

GI SPECIAL 5C27:



[Graphic by 1st ID soldiers against the war, Iraq 2004]

**“Soldiers Expressing
Opposition To The War”
“We Really Don’t Want To Go”
“Nothing Has Been Accomplished”
“A Lot Of People Have Died For All Of
This. And For What?”**

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

March 29, 2007 by Sarah Olson, Common Dreams [Excerpts]

“I joined the Army to go to war, and now I’m fighting to get out,” says Pfc. Ryan Follan, laughing nervously. He quickly becomes serious.

“Some of the causes are good, but I don’t think the war is for the right reasons.”

Follan laughs again, and there’s a long pause. “I’m deploying in a month, actually. I’m not a big fan of it, honestly.”

Private Follan is standing in a Taco Bell parking lot just outside Fort Stewart in Savannah, Georgia.

Each day, soldiers gather for lunch at fast food restaurants like this one.

On this particular day, the soldiers at Fort Stewart have visitors.

Last week, a convoy of approximately 20 veterans riding in converted school buses left Fayetteville, North Carolina. They were sponsored by Veterans for Peace, armed with literature and headed for New Orleans, where they are spending this week rebuilding houses in the Ninth Ward.

On the way, the group stopped at military bases throughout the South.

Their goal?

They were passing out copies of the Appeal for Redress, GI rights information, and copies of the videos “Ground Truth” and “Sir! No Sir!”

Veterans for Peace members say they’re not trying to pressure GIs to resist war. They want to educate soldiers about their rights. They know from experience that the military frowns on dissent and doesn’t go out of its way to educate soldiers regarding constitutionally protected ways to express their opinions on issues like war and peace. Despite popular opinion to the contrary, soldiers do indeed have rights to express political dissent.

The Appeal for Redress is a confidential online petition to Congress asking for an end to the Iraq war. Because the Uniform Code of Military Justice expressly permits members of the military to petition their representatives, the Appeal is 100 percent legal, and since its unveiling in late 2006 the Appeal has gathered over 1,700 signatures.

Private Follan hadn’t heard of the Appeal before, but says he thinks he’ll sign it.

“I can’t see any reason why I wouldn’t,” he says, explaining he hasn’t heard a single good reason for the Iraq war.

“If there are good reasons, I haven’t been told them yet. Maybe I’ll find out some more reasons when I get there.”

Follan is dressed in desert camouflage fatigues and is with a couple of friends. He’s 18 years old, and he joined the Army last July. He’s young and really earnest. He explains that despite his objections to the war, he doesn’t mind going. “I’m hoping to do the right thing,” he says. “I have no problem going and helping in any way I can.”

Pfc. Richard Jones was having lunch with Follan. He's quieter, just as young and just as earnest. He's a cavalry scout, with less than a year in the military. He expects to be deployed in May as well, but isn't sure. He's well aware of the complexity of the arguments both for and against the war.

"Nobody should go to war. War's not a good thing at all. But if that's what has to be done, then I guess that's what has to be done to protect your country and your people. It would be a lot worse if they were over here saying if you don't believe in our religion, and if you speak against it, we're gonna kick down your doors, then we're going to kill your family. That's not good. I wouldn't wish that on Iraqis either."

Jones doesn't know if he'll sign the Appeal, but he's glad to see Veterans for Peace. "I think it's a good thing that they're trying to help people. I don't want people to get the impression that we're just piddling around not really taking things seriously. I have no doubt that if we could get out of Iraq right now we would, obviously."

"I'm not a big fan of it," his friend Ryan Follan says again. "But who is, right? It's war. I can't wait to go." Follan appears to think about these contradictions and laughs. "I have no problem being in the Army. It's just the whole being in the Army thing."

These views were reflected in a shocking number of soldiers last week.

Almost everyone responded favorably to Veterans for Peace, with many soldiers leaving the parking lot with videos and brochures, saying they'd look into the Appeal for Redress.

While the majority of the media frames the public debate about the Iraq war in terms of supporting the troops vs. opposing the war, the men and women fighting it see things differently.

Soldiers are increasingly expressing unabashed opposition to the war.

A little later, two young women emerge from Taco Bell carrying to-go bags. Although they decline to give their names, each seems almost eager to share their views on the war.

"I don't believe in the war. I really don't wanna go to war. But I have to, so I'm gonna go," said one of them.

She joined the Army six months ago, and is assigned to warehouse supply. She's just learning her job and is apprehensive about doing it in a war zone. She doesn't feel like she has enough training.

Both women say they're frustrated with public apathy towards the war and those fighting it. "It seems like if it doesn't hit close to home, a lot of people don't really care," said the first private.

This is one of the reasons they're happy to see Veterans for Peace.

"It makes me feel good to know that other people think the same way I do. I'm glad they don't want to see us go to Iraq, because we really don't want to go."

Both women joined the military out of economic necessity.

“I don’t support the war either,” said the second soldier.

“But we all have necessities, so here we are. I’m scared, but at the same time, I’m excited in a weird way. I’m going somewhere new.”

