most of all, his family.

That’s how relatives will remember the 24-year-old. He died last week in Baqoubah, Iraq, after a roadside bomb detonated near his vehicle, the Pentagon said Sunday.

'He loved the military,' said sister Peggy Rode-Storey, who lives in Matthews.

Rode, who lived in Pineville before enlisting in October 2001, was a mechanic assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, based in Fort Hood, Texas.

He was on his second tour in Iraq when he was killed, Rode-Storey said. Two other soldiers based at Fort Hood were killed in the incident Wednesday.

Rode and his family moved to Pineville from Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1999, and he remained a Canadian citizen. He enrolled at South Mecklenburg High but left early, just shy of 18, to pursue a GED and join the Army, Rode-Storey said.

Rode's father and stepmother, Tom and Cheryl Rode, have since moved to Lake Mary, Fla.

Rode joined the military, in part, to follow the lead of his father, who spent 25 years in the Canadian armed forces, Rode-Storey said. Family members said Rode was easygoing and loved children, though he didn't have kids of his own.

Rode-Storey said her brother insisted on calling her 21-month-old daughter, Isabelle, 'Iggy,' because it was 'his own little name for her.' He wanted his niece to call him 'Uncle Baboon' in return, Rode-Storey said, laughing.

Tim Shelton of Charlotte, a neighbor of Rode's aunt and uncle, said Rode would fly paper airplanes with his 12-year-old son when he was home on leave. 'He was very nice,' Shelton said. 'He was very generous, very respectful.'

Rode was also an accomplished soldier, Fort Hood spokeswoman Nancy Bourget said. He had received several awards, including an Army Achievement Medal, she said.

Rode had about eight months left in Iraq, his sister said.

She said he e-mailed family members often and didn't talk much about the war, except to say, 'It's not like what you see on the news right now; it's different.'

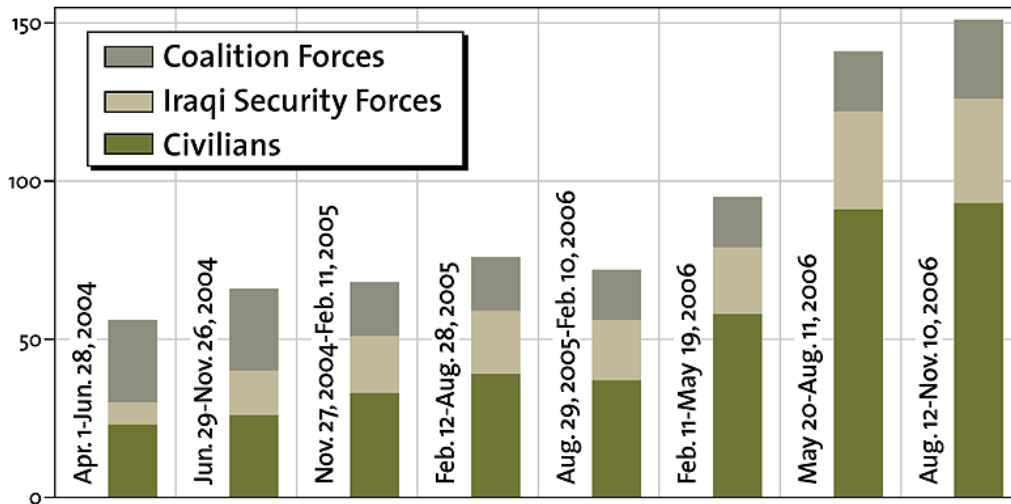
Rode never became an American citizen, though after he returned from his first tour of duty in 2005, all he had to do was file the paperwork, his sister said. U.S. officials usually accelerate citizenship for noncitizens who volunteer for the military.

She and her family plan to complete the process for him. 'Part of the reason we came here was to have all the liberties of a U.S. citizen,' Rode-Storey said.

