

GI SPECIAL 5D30:



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

Boston: 1775

Baghdad: 2007

**“The Longer American Troops
Stay The Longer They Will Be
Seen As Oppressors”**

**“Conquering Foreign Soldiers Will Be
Resisted In Iraq, As They Have Always
Been Everywhere Down The Centuries”**



An Iraqi holds his mother after she suffered a panic attack following the questioning and near-detainment of her son by US Army soldiers from the 5-20 Infantry Division during the launch of Operation Arrowhead Strike Six in the Shaab neighborhood of northern Baghdad, 06 February 2007. (AFP/David Furst)

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

In early April 1775, the British governor of Boston sent John Howe out to gather intelligence in that hotbed of insurgency now called the western suburbs, but then the Anbar province of its time.

March 13, 2007 by H.D.S. Greenway, The Boston Globe [Excerpts]

WHAT THE president and proponents of the "surge" in Iraq have underestimated is the loathing Iraqis have of foreign troops bursting into their houses, shoot-to-kill checkpoints, and the humiliation occupation brings.

Foreign troops legitimize insurgency.

A photograph by Agence France-Presse reminded me why the surge is unlikely to achieve anything more than temporary success, and is doomed to ultimate failure.

The photograph [above] shows four American soldiers, dressed in full, intimidating battle gear, around the periphery of a Baghdad living room. In the center, on the carpeted floor, lies a collapsed woman in a traditional black dress.

A man, identified as her son, is holding her in his arms. His feet are bare, as if he were caught by surprise.

But what arrests the eye is the look of horror and terror on his face as he looks up at an armed, gesticulating soldier. Another soldier has taken the liberty of making

himself at home on the sofa. The caption tells us only that the mother has fainted when her son was "questioned."

The Washington Post's Joshua Partlow recently wrote about how American soldiers tried to be friendly and kind. "During their six-hour patrol they handed out Iraqi newspapers and packets of gum . . . But machine gun-toting Americans rooting through bedrooms, inspecting weapons, and demanding identification cards clearly unsettle some residents."

They do more harm than unsettle. One US soldier told Partlow: "I was here the last time, in the beginning. Now that's totally changed. They don't even respect us anymore. They spit at us, they throw rocks at us. It wasn't like that before."

Americans may try to do their jobs humanely, but the nature of their business is coercive, brutal, and ultimately counterproductive.

The longer American troops stay the longer they will be seen as oppressors, and because they have to do their job, the more pictures we will see of cowering, frightened, and humiliated Iraqis.

To say American soldiers are creating stability in the cause of Iraqi national reconciliation doesn't wash.

All the Iraqi political leaders live near or in the Green Zone, and they could cut their deals in perfect security anytime they wanted. The point is they want power not reconciliation.

And so conquering foreign soldiers will be resisted in Iraq, as they have always been everywhere down the centuries.

In early April 1775, the British governor of Boston sent John Howe out to gather intelligence in that hotbed of insurgency now called the western suburbs, but then the Anbar province of its time.

Howe met an old man cleaning his rifle who looked too old to hunt game.

The old man said he expected foreign soldiers -- "a flock of redcoats" -- would be arriving soon, and he thought they would make good targets.

Arrive they did, and with them the American revolution that in many states degenerated into civil war.

The British soldiers were mostly of the same race and religion as the people they fought, but they were by then foreigners, and eight years later they were gone.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Indiana Soldier Dies In Iraq



Pfc. David Austin Kirkpatrick

April 29, 2007 The Indy Channel

MATTHEWS, Ind. -- A family member said Sunday that another Indiana soldier was killed in Iraq.

U.S. Army Pfc. David Austin Kirkpatrick, 20, of Matthews, was killed Friday, according to his sister, Carrie Kirkpatrick. Matthews is about 55 miles northeast of Indianapolis.

Kirkpatrick was a 2006 graduate of Eastbrook High School

Military officials told Kirkpatrick's parents that he was in a Humvee when it was damaged by an improvised explosive device.

Carrie Kirkpatrick said there was no definite date for her brother's remains to be returned home. "They told us that seven to 10 days from now, he would be back," she said.

Jones-Smith Funeral Home in Upland is handling funeral arrangements.

In all, 80 people from Indiana have died after being sent to the Mideast since the buildup for the invasion of Iraq began in 2003.

Soldier From 2 RIFLES Killed In Iraq

29 Apr 07 Ministry of Defence [UK]

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier from 2nd Battalion The Rifles (2 RIFLES) has been killed in a small arms fire attack whilst on a routine patrol in the Al Ashar district, east of central Basra at about 0930hrs this morning, Sunday 29 April 2007.

The soldier was dismounted from his vehicle and carrying out routine checks at the time of the incident.

He was immediately evacuated to Basra Palace but subsequently died of his injuries.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



A US soldier secures the site of a car bomb while another takes pictures of the wreckage of a vehicle in Baghdad's Jadiriya district, 26 April 2007. (AFP/Ahmad al-Rubaye)

Basra: “Thundering Rocket And Mortar Strikes Have Become A Near-Daily Occurrence At British Bases In This City”

April 29, 2007 By Alexandra Zavis, Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

BASRA, IRAQ — If it weren't for the alcohol-free drinks, the scene could have been straight out of an English pub.