Throughout their week on the road, Veterans for Peace met with similar responses to their education and outreach efforts.

Defying public expectation, most soldiers from Fort Bragg to Fort Benning expressed apprehension, ambivalence and concern.

For the most part, they joined the military because they love their country, and because they needed a job. Many of them are perplexed by the tasks their country is now asking them to perform.

“I just want people to realize that we don’t want to go over there. We’re not looking forward to it,” she said.

“People are over there dying and suffering. Nothing has been accomplished. We’ve sacrificed a lot of our time, and a lot of people have died for all of this. And for what?”

Sarah Olson is an independent journalist and radio producer based in Oakland, California.

MORE:

“I’m Against This War. I Don’t Want To Go, But That’s My Job” As 3rd ID Heads Back To Iraq For Third Tour, Residents And Soldiers Show Support For Bringing Troops Home

March 22, 2007 Sean Harder, SavannahNOW [Excerpts]

HINESVILLE [Georgia]- They rolled into town in colorfully painted buses reminiscent of author Ken Kessey’s psychedelic school bus of the 1960s.

They held up signs that read "Iraq Vets Against the War" and "Bring the Troops Home Now!"

Contrary to what you might expect in this military town outside Fort Stewart's front gates, the dozen or so Veterans for Peace protesters received a largely positive response.

Several Hinesville residents, military spouses and 3rd Infantry Division soldiers who drove by the protesters honked their horns, some even flashing the peace sign during Wednesday's lunch hour.

Army Pfc. Omar Figueras made a point of stopping his vehicle to say one thing to the demonstrators: "Peace."

"I agree with them," said Figueras, who'll be deploying to Iraq this summer with the 4th Brigade.

"I'm against this war. I don't want to go, but that's my job."

Just four years ago, as the 3rd Division led the charge into Baghdad, these demonstrators likely would have received a chillier reception. Now, however, polls show the majority of Americans wants troops to withdraw from Iraq, and that's giving active-duty soldiers the courage to speak out, said Elliot Adams, president of Veterans for Peace and a former Army paratrooper who served in Vietnam.

Adams' group, along with Iraq Veterans Against the War and Military Families Speak Out, launched a "peace convoy" to military bases throughout the Southeast this week.

Adams said honking horns and other signs of support aren't unusual outside military installations. It's just one sign of the anti-war movement's growing momentum.

"It's a sea change," he said. "People are getting the message. Our government is destroying our military. They're wearing out equipment and wearing out our people.

"Soldiers are angry about this war, but they don't know how to express it, so we're trying to give them that out."

The veterans handed out brochures about the GI Rights Hotline and the Appeal for Redress, a petition drive that so far has collected the signatures of more than 1,700 active-duty service members who want Congress to end the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Pfc. Ty Heald, a 2nd Brigade soldier who will deploy to Iraq in May, accepted the information but wasn't sure how he felt about the anti-war message.

"I just can't wait to go over there for the extra pay," he said. "Everybody who goes over there has a different take on it. You're really there to make sure your buddy doesn't get killed."

Kevin Benderman, a former Army sergeant at Fort Stewart who served 13 months in a military brig for refusing to deploy to Iraq a second time with his unit, also attended the protest. He and his wife, Monica, are working on “Benderman’s Bridge,” a project to help veterans obtain vocational training and transition into civilian life.

“Soldiers should be the first ones allowed to exercise their constitutional right to free speech,” he said.

“There are a lot of talking heads who like to say a lot of things, but it’s the soldiers who know better than anyone what’s going on in Iraq.”

Robert Randall of Brunswick, founder of GlynnPeace, said it helps to have a veterans group leading the call for a troop withdrawal.

“It helps dispel that myth that people who are against the war are also against the troops,” Randall said.

“The people who are really against the troops are the ones who are sending them off to get killed in a counter-productive war.”

Despite pending resolutions in Congress to set a time line for withdrawing U.S. troops, several activists predicted politics will prevent Democrats from ending the war.

“If you’re a Democrat, you can hang the war as a millstone around the Republicans’ neck, and come 2008 you might get elected,” Adams said. “But we’re going to stop the war before then.”

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier; 2nd Wounded

March 30, 2007 Associated Press

BAGHDAD - A roadside bomb killed a U.S. Soldier during a patrol in southern Baghdad, the military said Friday.

The Multinational Division - Baghdad soldier died and another was wounded Thursday when the explosion occurred while they were on.

Remembering A Fallen Soldier



Mar 18, 2007 By Rick Montanez, KIDK

As we reported Saturday, 29-year-old Emerson Brand of Rigby was killed in Iraq last Thursday.

He will likely be buried in Texas, but today his uncle, a pastor at the Apostolic Assembly in Idaho Falls, held special services to honor him.

The Apostolic Assembly was filled with people who came to pay their tributes to Sergeant Emerson Noah Brand. His grandparents Mary and Gabriel Mendez live in Idaho Falls, and they say Emerson requested a unit transfer so he could serve another term in Iraq.

“She told me yesterday that Emerson knew what he was going to,” said Mary.

