

## GI SPECIAL 5D14:



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

**“Why Don’t We Just  
Go?”**

**“I Don’t Want To Be Here”**

**“If You’ve Been Here Four Years And  
The Country Ain’t Straight, Why  
Extend Another Three Months?”**

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

April 13, 2007 By Joshua Partlow and Sylvia Moreno, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

BAQUBAH, Iraq, April 12 -- They found out by reading exasperated e-mails from their spouses, hearing somber announcements from their platoon commanders, seeing

snippets of the secretary of defense at a televised news conference: The American soldiers who thought they were staying in Iraq one year would now stay 15 months. All of them.

**From Texas to Baghdad and Baqubah to the Beltway, the reaction Thursday among U.S. soldiers and their families to the news of the mass extension was akin to a collective groan.**

**“It flat-out sucks, that’s the only way I can think to describe it,” said Pvt. Jeremy Perkins, 25, who works in an engineering battalion that clears roadside bombs in the embattled city of Baqubah, about 35 miles northeast of Baghdad.**

“I found this out today from my squad leader. I still haven’t told my wife yet. I’m just trying to figure out exactly how I’m going to break it to her that ‘Honey, uh, yeah, might be home before our next anniversary. Sorry I missed the last one.’ “

At their base, FOB Rustamiyah, word spread of the prolonged tour of duty a day after a memorial ceremony for the battalion’s first casualty and a few minutes after a rocket crashed down just outside the front gate. The extension struck some as another grievous blow.

**“I was mad before I even heard about the 15 months.**

**“I don’t want to be here.**

**“I don’t think you need to sit here an extra three months to help people do what they don’t want to do for their dadburn selves,” said Sgt. Shawn Miller, 30.**

**“To me, if you’ve been here four years and the country ain’t straight, why extend another three months?**

**“Why don’t we just go?”**

It had been 2 1/2 weeks since Spec. Steven Johns had spoken with his wife in Lusby, Md., but he opened his e-mail Thursday to find a note from her wondering when he was coming home. He was expecting to leave Iraq in June. Now he doesn’t know if he will make his one-year wedding anniversary in October.

“I’m not happy about it. “It’s a rough thing, man, this isn’t the best place to be,” he said, lighting a cigarette outside the call center on base in Baqubah.

### **Troops Invited:**

**What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsub.**

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

### **Two U.S. Soldiers Killed, 7 Wounded In Attack On U.S. Base “South Of Baghdad”**

April 13, 2007 AP

Thursday, two soldiers were killed and seven wounded in an attack on their base south of the capital. The two Iraqi interpreters died in that attack.

The military statement said U.S. forces dispatched a quick reaction force and attack helicopters to relieve the unit.

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### **IED Kills One, Wounds One U.S. Soldier Also “South Of Baghdad”**

April 13, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE  
No. 20070413-06

BAGHDAD — An MND-B Soldier died and one other was wounded when their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device south of Baghdad April 12. The unit was conducting a security patrol in the area when the attack occurred.

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### **“‘My Brother Was Diagnosed With PTSD, Extreme Depression, And Still He Was Sent Back,’ She Said” Fort Carson Deaths Include Twice- Wounded Soldier On Third Iraq Tour**

April 13, 2007 The Associated Press

FORT CARSON, Colo. -- One was a sergeant who had survived a sniper attack and a roadside bomb in two earlier combat tours in Iraq.

Another was a private counting down the days to May, when he and his wife would go on the honeymoon trip they had never had the chance to take.

The third was a Montana ranchhand who had bought his own ranch, but would never get to settle on it.

The three Fort Carson soldiers, all with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, died this week in combat in Iraq, although it was unclear Thursday if they were killed in the same attack.

Sgt. Ismael Solorio, 21, of San Luis, Ariz., died Monday during his third Iraq deployment, his older sister, Elvira Solorio said. She did not know how he died and the Department of Defense had not released details Thursday.

Pfc. Brian Lee Holden, 20, of Claremont, N.C., a gunner with the brigade's 17th Field Artillery Regiment, was killed by a roadside bomb, his family said.

Pfc. Kyle G. Bohrsen, 22, of Philipsburg, Mont., of the brigade's 12th Infantry Regiment, died Tuesday after being wounded by a roadside bomb, the Pentagon reported.

"I'm not sure what I'm going to do," Holden's widow, Amanda Holden, 19, said Thursday from their North Carolina home. "It's really hard to be so young and have to go through this."

The couple had been married 13 months and had been saving every dime they made to buy a house, she said.

"He told me the other day he was ready to come home, buy a house, settle down and have kids," she said.

The two were planning a trip to Myrtle Beach, S.C., during his scheduled leave next month. She said it was going to be the honeymoon they were unable to take when they got married in March 2006, just months before he was sent overseas.

Those plans were changed when she returned home to find Holden's mother and two Army officers in her living room.

"As soon as I saw them I knew," she said.

Her birthday is Saturday and she received a card from him this week.

While they were at Fort Carson together, she said they loved hiking the trails around Pikes Peak and taking their miniature pinscher to Memorial Park. He husband was never without a smile and had a knack for cheering people up, she said.

Solorio, a high school honor student, passed up college scholarships to join the Army, his sister said. With his parents' permission, he enlisted at 17.