Young men sat in animated groups, sipping milkshakes and mugs of milky tea in a cozy, wood-paneled room.

Others tucked into heaping plates of fish and chips. The TV was tuned to a soccer match, a game of pool was underway, and pop music pulsed in the background.

Until a crashing explosion sent everyone diving to the floor. For the next 10 minutes, the patrons of the restaurant at a British base here lay on their stomachs, waiting for the all-clear to sound.

Once an island of relative tranquillity in the mostly Shiite Muslim south, Basra has suffered a dramatic turnaround in the last two years.

Thundering rocket and mortar strikes have become a near-daily occurrence at British bases in this city. British soldiers who once patrolled on foot in berets and no body armor now venture downtown only in armored convoys.

Through most of 2006, British forces had recorded an average of 20 significant attacks per week in the four southern provinces under their control: Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Maysan and Basra.

The number increased steadily from September, peaking at 90 incidents per week in February, and dropping to about 50 in March and April, said Lt. Col. Kevin Stratford-Wright, a British military spokesman.

British soldiers in Basra have grown so accustomed to the shelling that when the siren sounds at night, some roll out of their cots and fall back to sleep face-down on the floor in their flak vests and helmets.

Most of the attacks do little harm, but six soldiers were injured in shelling recently at Basra palace.

Notes From A Hopeless War:

The Butchers Of Baghdad:
Desperate Command Orders U.S.
Occupation Artillery To Shell
Civilian Neighborhoods



Soldiers with the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division fire a 105 mm howitzer during an operation at a military base in Mahmudiya, south of Baghdad April 28, 2007. REUTERS/Bob Strong

4.29.07 BAGHDAD (AP)

U.S. forces fired an artillery barrage in southern Baghdad Sunday morning, rocking the capital with loud explosions.

The size and the pattern of the explosions, which began after 9 a.m. and lasted for at least 15 minutes, suggested they were directed at Sunni neighborhoods along the city's southern rim.

In a brief statement to The Associated Press, the U.S. military said it fired the artillery from a forward operating base near Iraq's Rasheed military base southeast of Baghdad, but provided no other details.

Iraqis in the southern region of the city said American and Iraqi forces had stepped up their operations in the Dora area of southern Baghdad starting Saturday night.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“Angry Protesters Chanting ‘Death To Bush’ And ‘Death To Karzai’ Demonstrated In Eastern Afghanistan”

29/04/07 RAHIM FAIEZ, Associated Press, KABUL, Afghanistan:

Hundreds of angry protesters chanting “Death to Bush” and “Death to Karzai” demonstrated in eastern Afghanistan after U.S.-led coalition and Afghan forces raided a suspected car bomb cell early Sunday, leaving four militants and two female civilians dead, officials said.

“Their operation was based on incorrect reports, and they carried out a cruel attack on these houses,” said local resident Akhtar Mohammad at the protest. “We are not the enemy, we are not al-Qaida. Why are they attacking us?”

Abdul Mohammad, a Nangarhar police investigator, said the operation early Sunday left five civilians dead, including two women.

He said villagers had taken the bodies to the main highway and blocked the road in an angry hours-long protest. They lashed out at President Bush and his Afghan counterpart, Hamid Karzai, as well as the governor of Nangarhar.

The villagers brought the bodies Sunday morning to the main highway between Jalalabad and Torkham, where hundreds of demonstrators came to protest the deaths, he said.

After the villagers dispersed, police worked to clear dozens of large trees that the protesters felled to block the road.

The latest violence is likely to deepen distrust among Afghans, whose support for international forces and the shaky U.S.-backed government is waning.

Pakistan Truckers Strike May Cut Off Oil Supplies For U.S. Afghan Occupation Forces

Shakir Afridi, a Pakistani transporter, told Dawn that truckers' representatives have relayed their demands to the Afghan government in Kabul. But they were also in talks with companies to halt the oil supply to foreign forces in Afghanistan from Sunday, he said.

April 29 2007 Independent Online.

Islamabad - Supplies of oil to US and NATO troops in Afghanistan may be disrupted after truckers angry at high taxes and extortion sealed a key route from Pakistan, a press report said on Sunday.

Hauliers that have blocked traffic at the Torkham crossing point near the Pakistani city of Peshawar since Friday are seeking to bring tanker firms into the dispute, commercial transporters told the Dawn newspaper.

The US forces in Afghanistan were unable to comment on the impact of the strike on their oil supplies but noted that the blockade was organized on the Pakistani side of the border.

Pakistani and Afghan trucking companies mounted the action in response to a steep hike in road taxes in 2006 and the extortion by warlords and security personnel in Afghanistan of large sums of money from drivers.

Landlocked Afghanistan receives most of its imports via the Pakistani sea port of Karachi. More than 350 trucks reportedly carry an average of 7 000 tons of goods each day from Peshawar to Kabul and eastern and northern Afghanistan via the Khyber Pass.