Emerson spent the last nine years of his life in the Army, serving once in Kosovo and this was his second deployment to Iraq.

“Suddenly he decided to go to the army, personal matters I guess,” said Gabriel.

“He was a brave boy,” added Mary.

His bravery took him into his second term in Iraq, but it was tragically cut short when an IED struck his unit, killing Emerson and three other soldiers. Gabriel says he heard about the deaths, but was hoping it wasn't Emerson.

"I just felt a feeling, but I never thought it was my grandson," he said.

Word hit the Mendez family Thursday when Emerson's parents, who live in Oklahoma, called to break the news about his death.

"She said, Mom you need to sit down, and Daddy too, and I said what happened? She says Emerson is with the Lord," said Mary.

As tragic as this has been for Gabriel and Mary, they say they know Emerson is in a better place.

"We had prayed for him, he was my little boy," said Mary.

S. Amboy Soldier Sebban Remembered As Hero

03/21/07 By JOHN MAJESKI, STAFF WRITER; Home News Tribune

SOUTH AMBOY — Hearts "heavy with grief," the family of a South Amboy soldier killed in Iraq remembered Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin L. Sebban as a "hero" smitten with Army life.

"Benjamin was a very kind, thoughtful and courageous man who loved his family, loved the Army and loved being a soldier," relatives said in a U.S. Army news release and declined to speak further with reporters. "We are extremely proud of his bravery and his service to his country. He was a hero who will be sorely missed by all of us."

Sebban, 29, is survived by his mother, Barbara Walsh of Neshanic Station and by brothers Daniel of South Brunswick and David of Neshanic Station.

He died Saturday in Baqouba, Iraq, from wounds suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his unit.

Mayor John T. O'Leary said Sebban was trying to warn troops when the device exploded, and he then treated the injured before dying, according to the soldier's brother.

"There was a vehicle with insurgents that ran into a ditch where the troops were. (Sebban) was getting out of a vehicle to warn the troops that were outside that they were getting ready to detonate the explosive. And in doing so, as he was warning them, the explosive went off, and I guess he got shrapnel to his body," O'Leary said, recounting the brother's tale.

"Then, he basically did his job and attended to the troops that were injured, thinking of them more than himself. From what I understand, he passed as he was attending to others."

Sebban was born in 1977 in Tunisia, North Africa, as a U.S. citizen and moved with his mother — a missionary — when he was 4 to South Amboy. He attended St. Mary's Elementary School in the city and was a 1996 graduate of the East Brunswick campus of the Middlesex County Vocational-Technical High School system. He also graduated from the Word of Life Bible College in Schroon Lake, N.Y., in 1998.

That same year he joined the U.S. Army as a combat medic, completing the basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Ga., in 2005.

Sebban was assigned to the well-known 82nd Airborne Division in January 2006. He had two previous deployments to Iraq, according to the Army, one in 2003 and another in 2004.

The Army said the late soldier received a number of awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

Arrangements for Sebban will be announced by The Gundrum Service Home for Funerals, 237 Bordentown Ave., South Amboy.

Local Soldier Killed By Roadside Bomb

March 21, 2007 Fort Worth Star-Telegram

FORT WORTH -- A 30-year-old soldier from Fort Worth was killed by a roadside bomb Saturday on his last mission before a scheduled trip home on R&R.

Spc. Marieo Guerrero, who joined the infantry because he wanted to make a difference in the world, was driving a Bradley Fighting Vehicle when the attack occurred in Baghdad. The Army told his mother that he was the only one in the vehicle killed.

'It's unreal that this is happening,' his mother, Cheryl Martinez, said from her home in Crowley.

Funeral services are pending at Laurel Land Funeral Home.

Spc. Guerrero is the 22nd man killed in Iraq from Tarrant County and the 15th from Fort Worth, one of the highest totals of any city in the country.

He was, his family said, a caring man who looked after his mom and sisters, loved being around animals and could shoot a mean game of pool. They worried about him constantly while he was in Iraq, but he never told them that he felt in danger.

'He knew the circumstances of joining the Army,' his younger sister, Carrie Sharif, said.

Born Sept. 8, 1976, Spc. Guerrero attended Southwest High School before finishing up his high-school years at Trimble Tech in 1995.

He had a variety of jobs after high school but decided to pursue the Army in 2004.

'He wanted to be front-line infantry, not for college money or anything, but to make the world a better place,' his mother said.

After infantry training at Fort Benning, Ga., Spc. Guerrero was assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, in Schweinfurt, Germany. He deployed to Iraq late last summer with the Germany-based 1st Infantry Division.

Although Spc. Guerrero wore the 1st Infantry patch, his unit was assigned to an area under the control of the 1st Cavalry Division.

He called his family almost every day, no matter where he was -- Georgia, Germany or Iraq. He was, they said, the last one to go to bed, the first one to get up, always asking how everyone was doing.

'He was the backbone of the family,' said his younger brother, Marcus Martinez. 'He made sure everyone came before him.'

Spc. Guerrero was, they said, unafraid of almost anything. The only thing they could think of made them laugh.