"I still can't believe he's gone," Elvira Solorio said from the family's home in San Luis, Ariz., south of Yuma. "I think we all deep inside feel it's not true. It's not possible."

He enjoyed soccer, video games and playing his guitar along with Christian music CDs. He also recently bought a pool cue with hopes of honing his billiard skills.

Solorio's family last saw him in January, when he was home on leave and was able to meet his infant daughter, Priscilla. Solorio had been home in September, hoping to be there when his daughter was born, but missed it by mere hours. He was on his way back to Fort Carson when his girlfriend went into labor.

"He was on the bus to Colorado, and we were in touch with him letting him know what was going on," Elvira Solorio said.

During his visit home in January, he married Priscilla's mother, Iris.

"I think in his mind he had a feeling that something was going to happen," his sister said. "He wanted to leave his daughter protected. As soon as he got here, everything was very fast. He was only married two days before he was sent back."

In November 2004, he was shot in the head by a sniper and family members were told to be prepared for the worst. A bullet entered the side of his face and shattered his jaw and teeth.

His sister said he had "the biggest smile I know with no teeth." She said the family wonders how he could have been fit for a third tour; in another incident, he was hit by shrapnel from a roadside bomb. He was awarded two Purple Hearts.

**"My brother was diagnosed with PTSD, extreme depression, and still he was sent back," she said of his third tour.**

Elvira Solorio said her family will miss her brother's generosity. When they were children, she said, her father would give them each \$5 to spend on outings to the local swap meet. She spotted a music box for \$10, and her brother gladly gave her his \$5 to help her buy it. She still owns the box.

"One thing I know for sure is that he's in heaven," she said, "because he deserved to be in heaven."

Bohrnsen, of Philipsburg, Mont., was an avid outdoorsman who loved hunting and fishing and bought land near his parents' ranch for when he left the Army, family members said. "He just had the kind of personality that everybody liked," said Geoff Bohrnsen, his father.

A lineman on his high school football team, Bohrnsen joined the Army about a year ago and loved the soldier's way of life, family said.

For Amanda Holden, the man she fell in love with at first sight when they worked at Petsmart was her life, and she's unsure of what to do next.

"I keep thinking that, you know, he was my future. And now I don't know what I've got."

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# Northern Indiana Soldier Dies In Iraq

Apr. 13, 2007 Associated Press

LaPORTE, Ind. - A soldier from northern Indiana whose brother was expected to be deployed later this year was killed in Iraq, his family said.

Army Spc. Jason Beadles, 22, of LaPorte, died Thursday, but military officials gave family members little information about his death, they said.

The Department of Defense had not confirmed Beadles death Friday morning.

His brother, Josh, also served in Iraq, returning to LaPorte three days before Jason left, said their mother, Delona Beadles. Josh Beadles is scheduled to return to Iraq in September, about a month before Jason was supposed to come home.

Jason Beadles was a heavy equipment operator in Iraq. His mother says the Army turned him from a teenage practical joker into a respectful soldier.

Officials told the family it would take two to three days before Beadles' body is brought to Maryland and another couple of days to South Bend. After that, it will be brought to LaPorte where he will be buried.

Beadles is the fourth Indiana soldier to die in Iraq in the past two weeks. His death raises to 76 the number of people from Indiana to have died after being sent to the Mideast since the buildup for the invasion of Iraq began in 2003.

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## Portland Soldier Killed In Baghdad

April 13, 2007 BY RUTH LIAO, Statesman Journal

A 37-year-old soldier from Portland driving a military vehicle was killed in Baghdad on Monday by an improvised explosive device, military officials said.

Army Pfc. Brett Andre Walton was killed about 6 p.m. while conducting combat operations, said Oregon Military Department public affairs spokeswoman Kay Fristad. Walton was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division out of Ft. Carson, Colo.

Officials are planning a memorial service at the Solid Rock Fellowship, 10500 SW Nimbus, Building T in Tigard, with internment at Willamette National Cemetery.

Walton is a graduate of Grant High School in Portland. He entered the Army on Sept. 13, 2006, and was deployed to Iraq on March 10.

Walton is survived by his wife, Lindsay; a daughter, Sydney, 5, of Sherwood; father Phillip Walton of Portland; mother Cassandra Phillips of Tigard; a brother, John; and sisters Cheryl and Kathleen.

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## NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP AND GO HOME



A U.S. Army soldier from 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment patrols a street in eastern Baghdad, Iraq, Dec. 30, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

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## “He Was A Soldier, He Believed In Being A Soldier”

Apr 13, 2007 KAUZ

What started off as a peaceful day of gardening quickly turned tragic for the Flores family when they saw two soldiers walking up their drive way.

“First things out my mouth were, not my son, but I already knew and my heart fell apart at that point, says Wilfred Jr.’s mother Vicky Flores. There are moments where I just start crying, says Wilfred Jr.’s sister Theresa Siegrist.

In 2004, Wilfred Flores Junior joined the army and was quickly deployed to Iraq, he was only eighteen years old . That decision didn’t come as a surprise to his parents, he was just following in their footsteps, both are retired officers

“We were proud of him for joining the army because it was his life long dream, says Wilfred Flores Sr.