Every truck pays the equivalent of 6,500 US dollars in taxes and bribes each year, Sawab Khan, a member of the truckers' association, told the BBC.

"This is too much for our transporters, who are mostly poor and hard-pressed to make both ends meet," he said.

Shakir Afridi, a Pakistani transporter, told Dawn that truckers' representatives have relayed their demands to the Afghan government in Kabul. But they were also in talks with companies to halt the oil supply to foreign forces in Afghanistan from Sunday, he said.

Scores of trucks have had to dump cargoes at warehouses in Peshawar because of the protest, which has disrupted supplies to eastern and northern Afghanistan. As well as oil, many other goods used at foreign military bases are trucked in from Pakistan.

Supplies to southern and western Afghan provinces are sent through the Pakistani city of Quetta and across the Chaman border point in the Balochistan province. Companies working the route say they encounter fewer problems and are not planning to strike.

TROOP NEWS

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



The body of Lance Cpl Daniel R. Scherry, 20, at Our Lady of Angels Church following his funeral services on April 28, 2007 in Cleveland, Ohio. Scherry was killed on April 16th in Iraq. (AP Photo/Amy Sancetta)

Latest News From The Stop The War Brigade In Germany; “This ‘Dream’ I Shared With Other People Here About IVAW Members Coming Over, To Assist Us And Play A Leading Role, Is Materializing”

From: Stop The War Brigade
To: GI Special
Sent: April 26, 2007 6:01 AM
Subject: RE: Tour

We have received pledges to cover the costs of the airfare of several Iraqi War Vets coming to Germany from several German Anti-War/Peace Organizations. The response has been encouraging.

We need to see what can be done in the next few days.

Our original goal was to have at least 10 Vets make the trip. That number would allow us to put together a diverse group of Iraq War Vets.

Before I forget. We would to encourage Veterans of all wars and armies to join us in Ansbach for the festivities, next month.

We won't be able to finance your trip but if you're thinking about going on vacation this Summer then think about changing your plans and either come over or donate that money to someone who can.

I'm talking particularly about WWII, Korean War and Viet Nam War Veterans and anything in-between. There is a role for you to play in this struggle. Your presence will not be taken lightly.

Many of you have been out there before, when we needed you. Think about picking up the banner one more time. You can contact us (STWB) or the Iraq Veterans Against The War directly for further information.

Dreams often turn into reality, and it seems that this "dream" I shared with other people here about IVAW members coming over, to assist us and play a leading role, is materializing.

No one, at this moment, can predict the outcome but I'm confident that our joint efforts will lead to Soldier's and Iraqi's lives being saved.

I'm also sending a copy of a speech I had the honor of giving February 4, 2006 of last year at a demonstration against the NATO Security Conference that was being held in Munich.

In my haste to write this speech, last year, I erroneously wrote that a scientist had the conversation with the Alien in the Film "Independence Day". The fact of the matter is that the dialogue took place between the President of the United States and the Alien. Here is the actual dialogue:

President of the USA: "I know there is much that we can learn from each other, if we can negotiate a Truce. We can find a way to co-exist. Can there be a peace between us?"

Alien: "Peace? No Peace.

President of the USA: "What is it that you want us to do?"

Alien: "Die !!!"

Ciao,

Darnell Stephen Summers
"Stop The WAR Brigade"

MORE:

**“We Are Now Living Under The
Threat Of Perpetual War, Fighting An
Enemy That Has Been Defined By
Scoundrels”**

**“They’re Doing The Same Thing Today
That They Did During The Viet Nam War.
Lie”**

**SPEECH AT THE COUNTER DEMONSTRATION:
NATO SECURITY CONFERENCE
Munich 4.2.2006**

By Darnell Stephen Summers, "Stop The WAR Brigade"

Hello Everybody,

I know it's cold so I won't talk too long.

Do you like to go to the movies? I do. I like science fiction and some films give you a remarkable look into the future. I used to watch the Star Trek series when it first ran on TV back in the 60's before I went to the Army.

Captain Kirk and his crew had laser weapons and what we call Handys today. Yes sometimes the writers have an eye on the future and can predict technological advances based on the knowledge of research at that time.

Now stay with me on this one.

I'm a Roland Emmerich fan.

A lot of people on the left didn't like his film "Independence Day". But I thought it was great and in my estimation it gave some insight into global problems that we face today.

There is one scene in that film that's my favorite and I find it very revealing. Will Smith plays a pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps and if you've seen the film you know that he gets involved in an aerial battle with one of the aliens that have invaded earth to plunder it and take all of its Treasures and Resources away.

These aliens just travel thru the Universe ripping everyone off they encounter.

Sound familiar?

Well, Will destroys the alien's spaceship but in the process he has himself to crash land. He finds out that the alien has survived, so Will drags him back to a Base where the alien is interrogated.

A well meaning scientist attempts to communicate with the alien and tells him that they could learn so much from one another and that there's no need for violence. Then the scientist, noticing some irritation on the part of the alien, puts a serious question to him.

He asks, "what can we do so that we can get along? and the alien answers almost immediately, "Die".

End of conversation.

I thought to myself," Damn, that's America!!!"