'The only thing I know of is newborns,' his sister said. 'He did not hold newborn babies.'

Spc. Guerrero called Friday night to tell his family that he loved them and that he had one more mission before he would be released on R&R to come home.

'Then we didn't hear anything else,' his sister said.

He is also survived by his wife, Jennifer; stepfather, Moises Martinez; and sister, Lisa Marie Guerrero.

U.S. Vehicles Attacked; Two Destroyed: Casualties Not Announced

3.30.07 VOI

A U.S. vehicle was destroyed on Friday when a car bomb was detonated near a U.S. vehicle patrol in Falluja an eyewitness said.

A U.S. vehicle was destroyed on Friday when an explosive device detonated near a U.S. vehicle patrol in al-Garma town, 15 km east of Falluja, local residents said.

An explosive charge went off near U.S. vehicle patrol in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul with no reports of casualties, a security source said on Friday.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. Army soldiers from Company A of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment patrol a street in New Baghdad, an eastern neighborhood in Baghdad Dec. 27, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed, Three Wounded; Nationality Not Announced, But Probably American

Mar. 30 2007 Associated Press

KABUL -- A NATO soldier was killed and three wounded during an operation in eastern Afghanistan, the U.S. military said Friday.

Four wounded soldiers were evacuated to a medical facility after the operation Thursday evening, where one died of his wounds, the military said. The three others are in stable condition.

The military did not specify the soldiers' nationalities or where the operation occurred. The majority of soldiers operating in eastern Afghanistan are American.

Assorted Resistance Action

30 January 2007 BBC & Associated Press

Police say a bomber drove into a bus carrying Afghan soldiers in the city of Herat, injuring three.

Fighting also erupted between Taliban militants and Afghan police and soldiers in the eastern province of Paktika late Thursday, and two police were killed, said Paktika Gov. Mohammed Akram Akhpelwak.

In the country's south, meanwhile, militants attacked a government compound in Zabul province on Thursday.

TROOP NEWS

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



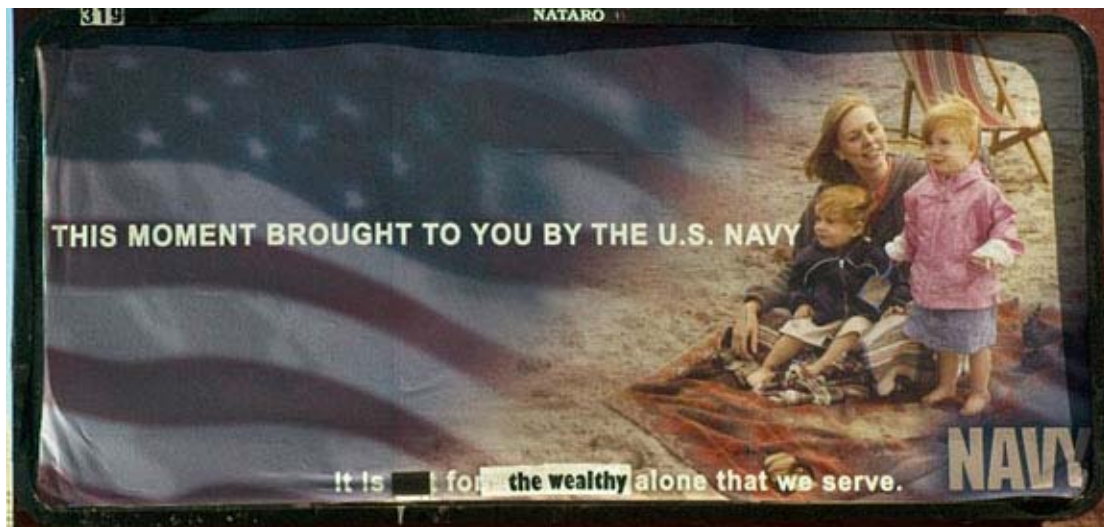
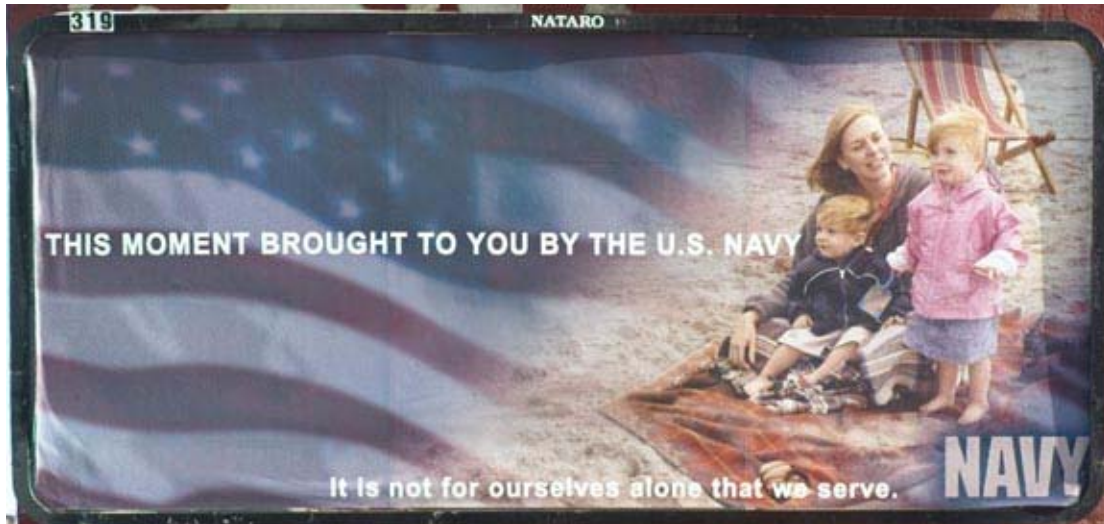
The casket of Staff Sgt. Paul Latourney of Roselle, Ill. at Arlington National Cemetery March 14, 2007. Latourney was killed earlier this month in Baghdad when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