THIS IS REALITY:

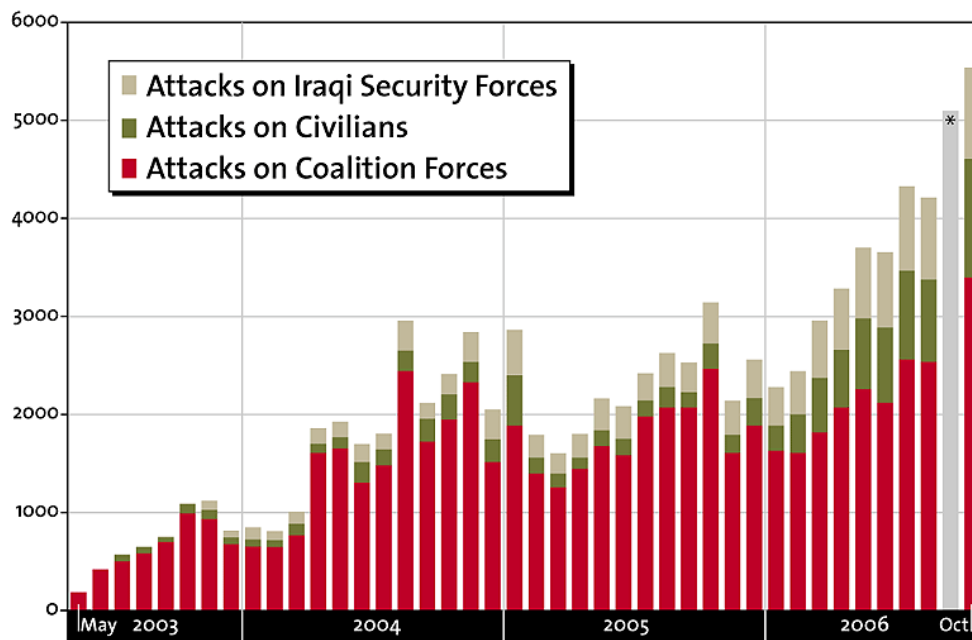
THE “CIVIL WAR” BULLSHIT IS A SMOKE SCREEN TO FUCK WITH YOUR MIND

AVERAGE DAILY CASUALTIES



Sources: Government Accountability Office (Attacks); Brookings Institution (Bombings); Department of Defense (Sectarian Violence, Casualties)

INSURGENT AND MILITIA ATTACKS



*Breakdown for September 2006 is classified by the Pentagon

Troops Invited:

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 email contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

**GUESS WHO'S WORRIED
GUESS WHO ISN'T
GUESS WHY
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Army soldiers from Company B of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment patrol in New Baghdad, an eastern neighborhood in the Iraqi capital Dec. 24, 2006 (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

U.S. Base At Al-Saqlawiyah Attacked; Casualties Not Announced

Feb 26 (VOI)

An eyewitness said that the U.S. base in al-Saqlawiyah district, 15 km north of Falluja, was hit by mortar shells.

“At least three blasts were heard in the U.S. base near after the attack,” the eyewitness added.

There was no immediate comment from the U.S. army on the al- Saqlawiyah base

December 2004: U.S. Command Says Resistance In Fallujah Wiped Out

February 2007: “Falluja Is Witnessing Continuous Armed Attacks Against U.S. And Iraqi Forces”

Feb 26 (VOI)

An Iraqi soldier was killed on Monday by a sniper bullet in Falluja, 45 km west of Baghdad, a police source said.

“An Iraqi soldier was killed by a sniper bullet at 5:00 pm on Monday near the eastern outlet to Falluja,” the source told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI). He added “the U.S. forces closed the outlet after the incident.”

Falluja is witnessing continuous armed attacks against U.S. and Iraqi forces stationed in Falluja, the main city of the province of Anbar.

Guerrillas launched on Tuesday a wide-scale attack on an Iraqi army base in al-Yarmouk neighborhood south of Falluja, the source, who asked not to be named, told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI).

“The gunmen used Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) in the 10-minute-long- attack, while sounds of blasts were heard”, he noted, adding no further details.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of U.S. Army Sgt. James Regan, in Manhasset, New York, February 16, 2007. Regan was killed by a roadside bomb while serving with the 3rd Battalion of the 75th Ranger Regiment in Baqubah, Iraq. REUTERS/Chip East (UNITED STATES)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

February 28, 2007 AP & Reuters

In Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, police said a high-ranking officer and his driver were killed in a drive-by shooting Wednesday.

Col. Abdul-Hadi Mohammed Saleh was on his way to work when guerrillas sprayed his car with machine gun fire, Brig. Abdul-Karim al-Jabouri said. Saleh's driver was killed and his bodyguard injured, al-Jabouri added.

The body of a police colonel who had been captured two months ago was found in northern Baghdad.