My name is Darnell Stephen Summers. I live here in Germany. I'd like to tell You a little about myself and why I'm here today to talk to you.

You should be concerned and there are many things to be concerned about. My message goes out to everyone on the planet but especially to the Youth. To those who will have an uncertain future after I'm long dead and gone.

I'm talking about my children and yes I'm a grandfather and that's a wonderful Thing. I'd like to think that their future is secure but I know it isn't. I can say that because my future, your future, our future is not certain.

It is less certain than it ever was.

We are now living under the threat of perpetual war, fighting an enemy that has been defined by scoundrels.

We live in fear.

The US is sending young men and women to other countries that most of them have never heard of. That sounds good to someone who's unemployed. They go there ultimately to kill and destroy.

Imagine, your first time away from home and you're responsible for so much suffering.

This is not like going to Mallorca on vacation. You're there because some slick-talking recruiter has fed you a line of bullshit.

He tells you how you'll get some job training, you'll go to faraway and exotic places, you can even go to University after your time is up. Now that sounds good to a young person who has no perspective on life, no job, and no future.

If your only recreation is going to the shopping Mall and McDonalds on the weekend then you'll do practically anything to get away and they know that and use it to their advantage.

They sell you a one-way ticket to hell.

They lie to them just to suck them into the system, just like they lie to you. You say, "no that's not my government, I'm German," but your government is sleeping in the same bed with the US at a cheap hotel called NATO.

That's a devious game that they play. Pitting us all against each other. That's right.

When they lie and get away with it they insult our intelligence and take away our dignity. That's unacceptable no matter how you look at it. They've been lying and killing every one of the 58 years that I've lived.

But there is hope and my standing up here is a sign of that.

The NATO Countries are meeting here in Munich to plan their next military Adventure. For those who've been saying this is not about oil, you're wrong, so terribly wrong.

But this is more than just about oil. Oil is just part of the problem. It's about every natural resource on this planet. They want to secure any and everything they need to keep their machine running and their system intact.

I don't know who is really responsible for the brutal attack on the WTC but I have my suspicions. I smell a rat. Shortly after that attack on the WTC September 11, 2001, AMERINATO, that's America and all of the members of NATO, started to attack Afghanistan. If you see one the other is not far away.

Afghanistan, one of the poorest nations on the face of the Earth.

Why?

These poor countries have something they have to have, something these industrial countries cannot live without: everything.

I'm not a pacifist but I believe in peace. Peace on this planet is as far away as Pluto. We all know that peace is not a reality at this time.

These people who have power and influence over us teach us to hate anyone who is not like us, and in the end they teach you to hate yourself for not being like "them".

They want to give you the feeling that there's nothing you can do to challenge them. They want us to believe that they are all powerful and invincible.

They have some people believing that, but I know it isn't true.

Just to show you how twisted they all are, they've invited John McCain who is also a Viet Nam veteran to this conference. He was a pilot during the war and was shot down over North Viet Nam while on a bombing mission. He was bombing innocent men, women and children. He was destroying lives, killing people, and now they want to give him an award for coming out against torture.

What a joke. He's not against torture. He wants to skip that step and just kill them all.

He spent a few years as a prisoner of war in Viet Nam and then was released and allowed to go back the US. So the media made this murderer a hero and gave him a seat in the U.S. Senate so he could spread his venom, his poison.

John McCain, kiss my ass.

They're doing the same thing today that they did during the Viet Nam War. Lie.

They lied from start to finish and guess what, NATO was right there with them with Germany playing a pivotal role.

In closing allow me to state that I can't say this often enough,

"They want to destroy the world, We want to save it.

That's the difference between us and them."

Thank You.

WAR DEBATE:

SHOULD THE US WITHDRAW FROM IRAQ NOW?

U.S. ARMY RECRUITER VS. ANTI-WAR OFFICER

**MAY 3RD, 2007: 7:00 PM-9:00 PM
AT THE RENAISSANCE CHARTER SCHOOL
QUEENS, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK**

[Note well: Fabian Bouthillette is a member of Iraq Veterans Against The War, which is not clear below. He is also active with the Military Project. T]

Located at 81st Street & 37th Avenue, Jackson Heights, Queens (Take the #7 train to 82nd St. Stop) There is (minimal) street parking if you wish to drive.

Dear Colleagues, Friends and Family Members,

Queens AntiWar Committee is sponsoring a ground-breaking Debate between U.S. Army Captain Krasnesky and Iraq Veteran Against the War, Fabian Bouthillette.

Please make your best effort to attend, and forward this email to your friends and colleagues for their information. We will hear from both sides, and learn about the perspectives of military recruiters as well as the experiences of those who have actually fought in the Iraq War.

Audience members will be asked to submit questions for consideration, making this a great opportunity to learn more about the U.S. War on Iraq and why it continues despite growing pressure for it to cease.

Your support is greatly appreciated. For further information, please contact Lisa Bolognese at 917-592-2027 or email queensantiwarcommittee@googlegroups.com.