Wilfred was a 10Th Mountain Infantry gunner stationed at Fort Drum, New York. During his last mission Saturday he swapped jobs with another soldier and took control of the wheel of their Humvee. That day their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. A sergeant was also killed, the soldier he swapped jobs with is still in the hospital.

"I would personally like to talk to him and tell him that it's OK. He shouldn't feel guilty for swapping places with my son, Vicky says.

Despite the fact that Wilfred Jr. was just days away from becoming an adult, the Flores family have no doubt in their mind their son was a hero.

"He was a soldier, he believed in being a soldier, that alone would make any parent proud, says Wilfred Sr.

Since Wilfred Jr. Wanted to continue his education after the military. His family has set up a scholarship fund with Cameron University's Agriculture Department. In lue of flowers they ask that you donate to that fund. Wilfred's funeral is expected to be held on April 15Th. The service will be held at Fort Sill and is open to the public.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **One Occupation Soldier Killed, Two Wounded; Nationality Not Announced**

13 April 2007 ISAF Public Information Office Release # 2007-302

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (13 April) - At approximately 9.30 a.m., an ISAF soldier died as a result of a firefiight in Southern Afghanistan.

Two other ISAF soldiers were injured and brought to an ISAF medical facility for treatment, their condition is not serious.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

### **15 Months In Iraq: "It's Going To Be A Huge Blow To The Morale Of The Guys That Are**



# **There,” Said Army National Guard Capt. Scott Stanford: “It’s Just One More Violation Of The Promise Between A Country And Its Military That This Administration Has Foisted Upon Us”**

April 12, 2007 Matthew B. Stannard, Anna Badkhen, S. F. Chronicle Staff Writers  
[Excerpt]

Active-duty soldiers will now serve 15 months in Iraq and Afghanistan instead of 12, an extension that Secretary of Defense Robert Gates portrayed as needed to maintain predictable troop levels, but it came as another painful sacrifice for the volunteer U.S. Army.

**“It’s going to be a huge blow to the morale of the guys that are there,” said Army National Guard Capt. Scott Stanford of Los Angeles, who served in Ramadi and now is active with Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a nonprofit advocacy group.**

“You start making plans -- planning weddings, hoping you’re going to make it home for the birth of kids -- and now you’re going to find out you’re going to stay over there,” he said.

**“Some percentage of the people that are extended are going to die or lose limbs or have traumatic brain injury ... It’s just one more violation of the promise between a country and its military that this administration has foisted upon us.”**

Marcie Puckett, 26, whose husband, Staff Sgt. Rob Puckett, 31, of Clarksville, Tenn., is on his third tour in Iraq with the 2-7 infantry battalion of the 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, said she had been planning a family vacation in Jamaica next February with their daughter Emily, 4, and 9-month-old son, Blake.

“We were going to make reservations next month. Now we’ll have to cancel that,” she said. “That just really stinks.”

“This will be hardest for the wives who have not been through this before,” Christina Teasley, 31, wrote in an e-mail. Her husband, Staff Sgt. John Teasley, 33, from Ormond Beach, Fla., is on his third tour in Iraq with the 2-7 infantry battalion.

“I know they were counting on 12-month deployments, which are hard enough,” wrote Christina Teasley, of Venice, Fla., who is a librarian at a technical college in Hinesville. “Several babies have been born since the guys deployed. ... Even though I told myself to prepare for this, it still hurts.

“On the bright side, it’s been 3 months to the day he left on this deployment -- only 365 days or so to go!”

**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**

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



Spc. Michael D. Rivera’s coffin after his funeral service March 21, 2007 in New York. He died March 7 in Baghdad, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

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## **U.S. Army Officers Getting Out Of War Service: “Anecdotal Evidence Of Collapse Is All Around”**

# “These Canaries Are Fleeing Their Cages In Frightening Numbers”

[Thanks to James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace & Phil G, who sent this in.]

4.12.07 Jim Lobe, IPS & April 11, 2007 By Bryan Bender, Boston Globe Staff [Excerpt]

Just as the Army has been forced to relax its recruitment standards, it has also been forced to shorten intervals between deployments. While the Army's recommended standard is a two-year interval between deployments that can last up to one year, the average current interval is substantially less; in some cases, as little as seven months.

Those stresses are particularly difficult to manage for mid-level officers, most of whom have families back at home and have already served as many as three and even four tours of duty in Iraq or Afghanistan.

While retention rates for these ranks remain strong, according to the Pentagon, some experts believe its statistics, which lag by several months, do not reflect what is actually taking place.

**“Today, anecdotal evidence of collapse is all around,” according to ret. Maj. Gen. Robert Scales, a former Rumsfeld adviser and a regular commentator on CNN, who previously was optimistic about the war and its impact on the Army.**

“The Army's collapse after Vietnam was presaged by a desertion of mid-grade officers (captains) and non-commissioned officers— Most left because they and their families were tired and didn't want to serve in units unprepared for war.”

“If we lose our sergeants and captains, the Army breaks again. It's just that simple. That's why these soldiers are the canaries in the readiness coal mine,” he told the Washington Times last week.

**“And... if you look closely, you will see that these canaries are fleeing their cages in frightening numbers.”**

Indeed, the Army is currently short about 3,000 mid-career officers, a number that will be impossible to make up as the army expands over the next five years -- a situation that Scales called “pretty much irreversible”.