A car bomber attacked a police station in Nahdha district in central Baghdad, killing two policemen and wounding another two, police said.

At least four Iraqi soldiers were seriously wounded when a roadside bomb struck their patrol in the town of Riyadh, 60 km (40 miles) southwest of the northern oil city of Kirkuk, an army source said.

Guerrillas killed Abdul-Hadi Mahmoud, the head of a government office in Mosul that issues identity cards, in a drive-by shooting in the northern city of Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Veterans have one more Hill to take. Don't talk politics, do it.
2. 28. 2007 Dale/Tennessee, Firebase

**“The U.S. Antiwar Movement Will
Not Be Captured By Forces
Advocating A Delayed Withdrawal,
Certainly Not Without A Major And
Intense Struggle”**

February 20, 2007 Via Ph G. He writes: This is by Jerry Gordon of the Ohio Labor Party and US Labor Against The War Steering Committee. [Excerpts]

Whereas the early days of the Vietnam antiwar movement were marked by a debate over whether the central demand should be “Out Now!” or “Negotiate Now,” such has not been the case in today’s movement.

ANSWER was the first coalition out of the gate and adopted a “Bring the Troops Home Now” position, which it has unwaveringly maintained.

UFPJ, formed as an alternative to ANSWER, took the same position, but not in the same consistent way. For example, UFPJ’s leaflets publicizing the demonstration held at the Republican National Convention in New York in August-September, 2004 called for saying no to Bush’s war and the Bush administration’s agenda, with no mention of immediate withdrawal (the better to involve Democrats who did not support such a demand).

In any event, the major antiwar demonstrations called by either or both of the two coalitions over the years since the invasion have been clearcut and unequivocal in promoting an immediate withdrawal position.

Even so, UFPJ banners and posters for the January 27, 2007 demonstration in D.C., unlike the demands it publicized in building the action, called upon Congress to stop the war, without reference to bringing the troops home now.

In fact, under the influence of liberal Democratic Party politicians, there has been a chipping away of the immediate withdrawal demand.

And now those promoting a “Withdraw Later” position are winning new converts, including from some groups which held an “Out Now!” position.

US Labor Against The War’s Position

At its founding conference in 2003, USLAW unanimously adopted an immediate withdrawal position in its Mission Statement.

No one questioned that until the December, 2005 meeting of the group’s Steering Committee held in Chicago, where a debate erupted over the kind of legislation USLAW could support. Some members of the Steering Committee contended that USLAW must support some kind of legislation, even if it contained negative provisions.

At issue was the McGovern bill, which would have defunded spending for the war, while continuing to finance “Iraq security forces,” which were acting as death squads assassinating trade unionists and others resisting the occupation. The meeting rejected endorsing the McGovern measure but the search for an alternative to it was on.

In his article “Iraq is Dying” (August 10, 2006 issue of The Nation), Tom Hayden urged the antiwar movement to abandon its demand for immediate withdrawal in favor of one calling for setting the date for withdrawal sometime in the future.

Specifically, he wrote: “Antiwar candidates, alongside the peace movement, can offer a defensible alternative (to staying the course), including a declaration by the United States of its intention to withdraw troops within a fixed timetable, including no permanent bases.”

Hayden claimed, without providing any documentation, that “recent surveys show that 87 percent of Iraqis” hold the view that what is needed is a specific timetable for American withdrawal, rather than an immediate withdrawal.

Of course there are polls and then there are polls.

A Zogby poll taken in January of 2005 found that 82 percent of Sunni Arabs and 69 percent of Shiites favor U.S. withdrawal either immediately or after an elected government is in place, which there is now.

The Hayden article was circulated to USLAW affiliates with the recommendation that it be read because it contained some important "new thinking."

HR 508

It now appears that proponents of a delayed withdrawal are rallying around HR 508, introduced by U.S. Reps, Barbara Lee, Maxine Waters and Lynne Woolsey. This measure calls for a withdrawal of all U.S. troops within six months following enactment.

What many of these proponents either do not know or are not concerned about is that HR 508 also calls for the U.S. to support a foreign occupation - an International Stabilization Force -- for up to two years following the end of the U.S. occupation, if requested to do so by an Iraqi puppet government.