Sincerely Yours,
Queens AntiWar Committee
Jackson Heights, Queens, NY

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

Fuck The Troops: **V.A. Rejects All Proposals For Speeding Up Benefits Claims As Backlog Hits 600,000 Cases**

April 30, 2007 Editorial, Army Times

Lawmakers are watching with alarm the exploding backlog of veterans' benefits claims, now estimated at 600,000 cases and growing as troops return from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It takes an average of six months to get an initial decision on a claim — and appeals can take another two years.

Lawmakers are considering at least four bills to tackle this problem in different ways. Among the ideas: automatically approving all claims by combat veterans or automatically paying a monthly stipend to veterans whose claims are still pending after more than 180 days.

To be fair, the proposals are flawed — some would make it difficult to guard against fraudulent or spurious claims.

But at an April 17 hearing on Capitol Hill, Veterans Affairs officials dismissed all four ideas out of hand while failing to offer a single new idea of their own, asking instead for more time for their current plans to work.

As if more time would solve a problem that has existed for well more than a decade.

The VA system is not working. There has been scant progress in moving from paper to electronic records, which could speed up claims decisions, and fitful efforts to hire more claims adjudicators clearly continue to fall short.

In truth, VA's chronic inability to deal with its backlog of benefits claims predates the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and should have been anticipated.

And the delays in settling cases are sure to become worse still as casualties from the wars mount in the months and years to come and as Vietnam veterans, now mostly in their 50s and 60s, edge into the senior citizen ranks.

VA is a vital part of the war effort — yet it has never quite put itself on a war footing.

What's needed is a sense of urgency from a bureaucracy that has grown comfortable stiff-arming those who suffered in service to their country.

Throwing cold water on the ideas of others while asking for more time just won't cut it.

Veterans deserve better.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

4.29.07 By KIM GAMEL, Associated Press Writer & By THOMAS WAGNER (AP) & Reuters

Authorities in northern Iraq imposed an indefinite curfew in Samarra after leaflets signed by insurgent groups threatened policemen if they did not quit their jobs and promised to target any oil company that wants to explore in the area.

The warnings to the policemen threatened to destroy their houses if they didn't comply.

Leaflets signed by a separate insurgent umbrella group calling itself the Mujahedeen of Samarra warned against oil exploration in the area and were posted on the walls of mosques in central Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad.

Guerrillas set fire to 15 fuel trucks and captured their drivers on a main road near the city of Samarra, 100 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A truck bombing Friday in the western city of Hit targeting the police chief killed nine Iraqi security forces and six civilians, although police chief Hamid Ibrahim al-Numrawi and his family were unharmed.

**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



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

Haj Ali & Sgt. Kevin Benderman

From: John Osmand

To: **GI Special & Monica Benderman**

Sent: April 29, 2007

Subject: Re: GI Special 5D28: "Nothing Good About Our Occupation"

I have seen and read a lot of things in the past few years that have been overwhelming: Iraqi babies with sniper bullet holes in their necks, veterans without limbs, mothers in burkas or tanktops crying over murdered sons and daughters.

But Monica's letter about Haj Ali overwhelmed me to tears for the first time in a long time.

Yesterday on Ventura's Main St., my wife Charlene took turns with fellow activist Kendra to stand on a box with a bag over her head and electrodes on each hand, like the photo of Haj Ali.

Across from them was a traveling mural with a photo of every US soldier who has died in Iraq through February, courtesy of Frank (Veterans For Peace).

At least five of us were there for three hours to reach out to the public and organize against the war. We passed out around a dozen Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) membership forms.

Your letter is overwhelming because yesterday we were making connections between the horrors of occupation and resistance of soldiers in the abstract; you are making actual connections.

It's overwhelming because there is a name to the ghostly image that haunts us, a person who has every reason to hate everything about the US military, yet who nonetheless accepts Kevin as a brother and fellow prisoner.

It's overwhelming because both Haj Ali and Kevin Benderman are prisoners of war, prisoners because of war, imprisoned because of war crimes, their very imprisonment crimes.

It's overwhelming because of the solidarity between the victims of rape, torture, and murder by soldiers, and the soldiers who refuse to rape, torture, and murder.

It's overwhelming to feel the seething outrage at the inhumanity of the brutal occupation, that the rulers of the world create people who torture and jail those who won't.

It's overwhelming to feel at the same time hope for humanity, for international unity, faith that peace and justice will prevail.

Thank you for telling us about our brothers Kevin and Haj.

I'm sure it will inspire us all.