**According to a report in the Boston Globe Wednesday, graduates from the military's officer training academy at West Point are choosing to leave active duty at the highest rate in more than three decades -- “a sign to many specialists,” the Globe said, “that repeated tours in Iraq are prematurely driving out some of the Army's top young officers.”**

Of the 903 officers commissioned on graduating from West Point in 2001, 54 percent had left the service by January of this year.

The figures mark the lowest retention rate of graduates after the completion of their mandatory duty since at least 1977, with the exception of members of three classes in the late 1980s who were encouraged to leave as the military downsized following the end of the Cold War.

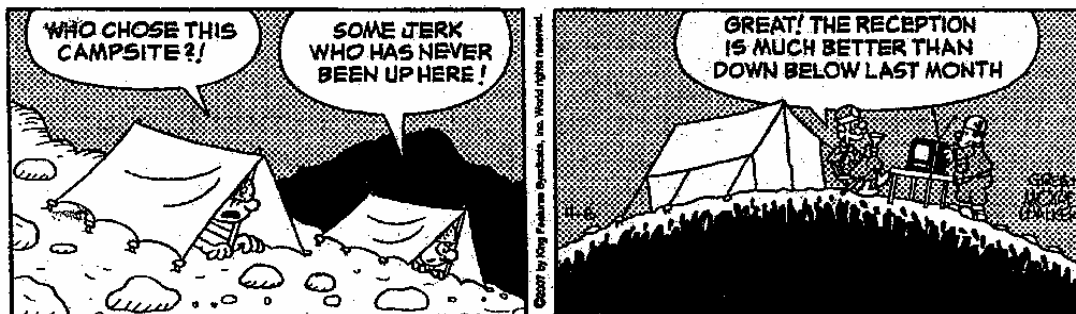
The Iraq War itself, with its repeated tours of duty and often-shifting military objectives, appears to have dissuaded more graduates than in recent history from continuing their military careers -- even as the Army has stressed that West Point training has become more important in an era of high-tech warfare.

**The sharpest increases in those leaving the military were among those whose commitments expired in 2005 and 2006, as many units were going back to Iraq and Afghanistan for their second and third tours. In each of those years, covering the classes of 2000 and 2001, about 35 percent got out at their earliest opportunity.**

[Senator Jack] Reed likened the departure of recently minted West Point graduates to the situation during the waning days of the Vietnam era, when “at the five-year mark you were losing a lot of officers because of the wear and tear.”

**Indeed, the percentages of recent graduates wanting to leave active duty may even be higher.**

**The numbers do not reflect those who may have been forced to stay longer than five years under the wartime authority known as “stop-loss,” in which the president can order troops with critical skills to remain on active duty.**



## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Assorted Resistance Action**

13 Apr 2007 Reuters & By Hussein Kadhmmim, McClatchy Newspapers

A roadside bomb killed one police commando and wounded three others when it exploded next to their patrol in Hilla, 100 km (60 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Baghdad -Around 7.00 a.m. a roadside bomb targeted an Iraqi police patrol killing one policeman and injuring 5 in Zafraniya neighborhood .

Diyala: LC Falih Hassan of the Iraqi national police was killed today after a road side bomb targeted his vehicle today after noon. Three of his body guards were killed.

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

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

## ***April 14, 1988: Very Happy Anniversary*** **Next To Last Government To Invade Afghanistan Withdraws In Defeat**



**Happy Russian soldiers going home.**

Carl Bunin Peace History April 9-15

April 14, 1988

The Soviet Union signed an agreement to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan after ten years of humiliating defeats at the hands of Afghan resistance forces.

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## **“If History Is Any Guide, The Democratic Party Will Be At Least As Determined As The Republicans To Advance U.S. Imperial Interests”**

April 13, 2007 BY LEE SUSTAR, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

GEORGE BUSH is promising to veto any Iraq war spending bill that includes a timeline--any timeline at all--for troop withdrawals.

**But the reality is that proposed legislation in the House would fund the occupation for virtually the remainder of Bush’s term.**

**The Democrats’ plan for withdrawal also makes a very big exception: U.S. troops who would remain in Iraq with the mission of “fighting terrorists” and protecting U.S. installations.**

Leaving aside numbers and timetables, the Democrats’ proposals reflect the Bush administration’s goal of creating a more stable Iraqi puppet state with its own armed forces, with the U.S. military taking a lower profile, but still a dominant role.

Bush’s all-but-certain veto of the Democrats’ war spending bill obscures the underlying unity of their Iraq perspectives, argues Noah Feldman, the New York University law professor who drafted the Iraqi constitution.

“It is not only that the (Democratic resolutions) were drafted and adopted with the certain knowledge that they would be vetoed,” he wrote in the April 8 New York Times Magazine. “More important, even if a future Democratic president did try to implement the new plans, the results would likely end up looking oddly similar to the Bush administration’s current strategy.”

“The ‘fight al-Qaeda’ strategy may be billed as a withdrawal plan, but it almost certainly could not and would not lead to a significant reduction in troop levels,” Feldman concludes. The reason: A total pullout of troops from Iraq would be the greatest strategic defeat in U.S. history, something neither the Republicans nor Democrats are yet prepared to face.

Certainly the Democrats’ challenge to Bush over the war reflects the pressure from the electorate, which used last November’s election to send an antiwar message and kick out the Republicans.