Like the Hayden article, a summary of HR 508 has been circulated to USLAW's list, with no critical comment. Here it is in its entirety:

This statement parallels the provisions of HR 508, introduced by Reps. Woolsey, Waters and Lee:

71-Member Congressional Progressive Caucus Says End the War in 6 Months

EXPANDED PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS BREAKS NEW GROUND --CALLS FOR BINDING VOTES AND BRINGING ALL U.S. TROOPS AND MILITARY CONTRACTORS IN IRAQ HOME IN A 6-MONTH TIME FRAME AS PART OF A FULLY-FUNDED REDEPLOYMENT PLAN

U.S. Representatives Lynn Woolsey (D-California) and Barbara Lee (D-California), Co-Chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), issued the following strongly-worded position on Iraq today on behalf of CPC Members:

CPC POSITION ON U.S. POLICY IN IRAQ

Over the last four years, the insurgency in Iraq has strengthened and sectarian violence has increased. Furthermore, the current situation on the ground in Iraq is grave and rapidly deteriorating. The Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) has determined accordingly that a predominantly military approach is no longer a viable solution to stabilizing Iraq.

We are committed to bringing all of the U.S. troops and military contractors in Iraq home in a six-month time frame as part of a fully-funded redeployment plan.

More specifically, we oppose sending additional U.S. troops and military contractors to Iraq and favor binding votes to block President Bush's escalation of U.S. military involvement in Iraq.

We believe all appropriations for U.S. military involvement in Iraq must be for the protection of our troops until and during their withdrawal within six months of the date of enactment of this limitation and accelerating the training and equipping of additional Iraqi security forces during that six-month time frame. The President has left the Congress few alternatives other than to use the power of purse spelled out in Article I, Section 9 of the U.S. Constitution to curtail U.S. military operations in Iraq.

Finally, we are opposed to establishing any permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq, support rescinding the President's Iraq war authority, and support greater diplomatic and political engagement in the region, while ensuring that the Iraqi people have control over their own petroleum resources.

Co-Chairs
Barbara Lee
Lynn Woolsey

Leaders of UFPJ are working closely with sponsors of 508, holding conference calls and attempting to work out a joint strategy.

Also joining the campaign for 508 is the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, to which the Workers World Party is affiliated, which has called a Town Hall meeting in Detroit for February 17, 2007 to "organize support for HR 508, a bill sponsored by 34 House members, which would cut off funding for the war and bring all the troops and military contractors home within 6 months."

The meeting will also demand an immediate cutoff of funding for the war, but how this position is compatible with calling for a delayed withdrawal is nowhere explained.

What is involved here is not the need to oppose all measures to limit the war or war spending - nobody says we should do that -- but rather to prevent any of these from obscuring or diluting or substituting for the fundamental demand for immediate withdrawal and a complete and immediate cutoff of funding.

Other Antiwar Forces Speak Out for Immediate Withdrawal

One thing has been made abundantly clear: the U.S. antiwar movement will not be captured by forces advocating a delayed withdrawal, certainly not without a major and intense struggle.

At a time when some delegates to USLAW's December Assembly were contending that USLAW should be willing to consider a timetable approach, 5,000 leaders and activists of the antiwar movement were joining together to issue a statement rejecting the idea.

Such well known authors and historians as Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn, activists like Cindy Sheehan, and UFPJ's National Coordinator Leslie Cagan were among the signers.

The statement, titled, "Why we stand for immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq," declares, "We call on the U.S. to get out of Iraq - not in six months, not in a year, but now."

To be sure, the other principal leader of UFPJ, Judith LeBlanc, a top figure in the CP, was not among the signers and takes the position that the antiwar movement should support all measures that point toward a U.S. withdrawal, and not adhere to immediate withdrawal as a central demand.

But UFPJ is not a monolithic body and the growing division in the antiwar movement over this issue is certain to provoke reverberations and tensions among some of its affiliates and activists.

USLAW and the Future

All of the above is the backdrop for the vote scheduled for February 28 by the USLAW Steering Committee on the Ohio State Labor Party's immediate withdrawal resolution.

That vote will help determine whether USLAW stands firm in support of the Iraqi people's right to self-determination or whether USLAW beats a retreat and paves the way for endorsing measures such as 508.

Whatever happens in the weeks ahead, there is an imperative need now to fight the good fight ideologically and politically to maintain the independence of the antiwar movement and to prevent it from becoming subordinated to the priorities of the politicians.

We all have a role to play in seeing to it that that does not happen.