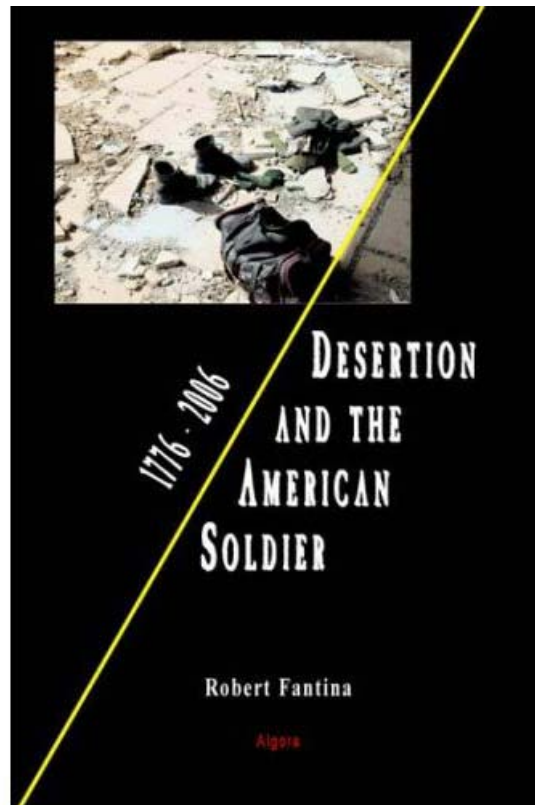
John

**PS- Please direct folks to learn about Kevin's case at the link below:
www.bendermandefense.org**

**John Osmand,
International Socialist Organization**

Desertion And The American Soldier, 1776 – 2006 “A Healthy Antidote To Military Propaganda”

April 23, 2007, Book Review by Peg Rapp, The Military Project: **Desertion And The American Soldier, 1776 – 2006, By Robert Fantina**



“As I went through the process which led to my decision to refuse deployment to Iraq for the second time, I was torn between thoughts of abandoning the soldiers that I serve with, or following my conscience, which tells me: war is the ultimate in destruction and waste of humanity.” Sgt. Camilo Mejia, Iraq Combat Veteran.

War and combat being what they are, desertion from the military has always been a heated political and emotional topic. Since many soldiers have considered “giving it all up” at some point, the military relies on unquestioning patriotism and the threat of punishment to limit the number of desertions. Deserters are told they are cowards or have a weak character (are “pussies” according to one recent CD, “Live from Iraq”). Yet, in every war, a surprising number of soldiers continue to desert. So are there ever justifiable reasons that make a soldier go AWOL?

In his book *Desertion and the American Soldier, 1776 – 2006*, Robert Fantina gives a historical account of why soldiers have deserted, beginning with the Revolutionary War up to the present conflict in Iraq. By viewing the issue over time, the book gives us a humane and nonjudgmental picture of the economic, emotional and moral issues that compel soldiers to desert.

Fantina packs the book with a brief historical overview of each major war, statistics, examples of the day to day life of the soldier and interviews and letters from soldiers themselves. He includes the desertion rates from each war (25-35% of the militias soldiers in the Revolutionary War; over 5,000 desertions a month in the Civil War after 1862).

He fully documents the punishments used to discourage desertion and when the military has failed to enforce these punishments (though you can't count on it).

The bulk of the book concentrates on the motives for desertion.

Two motives that he documents in every war are 1) a lack of soldiers' rights, combined with constant abuse and mistreatment of soldiers and 2) moral conflict over the goals or conduct of the war; or horror at the brutality of war, itself.

The lack of soldiers' rights and the mistreatment include lack of pay, food, military equipment and other survival needs.

The lack of proper military equipment is just as familiar to today's soldier in Iraq as it was to Civil War soldiers who were sent like sitting ducks into battle without guns.

Another abuse of soldier rights in earlier wars that led to desertion was to keep soldiers in service after their military contract had ended -- just as the introduction of the similar "Stop/Loss" policy is a major reason for desertions in Iraq today.

One interesting statistic in the book deals with the most infamous reaction to soldier abuse during the Vietnam War – the fragging of 1013 officers between the 1969 and 1972.

By documenting these facts, Fantina raises the question of whether career or citizen soldiers have the right to protest the conditions in the military during peace or wartime.

The book raises different questions concerning the moral conflict over the necessity of a war. Sgt. Camilo Mejia, a combat veteran of the Iraq war, refused redeployment to Iraq because "the 'oil driven' illegal war was unjustified and based on lies about weapons of mass destruction and the connection between Saddam Hussein and Al Queda." As Fantina demonstrates, the Iraq war also breaks international law as a war of aggression under the Nuremburg principles.

First hand examples of the massive destruction of human life through war are present throughout the book -- whether it is descriptions of the bloody battlefields of hand-to-hand combat in the Civil War or the massive bombing and destruction resulting in the death of men, women and children civilians in Iraq.

As Fantina notes, "soldiers will risk whatever necessary to prevent further participation in the carnage" and when Conscientious Objector status is denied, the soldiers frequently desert. He quotes Mr. Mejia: "As I went through the process which led to my decision to refuse deployment to Iraq for the second time, I was torn between thoughts of abandoning the soldiers that I serve with, or following my conscience, which tells me: war is the ultimate in destruction and waste of humanity."

The book is available through Amazon.com. I highly recommend it, especially to those in the military who would like a healthy antidote to military propaganda.

“Our Job Is To Oppose The Entire Project Of The ‘War On Terror,’ Including The Racist Dogma Attached To It”

Bush Gets Help From The “Left” To Justify Endless War And His Ignorant Bullshit

When the real underdogs resist, however, they are inevitably depicted by the U.S. political and media establishment as driven by an oppressive ideology, with the ultimate goal of undermining “Western values” of democracy and freedom.