But the Democrats also have a different audience in mind--Corporate America, the military brass, the State Department and intelligence bureaucracies that are increasingly aghast at the self-destruction of the Bush administration and the damage it is inflicting on U.S. interests.

The contrast with the period following September 11, 2001, couldn't be greater. Then, Bush was handed the greatest opportunity for U.S. imperialism since Pearl Harbor--overwhelming political support for an aggressive, militarized foreign policy to secure U.S. interests in the post-Cold War world.

If the Democrats were perceived as political doormats during that period, it's because the "Bush doctrine" of pre-emptive war reflected the post-September 11 consensus in the U.S. ruling class.

Today, however, Bush is presiding over two failed occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and U.S. credibility has sunk to an all-time low. Thus, there is mounting pressure for the Democrats to present an alternative.

**IF HISTORY is any guide, the Democratic Party will be at least as determined as the Republicans to advance U.S. imperial interests.**

Democratic President Franklin Delano Roosevelt may be remembered for his New Deal social reforms of the 1930s, but it was his administration--and that of his successor, Harry Truman--that turned the Second World War into a vehicle for establishing U.S. hegemony in the West.

Democrat John F. Kennedy took the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and laid the basis for the war in Vietnam that was enormously expanded by his vice president and successor, Lyndon Johnson.

The next Democrat in the White House, Jimmy Carter, had a different role to play, carrying out damage control in the wake of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. His solution: intensify the Cold War.

It was today's "peace activist" Carter who authorized the doctrine of "limited" nuclear war in Europe under Presidential Directive 59; reinstated registration for the military draft; created the Rapid Deployment Force in the Middle East (the forerunner of today's Central Command); and declared that any outside military aggression in the Persian Gulf would be considered hostile to the United States. Known as the Carter Doctrine, this policy set the stage strategically for the U.S. wars on Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

The administration of Bill Clinton may seem peaceful in comparison with Bush's. But it was Clinton who presided over the expansion of NATO and the bombings and occupations of Bosnia and Kosovo in the Balkans. As Andrew Bacevich, the retired military colonel turned political scientist, put it, the Clinton years saw the "unprecedented militarization of U.S. foreign policy."

After two terms of George W. Bush, the Democrats are finding it easier to talk the antiwar talk on the campaign trail--to the enthusiasm of millions of people who want the disastrous Iraq war to end. But walking the walk will be a different matter.

A Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama or John Edwards in the White House may help rehabilitate the U.S. image abroad. But the nature of the Democratic Party and the imperatives of U.S. imperialism will strictly limit the changes in U.S. foreign policy.

Under a Democratic White House, challenging the U.S. war machine will continue to depend on resistance abroad--and protests at home.

**“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**

## 32 Years Later:



Beirut, Lebanon: A man sits in a house which still carries the scars of the 1975-1990 civil war. Lebanon marks the 32nd anniversary of the beginning of the 15-year war today. Photograph: Marwan Naamani/AFP/Getty Images. [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

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**“The Surge Is Working ... To Unite All Iraqis Against Us”**



**“Colin Powell Was Only Partially Right  
When He Warned ‘If You Break It, You  
Own It’”**

**“He Didn’t Add Is That The Locals Will  
Hate You For It, And Try To Kill You  
Every Day Until You Give It Back”**

April 10, 2007 By Robert Scheer, Truthdig [Excerpts]

Meanwhile, back in liberated Iraq, the anniversary of Saddam Hussein’s overthrow was marked by only one sign of public response:

**In the Shiite holy city of Najaf, hundreds of thousands gathered to burn American flags and otherwise denounce the United States. “Yes! Yes! Iraq. No! No! America,” chanted demonstrators organized by cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, reported the BBC.**

**“We were liberated from Saddam. Now we need to be liberated again. Stop the suffering. Americans leave now.”**

What part of “leave now” doesn’t [Senator Joseph] Lieberman get?

**Speaking of the rally called by Sadr to blast the Americans as Iraq’s “archenemy” and to demand “that the occupiers withdraw from our land,” Lieberman surreally sought to find a silver lining of support for U.S. policy: “(Sadr) is not calling for a resurgence of sectarian conflict. He’s striking a nationalist chord. He’s acknowledging that the surge is working,” he said.**

Ugh.

What tortured logic.

**Ponder that sentence for the sheer mendacity of its optimism, which conveniently ignores the fact that the nationalist chord is a stridently anti-American one.**

**Yes, there were Sunni clerics in the Najaf march and Sadr’s followers heeded his call to wrap themselves, literally, in the Iraqi flag while shunning sectarian slogans-but what united them was the demand to end the U.S. occupation, which Lieberman so fervently supports.**

**So apparently the surge is working ... to unite all Iraqis against us.**

**As Hazim al-Araji, one of Sadr’s top Baghdad representatives, described the by-all-accounts massive rally: “There are people here from all different parties and**

**sects. We are all carrying the national flag, which is a symbol of unity. And we are all united in calling for the withdrawal of the Americans.”**

**Yet, spinning like a top, Sen. Lieberman desperately finds solace in a resurgent Iraqi nationalism based on hatred of the United States.**

It is true that Sadr has consistently opposed the breakup of Iraq into three ethnicity-based entities, but it is scant comfort that this son of a famed Shiite cleric killed by Saddam Hussein should now, in a sentiment that a recent ABC News poll shows is shared by a majority of his countrymen, consider Iraq’s self-proclaimed liberators as evil occupiers.