Jerry Gordon

OCCUPATION REPORT

Blood For Oil;

“THESE TALKS, REQUESTED BY IRAQ, COULDN'T BE HELD UNTIL IRAQ AGREED TO GIVE UP ITS OIL”

From: Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society
To: GI Special
Sent: February 28, 2007
Subject: blood for oil

TALKS TO INCLUDE SYRIA AND IRAN WILL BE HELD ON STABILIZING IRAQ

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27 - American officials said Tuesday that they had agreed to hold the highest-level contact with the Iranian authorities in more than two years as part of an international meeting on Iraq. While the newly scheduled meetings may not include direct negotiations between the United States and Iran, and are to focus strictly on stabilizing Iraq rather than other disputes, they could crack open a door to a diplomatic channel.

THESE TALKS, REQUESTED BY IRAQ, COULDN'T BE HELD UNTIL IRAQ AGREED TO GIVE UP ITS OIL

Iraqi officials had been pushing for such a meeting for several months, but Bush administration officials refused until the Iraqi government reached agreement on pressing domestic matters, including guidelines for nationwide distribution of oil revenue and foreign investment in the country's immense oil industry, administration officials said. The new government of Iraq maintains regular ties with Iran.

WHOA-- YOU MEAN THIS WAR HAS BEEN OVER OIL? WHO GAINS?

Comment By Dave Bacon:

U.S. President George W Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney might as well declare the Iraq war over and out. As far as they - and the humongous energy interests they defend - are concerned, only now is the mission really accomplished.

More than half a trillion dollars spent and perhaps half a million Iraqis killed have come down to this.

On Monday, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's cabinet in Baghdad approved the draft of the new Iraqi oil law. The government regards it as "a major national project". The key point of the law is that Iraq's immense oil wealth (115 billion barrels of proven reserves, third in the world after Saudi Arabia and Iran) will be under the iron rule of a fuzzy "Federal Oil and Gas Council" boasting "a panel of oil experts from inside and outside Iraq".

That is, nothing less than predominantly US Big Oil executives.

The law represents no less than institutionalized raping and pillaging of Iraq's oil wealth. It represents the death knell of nationalized (from 1972 to 1975) Iraqi resources, now replaced by production sharing agreements (PSAs) - which translate into savage privatization and monster profit rates of up to 75% for (basically US) Big Oil.

Sixty-five of Iraq's roughly 80 oilfields already known will be offered for Big Oil to exploit.

As if this were not enough, the law reduces in practice the role of Baghdad to a minimum. Oil wealth, in theory, will be distributed directly to Kurds in the north, Shi'ites in the south and Sunnis in the center.

For all practical purposes, Iraq will be partitioned into three statelets. Most of the country's reserves are in the Shi'ite-dominated south, while the Kurdish north holds the best prospects for future drilling.

MORE:

Troubles Ahead For The Iraq Oil Deal;
“The Rumbblings Of Opposition Go Beyond Parliament To The Oil Fields Themselves”
"If There Is No Solution We Can Stop Production, Stop Exports"

In a more threatening tone, he told union members at a conference on the law in Basra in early February: "We strongly warn all the foreign companies and foreign capital in the form of American companies against coming into our lands under the guise of production-sharing agreements."

Feb. 28, 2007 By VIVIENNE WALT, PARIS; Time Inc. [Excerpts]

Barely two days have passed since Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki hailed the country's new petroleum law as a "solid base for unity of all Iraqis" — a rare boast these days. President Bush has also trumpeted it as proof that Iraq has a viable future.

But parliamentarians and Iraq's oil unions have already begun mobilizing against the draft legislation, arguing that it is a desperate attempt by al-Maliki's

government to satisfy Western demands, which could damage Iraq's economic future and speed the country's ultimate disintegration.

The law is a dramatic break from the past. Foreign oil companies will have a stake in Iraq's vast oil wealth for the first time since 1972, when Iraq nationalized the oil industry.

But political infighting could yet scuttle the deal once it goes to a vote in parliament, perhaps in early March, say the law's detractors.

"The feeling is that the law is focused very much on sectarianism," says Saleh al-Mutlaq, who heads the National Dialogue Front, a small secular party with 11 seats in parliament. "It divides the country and the wealth into groups — Kurds, Sunnis, Shi'ites," he said on the phone from Amman on Tuesday.