CORRECTION

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

Mar 21, 2007 New York City War Resisters League

Thanks to an anonymous tip we were made aware of a Navy recruitment billboard in Brooklyn that was corrected.



More Iraq Veterans Condemn The War And The Imperial Demorats

#1:

“This House Bill Is An Act Of Cowardice On The Part Of Democrats” “It Looks Good On The Outside, But Is Rotten In The Inside”

March 30, 2007 Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

BOSTON--Led by Veterans for Peace, more than 4,000 protestors marched through the downtown streets here March 24 to demand an end to the war in Iraq. The demonstration, called by the Greater Boston Stop the Wars Coalition, was the largest in Boston since the war began four years ago.

The protest began with a rally at the Boston Commons addressed by radical historian Howard Zinn and Cindy Sheehan, co-founder of Gold Star Families for Peace.

Zinn demanded that Congress immediately cut spending for the war, insisting that “There is only one timetable for withdrawal, and that is to get the troops out as fast as ships and planes can carry them.”

Sheehan blasted Democrats in the House of Representatives for passing an appropriations bill that funds the war until September 2008.

The night before, Sheehan told a crowd of nearly 200 that “there is only one party in the United States,” and called for a “second American Revolution.”

While some demonstrators expressed continued support for congressional Democrats, others agreed with Sheehan that “the Democrats have failed us.” Andy Sapp of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) told Socialist Worker, “This House bill is an act of cowardice on the part of Democrats. It looks good on the outside, but is rotten in the inside.”

#2: “It’s All About Corporate Control Of Oil In The Middle East”

In Olympia, Wash., approximately 450 people attended an antiwar rally and march here March 24.

IVAW [Iraq Veterans Against the War] member Jeff Englehart told the crowd, “It’s all about corporate control of oil in the Middle East.

“It’s not worth the infringement of civil liberties of the citizens of Iraq and the citizens of the United States.”

Northeastern Illinois U. Pro-War Student Government Takes An Ass Whipping; Anti-War Students And Socialist Club Go On The Offensive

March 30, 2007 By Rachel Cohen, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

CHICAGO--The bravado of the ringleaders in a witch-hunt against socialists at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) went out with a whimper March 7.

Taking a cue from university administrators, who were maneuvering to discredit the campus Socialist Club following a protest against the presence of CIA recruiters, the Republican-led Student Government Association (SGA) had moved to decertify the club.

Two Socialist Club members were arrested February 28 for simply trying to attend the meeting with CIA officials.

After a series of e-mails exchanging contrived condemnations and plots, the SGA’s rules and charter committee summoned the club’s president, Keeanga Taylor, to appear for a “hearing” on the Socialist Club’s official charter.

Amid the messages traded among SGA senators -- leaked to Taylor and forwarded out to a variety of campus activists and organizations -- was hate mail from one campus employee volunteering her approval of the Student Government’s decision to “hang” the socialists, as they were “guilty by association.”

Rather than be intimidated, the club took their hearing as an opportunity set the record straight, and to put campus repression on trial instead.

Socialist Club members, it turned out, were not alone in wanting to know why the SGA had time to put the club on trial when they had done nothing to stand up to the 14.7 percent tuition hikes the student body will face next fall.

Nor has the SGA lifted a finger to question the decertification of about half the school’s student organizations last semester on the basis of Student Activities Department’s bureaucratic and arbitrarily enforced codes and regulations.

In fact, the Socialist Club was joined by 40 other supporters, activists and other students, who packed the meeting and applauded Taylor’s speech condemning the political persecution of the socialists and demanding action, instead, on behalf of NEIU’s working-class student body.

The SGA was forced to relent. It even voted to demand that the administration make public its investigation of the incident and to interview the students involved--which NEIU officials still have yet to do.

This victory was made possible by the unpopularity of the SGA's well-known prowar bias and their neglect of students' concerns. But it was also a result of the polarizing effect the anti-left campaign by the administration and the SGA.

On the one side is a growing Socialist Club, an ever-more-determined Campus Antiwar Network and a broad layer of students, faculty and staff appalled by campus repression. On other side is an isolated administration that can't get its story straight.