Indeed, the legacy of Bush’s invasion is that the tired anti-U.S. nationalism of Saddam, never endorsed by the Shiite majority, now has a virulent energy that it never previously possessed.

**Colin Powell was only partially right when he warned before the U.S. invasion, “If you break it, you own it.”**

**What he didn’t add is that the locals will hate you for it, and try to kill you every day until you give it back.**

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## **Quick; Send The U.S. Border Patrol To Syria**

April 10, 2007 By JAMES G. ABOUREZK, US Senator for South Dakota, 1974-1980; Counterpunch.

At a lunch I attended with Margaret Scobey, who replaced Ted Kattouf as Ambassador to Syria, she commented that, “the problem we have with Syria is that they’re allowing insurgents to cross into Iraq from Syria to fight against our forces there.”

When I asked her why didn’t the United States have American troops guard the Syrian-Iraqi border to stop the fighters, her response was that the U.S. didn’t have enough troops to do so.

**At another meeting I had with President Al Assad, we discussed the issue, and he asked me to tell President Bush that he would like to have the U.S. Border Patrol come over and teach the Syrians how to prevent people from illegally crossing the border.**

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

# ***Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!***

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



An Iraqi citizen is forced to squat by a wall as he is questioned by U.S. soldiers during an invasion of his home in the middle of the night in Baghdad, April 10, 2007. (Bob Strong/Reuters)

**[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?]**

**"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!**

***Welcome To Liberated Iraq:  
Bush's Military Dictators Keep  
Associated Press Photographer In  
Prison A Year Charged With  
Nothing:  
"He's Just Being Held To Be Held"***

April 11, 2007 By DAVID CRARY, NEW YORK (AP)

**One year after his arrest, an Associated Press photographer is still being held at a prison camp in Iraq by U.S. military officials who have neither formally charged him with a crime nor made public any evidence of wrongdoing.**

Bilal Hussein was taken prisoner in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi on April 12, 2006. Twelve months later, the U.S. military claims it is justified in continuing to imprison him merely because it considers him a security threat.

"April 12 is a sad anniversary for Bilal's AP colleagues worldwide," said the AP's executive editor, Kathleen Carroll.

**"He has now been held by the U.S. military in Iraq for an entire year without formal charges or the due process that a democratic society demands."**

Paul Gardephe, the lawyer handling the case for the AP, recently returned from an extended visit to Iraq, where he spoke with military officials, journalists, Iraqi citizens and - for more than 40 hours - Hussein himself at the Camp Cropper prison near Baghdad's airport.

**"Bilal has done nothing to justify a year in detention without charges," Gardephe said. "The military has not provided any credible evidence to support the various accusations of criminal conduct that it has made."**

Dozens of journalists - mostly Iraqis - have been detained by U.S. troops or Iraqi security forces during the war, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect

Journalists. Most were released without a trial after short periods, and Hussein is the only one currently being held on such a long-term basis, according to CPJ executive director Joel Simon.

**“It’s unfathomable to me why, after an entire year, there has been no progress in terms of the legal process moving ahead,” Simon said. “If the U.S. government is affirming that they need time to develop evidence ... a year is plenty of time.”**

Hussein, 35, is allowed one-hour visits from family members once a month. His attorney and AP colleagues also are allowed to see him.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman, in a written response Tuesday to AP inquiries, said the case against Hussein has been reviewed four times - mostly recently in November - by three separate entities in Iraq, among them a review board that includes representatives of the Iraqi government and the U.S.-led coalition.

“Each of these independent, objective, fact-finding reviews considered all available evidence and determined Hussein represented an imperative threat to security and recommended continued detention,” Whitman said.

**Gardephe dismissed the legality of such hearings.**

**He pointed out that Hussein was not present and had no legal representative at those reviews, and had no chance to confront any witnesses against him or call witnesses on his own behalf.**

Numerous journalism organizations have voiced support for the AP demand that Hussein be released, and many newspapers have called for that in editorials.

During his visit, Gardephe said he met at length with U.S. military officials, discussing each of the nine informal allegations that have been cited as justifying Hussein’s detention.

**Gardephe said U.S. officials indicated they lacked solid evidence on seven of the allegations and could not reveal the evidence they did have on the other two allegations because it was classified.**

**One of those allegations is that Hussein offered to provide false identification to a sniper who was seeking to evade capture, while the other is that he took photographs that were synchronized with insurgent explosions, Gardephe said.**

**Gardephe disputed the validity of both those allegations.**

**False identification cards have long been easily available from a variety of sources in Iraq, and Gardephe said insurgents would likely have a ready supply without having to turn to an AP photographer for one.**

**He also noted that the military didn’t even claim Hussein actually provided a false ID, just that he allegedly made an offer.**

As for the photo allegation, Gardephe said he examined all of the more than 900 photographs Hussein submitted to the AP during a 20-month period before his detention. "There are no photos that are synchronized with an explosion," he said.

***"The absence of evidence leads to the conclusion that Bilal is being held because of the photographs he took for the AP - which were published around the world - and which were part of AP's Pulitzer Prize-winning submission in 2005," Gardephe said.***

Hussein is among a number of news photographers and television cameramen working in Iraq's Anbar province who have been arrested.