Billions of dollars — and Iraq's future — are at stake. Virtually all the revenues Iraq has to rebuild its shattered economy will come from its mammoth energy deposits — some of the world's biggest untapped reserves — of about 115 billion barrels of oil and about 110 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Under the new law, agreed on Monday by Iraq's cabinet, foreign oil companies will be allowed to cut long-term exploration and development deals with the government for 20 years, renewable for a further five years.

Among the parliamentarians arguing against the law are Moqtada al-Sadr's bloc, which fears that foreign oil companies will move into Iraq in force, and stay long after U.S. soldiers have left.

"I'm going back for this very reason," al-Mutlaq says. "We cannot yet figure out how many people will stand against it."

He says he is certain he will find allies among his colleagues, who he says believe that the law is geared to the needs of Western oil companies rather than Iraqis.

There has been no public hearing on the draft, whose details have largely been kept secret.

Iraqi lawmakers fumed last July when U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman discussed the draft during a trip to the region, "when hardly a single parliamentarian had seen it," says Kamil Mahdi, an Iraqi who is senior lecturer in Middle East economics at the University of Exeter in Britain, and who spent Tuesday discussing the law by phone with several parliamentarians.

He said several believe that the government should wait until the war ends before locking Iraq into long-term deals with foreigners, he says. "This draft is totally out of synch with any notion of the interests of Iraq," he says.

The rumblings of opposition go beyond parliament to the oil fields themselves. Iraq's biggest oil unions, which could potentially disrupt production, have been among the law's strongest opponents.

Hassan Jum'ah Awwad Al-Asadi, head of Iraq's Federation of Oil Unions, the largest union group, says he intends to mobilize his 23,000 or so members against the draft.

"We want a new, different law, which will be in the interests of Iraqis," he said by phone from Basra on Wednesday.

"If there is no solution we can stop production, stop exports."

In a more threatening tone, he told union members at a conference on the law in Basra in early February: "We strongly warn all the foreign companies and foreign capital in the form of American companies against coming into our lands under the guise of production-sharing agreements."

MORE:

Iraq Oil Workers Union President Says "We Know For Certain That These Plans Do Not Serve The Sons And Daughters Of Iraq"

February 27, 2007 From: Ewa Jasiewicz, PLATFORM PRESS RELEASE

Iraq's Cabinet has just approved a Hydrocarbon Law which will allow foreign companies control over Iraq's oil for the first time in 35 years.

Foreign oil companies and the British and US governments have been reviewing and commenting on the law for the past 8 months.

Iraqi Parliamentarians are seeing it for the first time this month.

The law allows Iraqi oil to be developed by foreign companies under long term contracts which will give them exclusive rights. These are likely to be contracts known as Production Sharing Agreements. Due to the surrounding controversy, the term Production Sharing Agreement has been dropped in favour of Exploration and Risk Contracts. ERCs are thought to be the equivalent of PSAs under a different name.

Ewa Jasiewicz, Researcher and campaigner at PLATFORM: said: 'The law's unfair, untransparent and undemocratic provisions reflect the influence and interests of external actors; namely the US and British governments and foreign oil companies.

As a document it makes history and marks a milestone in a historical process that has been pushed through by war and occupation.

It is the sell off and rip off of Iraq's oil by foreign companies'.

Hassan Jumaa Awad al Assadi, the leader of Iraq's most powerful oil union 'The Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions' says: "Those who spread the word that the oil sector will not improve except with foreign capital and production-sharing are dreaming.

"They must think again, since we know for certain that these plans do not serve the sons and daughters of Iraq.'

The following concerns have been raised:

A Surrender of Sovereignty:

Article 41 legislates for any disputes between foreign companies and Iraqi authorities which cannot be resolved through negotiation to be resolved 'through arbitration or the competent authority'. In practice this means through a secretive and remote international arbitration tribunal - overriding domestic law.

Iraq will not have the power to intervene using its own judicial system.

Parliament By-passed With revenues (article 11)as with contracts:

There is no provision for Parliamentary scrutiny. Fields such as West Qurna and Majnoon could each alone account for up to 10% of all government revenue. As such, the terms of these developments should be subject to Parliamentary debate as they are in many other countries.

No Guarantee of State Participation:

No minimum level has been set for state participation in contracts. For a country as well endowed with resources and technical skills as Iraq, a high minimum threshold would have been expected. Article 35 allows companies unlimited transfer of profits outside of Iraq. This could restrict the government's ability to manage financial crises.