On the day of the first court appearance for the two men arrested at the CIA event, the university lawyer reduced the charge against student Kenneth Barrios from petty charge of "disrupting a university event" to a misdemeanor battery charge. Another student, Matthew Larson, also faces a simple battery charge.

Activists at NEIU will need the help of SW readers nationwide to keep up the stream of phone calls, e-mails and petition signatures going to NEIU's administration to get these phony charges dropped.

For more information, see the statement on the Campus Antiwar Network Web site.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**Al-Sadr Calls For Mass
Demonstration Against The
Occupation April 9;
"I Renew My Call For The Occupier
To Leave Our Land"
"You, Oppressed People Of Iraq, Let
The Entire World Hear Your Voice
That You Reject Occupation"**

“Years have passed and instead of having Bush’s pictures in Iraqi houses, they are being stepped on, along with their flags, with the feet of Iraqis.”

03/30/07 By BUSHRA JUHI, Associated Press Writer & By Patty Lee Parmalee, Reuters

The radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr [translation: pro-American but anti-occupation nationalist politician Muqtada al-Sadr] issued a scathing attack on the United States on Friday, following one of the country’s bloodiest days, blaming Washington for Iraq’s troubles and calling for a mass demonstration April 9 — the fourth anniversary of the fall of Baghdad.

“Iraq has endured difficult years because of this oppressive occupation that claims it removed the destroyer (Saddam Hussein) to bring the ghost of a fake democracy,” Sadr said in a statement.

“Years have passed and instead of having Bush’s pictures in Iraqi houses, they are being stepped on, along with their flags, with the feet of Iraqis.”

The latest statement was read to worshippers during Friday prayers at a mosque in Kufa, a Shiite holy city south of Baghdad where al-Sadr frequently led the ritual.

“I renew my call for the occupier (the United States) to leave our land,” he said in the statement, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press. “The departure of the occupier will mean stability for Iraq, victory for Islam and peace and defeat for terrorism and infidels.”

“You, oppressed people of Iraq, let the entire world hear your voice that you reject occupation, destruction and terrorism,” he said in calling for the April 9 demonstration.

“Fly Iraqi flags atop homes, apartment buildings and government departments to show the sovereignty and independence of Iraq, and that you reject the presence of American flags and those of other nations occupying our beloved Iraq. Keep them there until they leave our land,” he said.

MORE:

3.30.07 VOI

U.S. forces stormed on Friday al-Sadr’s office in al-Hurriyah city, northwestern Baghdad, killing two people, including a child, and arresting two others, an eyewitness said.

Sixteen civilians were killed and 14 others wounded in a U.S. air raid on Sadr City, east of Baghdad, according to the official Iraqi TV al-Iraqiya.

Assorted Resistance Action

30 Mar 2007 Reuters & VOI

Guerrillas killed two policemen in a drive-by shooting and wounded another in a village near the city of Hilla, police said. Hilla is 100 km (62 miles) south of Baghdad.

An explosive charge went off on Friday near an Iraqi army vehicle patrol in al-Azim district, north of Diala province, central Iraq, killing an Iraqi soldier and destroying a Hummer, a police source said

An explosive charge detonated Friday near a police patrol vehicle in Kirkuk, 250 km northeast of Baghdad, with no reports of casualties, a security source said.

Six mortar shells fell Friday onto the government-owned Ninewa TV building in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul with no reports of casualties, a police source said.

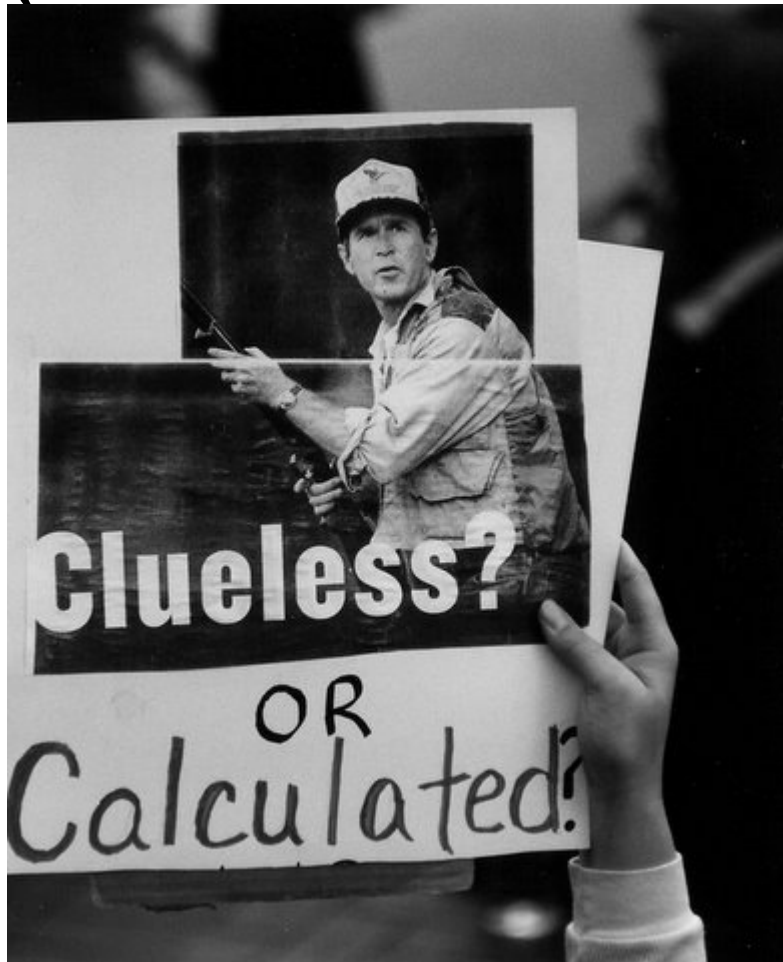
An explosive charge went off near an Iraqi vehicle patrol in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul with no reports of casualties, a security source said on Friday.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