"We continue to believe that Bilal is being held simply because his photos from volatile Anbar province were unwelcome," said Carroll. "We hold him close in our thoughts as we continue to work toward a resolution that will lead to his freedom."

Gardephe said that during his visits at Camp Cropper, Hussein looked healthy and made no complaints of recent mistreatment.

**"He hasn't been interrogated since May 2006, so he clearly is not being held for intelligence value," the attorney added.**

**"He's just being held to be held."**

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## ***Tal Afar:*** **Slaughter Where Bush Bragged Of** **Success**

April 13, 2007 By Ellie Fingerman, Seattle; Socialist Worker

JUST HOW much worse the situation in Iraq has become was evident recently when a vicious massacre took place in the city of Tal Afar.

Described by the New York Times as "one of the bloodiest chapters in Iraq's sectarian strife," this northwestern city of about 200,000 witnessed a gruesome explosion of truck bombs, which killed 83 people and wounded 185--followed by a retaliatory killing spree by the local police force, who dragged 70 people into the street and shot them, execution style.

All of this, by itself, is horrifying.

But what makes this particular event even more appalling is that in a long speech given three years ago in 2004, President Bush nauseatingly repeated over and over again that Tal Afar was a model example of a successful result of U.S. military operations in Iraq.

Bush described in giddy detail how “Operation Restoring Rights” had created a city where there existed a “professional police force that all sides could have confidence in”; where the “terrorists... have been driven out or put on the run”; and where “if you’re a resident of Tal Afar today, this is what you’re going to see:...your children going to school and playing safely in the streets...markets opening...a city that is coming back to life.”

Now, three years later, residents of Tal Afar see the same police force pulling people outside of their homes and killing them. They see drivers luring people to trucks pretending to give out free flour, and then detonating bombs.

And instead of seeing children playing safely in the street, Tal Afar resident Salih Qaddaw described what he saw: “I haven’t heard or seen such a massacre in my life. Bodies accumulated in the streets.”

**Tal Afar is yet another vivid example of why the only real solution to ending the crisis in Iraq is to get the U.S. military out--now.**

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## **Cash For Dead Iraqis, Sometimes: “‘I Had Three To Four Times More,’ Mr. Tracy Said, ‘I Just Didn’t Have Enough Money’”**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

April 12, 2007 PAUL von ZIELBAUER, The New York Times & April 13, 2007 Ewen MacAskill in Washington, The Guardian [Excerpts]

**In February 2006, nervous American soldiers in Tikrit killed an Iraqi fisherman on the Tigris River after he leaned over to switch off his engine.**

**A year earlier, a civilian filling his car and an Iraqi Army officer directing traffic were shot by American soldiers in a passing convoy in Balad, for no apparent reason.**

The incidents are among many thousands of claims submitted to the Army by Iraqi and Afghan civilians seeking payment for noncombat killings, injuries or property damage American forces inflicted on them or their relatives.

**In the case of the fisherman in Tikrit, he and his companion desperately tried to appear unthreatening to an American helicopter overhead.**

**“They held up the fish in the air and shouted ‘Fish! Fish!’ to show they meant no harm,” said the Army report attached to the claim filed by the fisherman’s family.**

**The Army refused to compensate for the killing, ruling that it was “combat activity,” but approved \$3,500 for his boat, net and cellphone, which drifted away and were stolen.**

**In the killings at the gas station in Balad, documents show that the Army determined that the neither of the dead Iraqis had done anything hostile or criminal, and approved \$5,000 to the civilian’s brother but nothing for the Iraqi officer.**

**In another incident, in 2005, an American soldier in a dangerous Sunni Arab area south of Baghdad killed a boy after mistaking his book bag for a bomb satchel. The Army paid the boy’s uncle \$500.**

The Foreign Claims Act, which governs such compensation, does not deal with combat-related cases. For those cases, including the boy’s, the Army may offer a condolence payment as a gesture of regret with no admission of fault, of usually no higher than \$2,500 per person killed.

In Haditha, one of the most notorious incidents involving American troops in Iraq, the Marines paid residents \$38,000 after troops killed two dozen people in November 2005.

The relatively small number of claims divulged by the Army show patterns of misunderstanding at checkpoints and around American military convoys that often result in inadvertent killings.

Among the files is one relating to a mother shot dead and her two children wounded when the taxi they were in went through a checkpoint at Baqubah, north of Baghdad, in February last year.

**The US defence department file said: “While the matter is still under investigation, there is evidence to suggest that the warning cones and printed checkpoint signs had not yet been displayed in front of the checkpoint, which may be the reason why the driver of the taxi did not believe he was required to stop.”**

The case has since been resolved and the US military has paid out \$7,500 (£3,750).

In September 2005, soldiers killed a man and his sister by firing 200 rounds into their car as it approached a checkpoint, apparently too quickly, near Mussayib.

The Army lieutenant colonel who handled the claim awarded relatives a \$10,000 compensation payment, finding that the soldiers had overstepped the rules of engagement.

“There are some very tragic losses of civilian life, including losses of whole families,” said Anthony D. Romero, the A.C.L.U.’s executive director, in an interview. He said the claims showed “enormous confusion on all sides, both from the civilian population on how to interact with the armed services and also among the soldiers themselves.”