Sectarianised Decision-Making:

The newly created Federal Oil and Gas Council will decide which contracts are accepted. The Prime Minister, in consultation with the main parties is likely to decide its composition. All decisions on the fairness of the contracts and whether they serve Iraqis' interests will be completely removed from public or parliamentary scrutiny.

As with the structure of the current government, grown from the original sectarian composition of the Governing Council of June 2003, the Federal Oil and Gas Council will be sectarianised, leading to regional and sectarian agendas impacting on national economic policy. Iraqi oil union leader Hassan Jumaa comments: 'We believe this law to be more political than economic; it threatens to set governorate against governorate and region against region'.

Iraqi Companies Undermined:

Foreign companies are only 'encouraged' to co-operate with Iraqi companies and purchase goods and services from them 'whenever they are competitive' (Art 9) Iraqis should only be employed 'to a reasonable extent'. Normally contracts specify minimum Iraqi content and employment and minimum levels of training and technology transfer.

Lack of Transparency:

The previous requirement to have contracts published 2 months after signing has been dropped, requiring only 'financially significant' contracts to be published, with no time limit.

Limited Regulatory Space:

The definition of 'good oil field practices' (Art 4. Def 4) including relating to health and safety and environmental standards is equated to what oil companies think is right. This could seriously restrict the regulatory influence of the Iraqi government .

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MORE:

**“While The Politicians In
Washington And Baghdad Bicker
To Carve Up The Real Prize, And
Just What Share Big Oil Will Get,**

More Iraqi Civilians And American Soldiers Die”

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.]

February 21st, 2007 Juan Gonzalez, New York Daily News

Throughout nearly four years of the daily mayhem and carnage in Iraq, President Bush and his aides in the White House have scoffed at even the slightest suggestion that the U.S. military occupation has anything to do with oil.

The President presumably would have us all believe that if Iraq had the world's second-largest supply of bananas instead of petroleum, American troops would still be there.

Now comes new evidence of the big prize in Iraq that rarely gets mentioned at White House briefings.

A proposed new Iraqi oil and gas law began circulating last week among that country's top government leaders and was quickly leaked to various Internet sites - before it has even been presented to the Iraqi parliament.

Under the proposed law, Iraq's immense oil reserves would not simply be opened to foreign oil exploration, as many had expected. Amazingly, executives from those companies would actually be given seats on a new Federal Oil and Gas Council that would control all of Iraq's reserves.

In other words, Chevron, ExxonMobil, British Petroleum and the other Western oil giants could end up on the board of directors of the Iraqi Federal Oil and Gas Council, while Iraq's own national oil company would become just another competitor.

The new law would grant the council virtually all power to develop policies and plans for undeveloped oil fields and to review and change all exploration and production contracts.

Since most of Iraq's 73 proven petroleum fields have yet to be developed, the new council would instantly become a world energy powerhouse.

“We're talking about trillions of dollars of oil that are at stake,” said Raed Jarrar, an independent Iraqi journalist and blogger who obtained an Arabic copy of the draft law and posted an English-language translation on his Web site over the weekend.

Take, for example, the massive Majnoon field in southern Iraq near the Iranian border, which contains an estimated 20 billion barrels. Before Saddam Hussein was toppled by the U.S. invasion in 2003, he had granted a \$4 billion contract to French oil giant TotalFinaElf to develop the field.

In the same way, the Iraqi dictator signed contracts with Chinese, Russian, Korean, Italian and Spanish companies to develop 10 other big oil fields once international sanctions against his regime were lifted.

The big British and American companies had been shut out of Iraq, thanks to more than a decade of U.S. sanctions against Saddam.

But if the new law passes, those companies will be the ones reviewing those very contracts and any others.

“Iraq’s economic security and development will be thrown into question with this law,” said Antonia Juhasz of Oil Change International, a petroleum industry watchdog group. “It’s a radical departure not only from Iraq’s existing structure but from how oil is managed in most of the world today.”

Throughout the developing world, national oil companies control the bulk of oil production, though they often develop joint agreements with foreign commercial oil groups.

But under the proposed law, the government-owned Iraqi National Oil Co. “will not get any preference over foreign companies,” Juhasz said.