Unfortunately, some voices on the left – even radical sections of the antiwar movement—accept these same terms.

April 20, 2007 By HADES I and AARON HESS, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

AT A recent antiwar panel discussion in New York City, Columbia University professor and antiwar activist Hamid Dabashi commented that whenever the U.S. goes to war, it projects an image of itself as the embattled underdog – an “army of Sparta,” rather than an aggressive superpower bent on conquest.

When the real underdogs resist, however, they are inevitably depicted by the U.S. political and media establishment as driven by an oppressive ideology, with the ultimate goal of undermining “Western values” of democracy and freedom.

Following the U.S. invasion of Cuba in 1898—at the dawn of the American empire—Theodore Roosevelt characterized the Cubans he helped to conquer as “moral degenerates.”

In reality, as novelist Mark Twain pointed out, the U.S. imperialists were the “true savages.”

Since September 11, 2001, Islam has become the target of choice in U.S. ruling circles.

“The war we fight today is more than a military conflict,” George Bush declared in a speech last year. “It is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. On one side are those who believe in the values of freedom and moderation, the right of all people to speak and worship and live in liberty. And on the other side are those driven by the values of tyranny and extremism.”

If it were only Bush and the discredited neocons of his administration who used this rhetoric, that would be one thing.

But Democratic Party politicians are also quick to denounce “Islamic extremism” and warn of the threat of “fundamentalist” countries like Iran.

Unfortunately, some voices on the left – even radical sections of the antiwar movement—accept these same terms.

For example, Sunsara Taylor of the pro-impeachment group World Can’t Wait (WCW) and a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), wrote recently of the “intolerable choice...between crusading McWorld or reactionary Jihad.”

It is important that the antiwar movement reject the distorted picture of Islam presented by pro-war conservatives, but partly echoed in comments like these.

Our job is to oppose the entire project of the “war on terror,” including the racist dogma attached to it.

OVER THE years, Islamophobia has been given an intellectual gloss by a whole industry of well-paid “experts” on Islam and the Arab world. Two of the most renowned examples are Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington.

At the core of their writings is the idea that Islam and the Arab world have produced a static, unchanging civilization averse to Enlightenment ideals that they claim are the sole province of the “West”—such as religious tolerance, women’s rights and democracy.

These views have little use for historical facts. For example, while Western Europe remained stuck for centuries in what historians call the “Dark Ages,” the Islamic world was the center of intellectual inquiry, preserving and advancing the scientific breakthroughs of the ancient world.

And when it comes to religious intolerance, the oppression of women and barbaric dictatorships, Christianity’s history stands out as especially bloody.

No matter: Huntington argues that the “East” and the “West” are headed for an inevitable “clash of civilizations”—the title of his book that became required reading for the neocons after 9/11.

Politicians and the corporate media adopted these ideas to justify the “war on terror.”

In fact, with their claims about weapons of mass destruction and al-Qaeda exposed as frauds, the caricature of Muslims who “hate our freedoms” is one of the few justifications for war and occupation they can still turn to.

Of course, phrases like “Islamic fascism” aren’t used to describe the repressive, theocratic regimes bankrolled and backed by Washington—such as the Saudi monarchy or the military dictatorship in Pakistan. Only Washington’s enemies are branded with the “f”-word.

Unfortunately, significant voices on the left have accepted the core of the “clash of civilizations” idea.

Probably the worst example was an October 2005 article in The Progressive called “Our al-Qaeda Problem”—which was accompanied by a cover drawing of a menacing, turbaned man carrying a huge scimitar blade and towering over a cowering white figure.

Sunsara Taylor of WCW doesn’t employ this racist imagery.

But she does accept the framework that the Progressive article shared with pro-war views.

“[I]ncreasingly, humanity is being confronted with two intolerable choices: Bush’s crusade for empire or a reactionary Islamic fundamentalist response,” Taylor wrote in the RCP’s Revolution newspaper.

“The Bush regime has committed crimes on a far greater scale and is by far the greater danger to humanity...but both are complete nightmares.

“Both reinforce and feed off each other, and as they grow, they suck up the air to breath for secular and progressive forces in this country and around the world...

“People in their hundreds of millions—in this country and around the world—must be presented with a third option, an option that refuses to choose between crusading McWorld or reactionary Jihad.”

THE “JIHAD vs. McWorld” idea comes from the title of a book by Benjamin Barber, written in 1995.

While offering some critiques of U.S.-led “market fundamentalism,” Barber’s book takes more than a few pages straight out of the anti-Muslim playbook.

For example, a typically muddled passage reads: “[A]lthough it is clear that Islam is a complex religion that is by no means synonymous with Jihad, it is relatively inhospitable to democracy, and that inhospitality in turn nurtures conditions favorable to parochialism, anti-modernism, exclusiveness and hostility to ‘others’—the characteristics that constitute what I call Jihad.”

There are many problems with Barber’s understanding of Islam, as with the one Taylor adopts.

For one, it tends to lump together very different tendencies among Muslims, as well as contending Islamist organizations that regard one another as enemies.