The Army usually assigns a captain, major or lieutenant colonel to accept claims in Iraq and Afghanistan and decide on payment.



But in and near combat zones in Iraq, a claim's merit is quickly judged by an officer juggling dozens of new claims each week, said Jon E. Tracy, a former Army captain and lawyer who adjudicated Iraqi civilian claims in the Baghdad area from May 2003 through July 2004.

**“I know plenty of lawyers who did not pay any condolences payments at all,” said Mr. Tracy, who is now a legal consultant for the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict.**

**“There was no reason for it. It was clearly not combat, and the victim was clearly innocent, all the facts are there, witness statements, but they wouldn't pay them.”**

Another file, from the 101st Airborne Division, deals with a claim for \$4,800 from a father whose son was shot dead in a car at a checkpoint between Baghdad and Kirkuk in 2005.

**A sergeant dealing with it writes: “How was he supposed to know to get out of the vehicle when they fired warning shots? If I was in his place I would have stayed put too.” In spite of his comments, the claim was turned down.**

Half of the claims he adjudicated were property damage claims from collisions with military vehicles, he said. Most fraudulent claims were property claims; few were for wrongful killings. “You just had to read people,” he said.

About a quarter of claims were for personal injury or deaths.

**In his year judging claims, Mr. Tracy said he paid 52 condolence payments, most for deaths.**

**“I had three to four times more,” Mr. Tracy said, “I just didn't have enough money.”**

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## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

# **Children's Playground And Women's Recreation Tent Latest Targets; Zionist Regime Intensifies Its Torment Of Old City Palestinians**

April 4, 2007 Press Release, Playgrounds for Palestine

The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem has recently served demolition orders for a playground and six houses in the Old City. The playground is part of a larger recreation

facility for women and children at Burj Al Luq Luq Social Centre in the Moslem Quarter of the Old City.

**Based on previous attempts to remove this facility, it seems this space has been coveted in order to build 30 homes, a synagogue and religious school for Jews only.**

These latest orders must be seen in the context of the ongoing policy of the Judaization of Jerusalem and the systematic destruction of facilities that foster education and childhood among Palestinian children. The current demolitions, like all others, have been ordered in flagrant contravention of International law and of UN resolutions on the status of East Jerusalem.

**Of course, this is not the first time Israel has demolished playgrounds or targeted children, in particular:**

**On February 22, 2006, Israeli occupation forces bulldozed a brand new public park - including a playground and swimming pool - that had been funded by the United States, on the pretext here was that it was built "illegally."**

Ironically, Israel's entire presence and protocols in the occupied territories have been universally condemned as illegal based on the UN Resolution 242 and the 4th Geneva Convention, among other tenets of international law.

**On January 10th of this year, the Haaretz reported the demolition of the only playground in an "unrecognized" Arab community where 200 children had only garbage dumps in which to play prior to assistance from the European Union to build a playground there.**

**Again, the pretext in this case was that the playground was built "illegally".**

These and many other instances of playground demolitions are just a few examples of the numerous ways Israel targets Palestinian children.

We, the Board of Directors of Playgrounds for Palestine, add our voice to that of the Board of Burj Al Luq Luq Social Centre to appeal to the International Community to intervene on behalf of Palestinian children by exerting pressure on Israel to respect international law and to halt its policy of destroying Palestinian society.

We ask all NGOs working in the field of Child Rights to consider how the demolition of a children's playground violates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We ask people of all religions around the world to stand beside the Muslim and Christian residents of Jerusalem in resisting this latest attack whose principal victims are local women and children.

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[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **Bush Fires Senate Judiciary Committee: Critics Question Timing of Decision**

April 9, 2007 The Borowitz Report

In a move that seems guaranteed to create more controversy for his embattled administration, President George W. Bush today fired the entire Senate Judiciary Committee.

Critics were quick to question the timing of the president's decision, coming as it did just days before Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' scheduled appearance before the Senate panel on Thursday.

But in a briefing with the White House press corps today, Mr. Bush insisted that the mass sacking of the Senate Judiciary Committee had "nothing to do with" Mr. Gonzales' impending appearance.

"I just thought these folks needed to spend more time with their families," Mr. Bush said. "Especially that bastard Ted Kennedy."

Immediately after the president announced his decision, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee cried foul, arguing that the President has no constitutional authority to fire members of the U.S. Senate.

But Mr. Bush was quick to shoot back, telling reporters, "The only people who can determine what is constitutional and what is not is the U.S. Supreme Court, and as of today, I have decided to can them, too."

With the sudden increase in the volume of firings coming out of the White House, insiders have wondered whether Mr. Bush intends to do all of the sacking himself or whether he would seek additional help to share the workload.

Mr. Bush seemed to answer that question today, when he appointed a new "special assistant to the President": billionaire Donald Trump.

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# ***Sometimes Dreams Come True: Army Sending New Bomb-Detecting Robot To Iraq***



REUTERS/Jason Reed

Army personnel demonstrate a new integrated two-part bomb detection robot at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California April 4, 2007.

The robot will be sent to Iraq and used to detect IEDS that are being used against American troops by Iraqi insurgents.

## **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/](http://www.ivaw.org/))

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