The law must still be presented to the Iraqi parliament. Given the many political and religious divisions in the country, its passage is hardly guaranteed.

The main religious and ethnic groups are all pushing to control contracts and oil revenues for their regions, while the Bush administration is seeking more centralized control.

While the politicians in Washington and Baghdad bicker to carve up the real prize, and just what share Big Oil will get, more Iraqi civilians and American soldiers die each day - for freedom, we’re told.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Democratic Chairman Of The Senate Armed Services Committee Says Iraq War Will Never End

[Since the Iraqis are proud and patriotic, and will fight until the last foreign occupation troop leaves their land, his silly statement, below, would mean the war would never end. That won’t happen of course, because neither Americans, nor, most importantly, the troops, will tolerate a war that never ends. Before that

happens, they will take down hard this evil bi-partisan Imperial government. It seems that voting is useless, and that the only thing these politicians understand is the judicious application of force. Duh. T]

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

28 February, 2007 World Socialist Web [Excerpts]

Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, flatly rejected Sunday any attempt to cut off funding for the US war in Iraq...

Levin made his comments on NBC television's "Meet the Press" program, after a week in which Democratic leaders in both the House of Representatives and Senate effectively abandoned any effort to impose binding legislative limits on the war in Iraq—spurring popular antiwar sentiment, which continues to grow.

Levin said, "We don't believe that it's going to be possible to remove all of our troops from Iraq because there's going to be a limited purpose that they're going to need to serve, including continued training of the Iraqi army, support for logistics in the Iraqi army, a counterterrorism purpose or a mission because there's about 5,000 Al Qaida in Iraq."

MORE:

SecDef Gates Says Iraq War Will Never End

[Since the Iraqis are proud and patriotic, and will fight until the last foreign occupation troop leaves their land, his silly statement, below, would mean the war would never end. That won't happen of course, because neither Americans, nor, most importantly, the troops, will tolerate a war that never ends. Before that happens, they will take down hard this evil bi-partisan Imperial government. It seems that voting is useless, and that the only thing these politicians understand is the judicious application of force. Duh. T]

Feb 28, 2007 By William H. McMichael, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpt]

"We will probably have some presence in Iraq, as we have had in Korea and Germany and a variety of other places around the world where we've been at war, for a prolonged period of time," [Defense Secretary Robert M.] Gates said. "A number of years."

Eight Former Black Panthers Arrested:

“These Men Went On The Road And Talked About Their Torture...That’s What This Case Is About”

February 9, 2007 By Elizabeth Schulte, Socialist Worker

EIGHT FORMER Black Panthers were arrested last week in connection with a 1971 killing of a San Francisco police officer--even though the same charges were dropped 30 years ago because defendants had been tortured into confessing.

Murder charges were dropped against Harold Taylor and two codefendants in 1975 when it was revealed that New Orleans police had tortured them into giving false confessions.

In 1973, the three were abused by New Orleans police for several days--including being stripped naked, beaten, covered in blankets soaked with boiling water, smothered, and shocked with cattle prods on their genitals.

In 1974, a court ruled that San Francisco and New Orleans police had engaged in torture to get the confessions, and the next year, a San Francisco judge dismissed charges against the three men.

But two years ago, a San Francisco grand jury was convened to reopen the case. Police claim they now have new evidence that implicates the former Panthers.

The roundup on January 23 involved law enforcement across the country. Taylor was arrested in Florida; Richard Brown, Richard O’Neal, Ray Boudreaux and Henry Watson Jones in California; and Francisco Torres in New York.

Police are also charging two men who are already in jail--political prisoners Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqin, who are members of the New York Three, accused of killing a New York police officer in 1971--and are still looking for another.

“People ask the question, why pick up these men after they’ve been around, have not attempted to elude the authorities, have led productive lives all these years?” Torres’ attorney Michael Warren told Amy Goodman on the Democracy Now! radio program.”

John Ashcroft, shortly after he was appointed attorney general, made a vow and a promise that he was going to go after as many ex-Black Panthers as he possibly could...And that’s when this program was instituted...

“The most recent reason relates to retaliation. These men, after being tortured, and after the grand jury ended in 2006, went on the road with the Center for Constitutional Rights and talked about their torture...That’s what this case is about.”

OCCUPATION ISN’T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!



Can we join the Star Wars club? Blair lobbies for UK to be part of defence system
[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

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)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

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

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

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

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

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

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