It should go without saying that al-Qaeda, a rootless terrorist network initially formed with the collaboration of the CIA, has nothing in common with a mass movement like Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Palestine—nor is there any use in an understanding of

Islam that makes no distinction between the Shia-dominated Iranian government and the Sunni Wahabists of Saudi Arabia.

The “Jihad vs. McWorld” view also fails to recognize how and why Islamist oppositional movements rose to prominence in the first place.

Initially encouraged in some cases by Western powers as a counterweight to Arab nationalism—the first “fundamentalist” state was Saudi Arabia, brought into being by Britain and the U.S. to secure the flow of oil from the Middle East—Islamists gained a mass base with the decline of secular nationalist movements.

Support for organizations like Hamas or Hezbollah isn’t primarily the result of a commitment to religious tenets, but because they represent a political alternative that has stood up against imperialism—chiefly, the U.S. and its main ally Israel.

To understand religiously based movements, the starting point for socialists is not the religious ideology, but the social and political forces such movements represent.

Of course, socialists have important criticisms to make of Islamist forces. As in all religions, elements of Islam are explicitly conservative—for example, the attitude that women are the inferiors of men. Such positions are barriers to building the most effective resistance to imperialism.

But the “Jihad vs. McWorld” view fails to recognize that Islamist organizations were able to gain a mass following by representing an alternative of resistance.

To promote such views can only disorient antiwar activism—especially at a time when the U.S. is threatening a war on Iran, a “reactionary Islamic fundamentalist response,” according to Taylor’s view.

THE RCP’s Chairman Bob Avakian gave voice to an even deeper confusion in an article that claimed living in America was “like living in the house of Tony Soprano”—where all the “goodies” have “something to do with what the master of the house is doing out there in the world.”

“But September 11,” he went on, “was a rude announcement that there’s a price to be paid for living in Tony Soprano’s house, for continuing to go along with these profoundly unequal relations in the world and the way that your government, and this system fundamentally, bludgeons people in the world into conditions of almost unspeakable suffering in order to keep this whole thing going, and in order, yes, for some ‘goodies’ to be handed out to sections of the population in the ‘house.’...”

“All that is being shaken up now. Now, you don’t just get the goodies for ‘living in Tony Soprano’s house’—you get the ‘strangers’ out in the backyard at night.”

Leaving aside the “terrorists in our midst” tone so eerily reminiscent of post-September 11 fear-mongering, Avakian’s view that ordinary working Americans were sharing in the “goodies” is false.

Working-class people in the U.S. have also been forced to pay—with continuing cuts in social services, with shredded civil liberties, and with their lives, in the case of the soldiers used as cannon fodder in Iraq and Afghanistan—for U.S. wars.

Building the strongest possible movement for peace and justice requires clarity about who the victims are and who's to blame.

It also requires completely rejecting the caricatures about Islam peddled by U.S. leaders to justify their war at home and abroad.

If the antiwar movement fails to thoroughly expose the distortions and myths about “reactionary Islamic fundamentalism,” it allows American rulers to keep using one of their most powerful ideological weapons for continuing their wars.

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Iraqi citizens stand aside as foreign occupation soldiers from US Alpha Troop, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division search their home near Rustamaya, 25 miles east of Baghdad April 21, 2007. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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.

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

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

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

U.S. Ambassador Tells A World Class Stupid Lie To Iraqi Official

April 29, 2007 By David E. Sanger, International Herald Tribune Published: April 29, 2007 [Excerpts]

[Ryan Crocker, the newly arrived U.S. ambassador to Iraq] said that he had told Maliki that evidence of progress "is important in American terms" because "to sustain American support we have to be able to see that Iraqis are stepping up to hard challenges."

[Makiki would have to be brain dead not be understand that Americans not only do not "support" the war in Iraq anymore, they have had enough of it and want the troops to come home now. Crocker, like the rest of the traitors keeping the war going, simply assumes that support for the war from government in DC is the same as "American support."

[When an Imperial government assumes that what the American people want means nothing, and when Imperial government politicians assumes they are "America," and the rest of us don't matter, then it is time to bring that government of traitors down, hard. And that's just another reason we need our troops home now, to defend us against these DC domestic enemies. T]

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. Name, I.D., withheld unless you

request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE



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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Bush Postpones Thinking About Iraq
Until 2009**

“The Best Thing We Can Do To Support The Troops Is To Not Think About Them,” The President Said

April 29, 2007 The Borowitz Report [Excerpt]

Saying that it was too early to assess whether the surge of additional troops into Baghdad was improving the security situation in the capital city, President George W. Bush said today he would postpone thinking about Iraq until 2009.

While congressional Democrats have urged the president to start thinking about Iraq now, the president said that setting a timetable for thinking about the war would send the “wrong message” to the insurgents.

“Thinking about the war in Iraq is exactly what the insurgents want us to do,” Mr. Bush told reporters. “By saying that we are giving the war in Iraq a thoughtful assessment, we would be playing directly into the evildoers’ hands.”

The president also lashed out at the Democrats in congress for spending “untold hours” thinking about the war and argued that “excessive thinking” about Iraq would undermine the position of the U.S. troops there.

“The best thing we can do to support the troops is to not think about them,” the president said.

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