STP (SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT)



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: March 28, 2007

STP (SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT)

SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
support the troops
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
support the troops
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
BRING 'EM ON

SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
support the troops
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
BRING 'EM ON
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT
BRING 'EM ON
BRING 'EM ON
BRING 'EM ON

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
March 27, 2007

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

“I Support The Occupation Of Iraq, But I Don’t Support Our Troops”

[Thanks to Jose Vasquez, Iraq Veterans Against The War, who sent this in.]

February 23 The Onion

The U.S. went to war in Iraq to remove an evil and dangerous political adversary from power. Now that we have done that, the American troops must remain in Iraq until the country is a fully functioning democracy, able to spark change throughout the entire Middle East.

While I find this obvious, there are still a lot of people in our country who fail to grasp it.

I support Bush-administration foreign-policy goals, but I stand firmly against the individual men and women on the ground in the Persian Gulf.

Yes, occupying Iraq does require troops, but they are there for one reason and one reason only: to carry out the orders of the U.S. Defense Department.

As far as their overall importance goes, they are no more worthy of our consideration than a box of nails. Ribbons and banners in ostensible “support” of the troops miss the whole point of the invasion, which is to gain a strategic hold over that volatile and lucrative geopolitical region.

Need I remind the reader that it is our flag, not the troops, that we salute? It is our nation-state, not a bunch of 20-year-olds in parachute pants, that deserves our allegiance.

As a patriot and true American, my heart sings at the thought of the Pentagon, and the zealous, calculating measures undertaken by the proud military bureaucracy of this great superpower. I feel a surge of pride when I think about our high-tech GBU laser-guided bombs, capable of carrying a 2,000-pound warhead.

I tied a ribbon around my tree for the safe return of our nation’s F-16s, because our military aircraft are instrumental to finishing our work in Iraq. And on the back of my car, I have a sticker stating my support for the CIA’s ongoing efforts in Iraq.

I support the occupation, and the occupation alone, because when we start to support the troops, we pave the way for irrelevant concerns about their families back at home. Before you know it, questions about who is and isn’t going to be home in time for Christmas will be interfering with the crucial decision-making process of our commander-in-chief.

I’d like to ask those currently trumpeting their support for the troops a question: Have you ever actually met any of these soldiers in person? Well, I have, and believe me, they are no more impressive than any other low-level functionary of a large institution.

In all honesty, my soul swells with pride at the thought of the military-strategy papers and cost-analysis reports in which the troops are represented as numerical figures.

But, as for the men and women—well, in almost every respect, they are average.

Although they are no less intelligent than any other American, it is certainly fair to say they lack the ability to devise the complex strategies and tactics to manage their own divisions, much less grasp the nuanced reasons for their deployment.

It is ridiculous that my “heart” is somehow morally or ethically obliged to “go out” to the troops.

In fact, had the troops not been put to productive labor by the sheer might and institutional authority of the U.S. military, a good number of them would be sitting around bars, drinking and gambling. In short, we shouldn’t view the troops as objects of sympathy, because their very contribution to our society is their ability to carry out simple commands on a battlefield.

Allow me to pursue this from a more personal angle.

I have a son in the military. If I may say so, we’ve never gotten along particularly well.

Frankly, he's been a bit of a disappointment to his mother and me. Nevertheless, he is our flesh and blood and always will be, and we wish him no harm.

So I speak from a position of personal experience when I say that, while I do not wish death for any of the troops, death tolls should not be our greatest concern.

All that matters is the pursuit of the foreign-policy goals of this great land, the land I love. America.

Beloved Father, Please Don't Touch The Garden. That Is Where I Have Hidden 'The THING'

March 21, 2007, GERALD ALI [cawi]

An old Arab lived close to New York City for more than 40 years.

One day, he decided that he would love to plant potatoes and herbs in his garden, but he knew he was alone and too old and weak.

His son was in college in Paris, so the old man sent him an e-mail explaining the problem:

"Beloved son, I am very sad, because I can't plant potatoes in my garden. I am sure, if only you were here, that you would help me and dig up the garden for me.

"I love you, your father."

The following day, the old man received a response e-mail from his son: "Beloved father, please don't touch the garden. That is where I have hidden 'the THING.'"

"I love you, too, Ahmed."

At 4pm the FBI and the Rangers visited the house of the old man and took the whole garden apart, searching every inch. But they couldn't find anything.

Disappointed, they left the house.

The next day, the old man received another e-mail from his son: "Beloved father, I hope the garden is dug up by now and you can plant your potatoes.

"That is all I could do for you from here.

"Your loving son, Ahmed".

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



Foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. 6-9 squadron, 3rd brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, searches an Iraqi citizen's intimate personal possession in her house in al-Khala village outside Muqdadiyah, north of Baghdad, March 5, 2007. (AP Photo/Dusan Vranic)

[Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.]

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

The women and children were moved into a room, where they huddled together in silence. The men had been forced down onto their knees wherever they were apprehended, their hands secured behind their backs with plastic handcuffs and their eyes covered by makeshift blindfolds. YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal, 3.12.07

“In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit,” said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay’s Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday’s raid. “Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead.”

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

Retired General Reports Iraq Major Cities Controlled By Resistance Forces; “Their Sophistication, Numbers And Lethality Go Up – Not Down – As They Incur These Staggering Battle Losses”

One result is that “no Iraqi government official, coalition soldier, diplomat, reporter, foreign NGO, nor contractor can walk the streets of Baghdad, nor Mosul, nor Kirkuk, nor Basra, nor Tikrit, nor Najaf, nor Ramadi, without heavily armed protection.”

March 28, 2007 By Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpt]

An influential retired Army general released a dire assessment of the situation in Iraq, based on a recent round of meetings there with Gen. David H. Petraeus and 16 other senior U.S. commanders.

“The population is in despair,” retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey wrote in an eight-page document compiled in his capacity as a professor at West Point. “Life in many of the urban areas is now desperate.”

The government lacks dominance in every province, he added. One result is that “no Iraqi government official, coalition soldier, diplomat, reporter, foreign NGO,

nor contractor can walk the streets of Baghdad, nor Mosul, nor Kirkuk, nor Basra, nor Tikrit, nor Najaf, nor Ramadi, without heavily armed protection.”

Militias and armed bands are “in some ways more capable of independent operations” than the Iraqi army, he added.

McCaffrey is gloomy about the continuing strength of the insurgency.

At this point, he said, about 27,000 fighters are being held, and at least 20,000 others have been killed, yet enemy combatants continue to produce new leaders and foot soldiers.

The result, five years into the war, he said, is that “their sophistication, numbers and lethality go up – not down – as they incur these staggering battle losses.”

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

***Here's Some Big News For
Anybody That's Been Asleep Or
Brain-Dead This Month:***

**It's Not Bush's War Anymore;
It's The Democrats' Congress And
The Democrats' War;
[If Bush And Cheney Vanished From
The Face Of The Earth Tomorrow,
The War In Iraq Would Still Be There]**

[Duh]

The “slow bleed” policy has some toothless requirements for presidential assertions of progress like those we’ve heard for the past four years from the Administration; these reporting requirements allow “slow bleed” proponents to make the preposterous claim they are “ending the war” by funding it.

March 26, 2007 by Cindy Sheehan, Zmag.org [Excerpts]

THE DEMOCRATS ARE FUNDING IRAQ ESCALATION: The Democratic leadership has proposed \$100 billion of supplemental funding for an increased troop presence in Iraq.

The leadership opted for the "slow bleed" policy over a month ago.

This extends the occupation for at least another 18 months, and allows permanent placement of troops thereafter for “training” or “combating terrorism”.

The surge of 20,000 troops recently increased to 30,000 and will likely increase to 100,000 by year-end.

Will the hapless Democrats then claim, “If only I knew then what I know now” as they have for the past year?

The “slow bleed” policy has some toothless requirements for presidential assertions of progress like those we’ve heard for the past four years from the Administration; these reporting requirements allow “slow bleed” proponents to make the preposterous claim they are “ending the war” by funding it.

Amendments that would require withdrawal of US forces this year, the policy overwhelming favored by Americans, and the troops themselves, are not even being allowed for a vote by the leadership!

The shameless short-term purpose of the Democratic policy is to embarrass Republicans with a Senate filibuster of the supplemental, or a presidential veto, and the longer-term aim is to help Democrats in the 2008 election by saddling the Republicans with intervention in an untenable civil war.

The prolongation of the occupation is now opposed by two-thirds of all Americans; we want our troops safely home by this Christmas, not political chicanery.

As a consequence Americans now think even more poorly of Congress than ever; the failure to withdraw from Iraq dropped Democratic support of Congress from 44% to 33% according to the latest Gallup poll.

A year ago 72% of the troops in Iraq said all troops should come home in 2006 but politicians did not heed their message.

How much better we would be if our support included listening to them.

Not another drop of blood should be spilled to protect cowardice by both political parties.

MORE:

[And Anything Less Is Stupid, Silly, Time-Wasting Bullshit]

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

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.org/)

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/qispecial/2006/index.html>;

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

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

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

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.