

GI SPECIAL 511:

And The Same To You, Asshole



Odierno expresses his uncensored opinion of the value of his troops' lives as he enters Forward Operating Base Loyalty in south-east Baghdad Aug. 5, 2007. He is publicly pushing the Bush regime to stop any plans to cut back troop strength in Iraq. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek, File)

Basra Falls:

**“On The Streets, There Is A
Sense Of Jubilation And Victory
Over British Forces”**

**17,000 Strong Mahdi Army
Assures British Soldiers “Safe
Departure”**

“God Has Blessed Us With Victory Over The Occupation” Resistance Prisoners Set Free

The Mahdi Army, which according to one estimate, numbers about 17,000 in Basra and is divided into about 40 sariyas (company-size military unit), is the strongest among its rivals in the militia-infiltrated police force and it has influence over vital sectors such as health, education, power distribution, and ports.

August 28, 2007 By Sam Dagher, Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor
[Excerpts]

The last contingent of British soldiers based in the center of this southern city will leave by Friday, says a senior Iraqi security official, adding that a deal has been struck with leaders of Moqtada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army to ensure their safe departure.

As they pull back to a base outside Basra, the British will leave a vital provincial capital in the throes of a turf battle between Shiite factions – one that Mr. Sadr’s militia appears to be winning.

“By the end of August, there will be no presence for British forces at the palace or at the joint coordination center. Both will be in the hands of the Iraqi government,” says the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the matter.

“I think it’s best if they leave, because they did nothing to stop the militias, which were formed in the womb of their occupation.” A spokesman for the British military in Basra confirmed that a small force left the Provincial Joint Coordination Center (PJCC), site of a British-Iraqi security task force, Saturday.

He declined comment on the timing of the pullout of 500 soldiers from a compound of four Saddam Hussein-era palaces that are located on the strategic Shatt al-Arab River. The buildings have been occupied by coalition troops since the start of the war in 2003.

Ahead of the pullout, an agreement between British and Iraqi authorities resulted in the transfer of more than two dozen Mahdi Army prisoners from British to Iraqi custody, according to the security official.

They were then released by an Iraqi court in an attempt to pacify the militias during the highly symbolic handover of the palaces to Iraqis, he said. The British did not comment on any arrangements.

The departing force will join 5,000 soldiers at the Shaibah air base, about 10 miles southwest of the city, also home to the US and British consulates. Unlike their US counterparts elsewhere in Iraq, British forces have been gradually trimming their presence in the south since May 2003, when they numbered 18,000.

The Iraqi official says the palaces will be handed over to an Iraqi force dispatched from Baghdad and will not be given to the controversial provincial authority, which is embroiled in a power struggle between rival Shiite political parties. This 3,000-strong Iraqi force will consist of two Army battalions and elements from the Ministry of Interior's commando unit.

The Mahdi Army, which according to one estimate, numbers about 17,000 in Basra and is divided into about 40 sariyas (company-size military unit), is the strongest among its rivals in the militia-infiltrated police force and it has influence over vital sectors such as health, education, power distribution, and ports.

Although Basra, an economically important port city in a province with some of the largest oil deposits in the world, is considerably calmer and less violent than Baghdad, it faces a low-intensity, yet vicious, battle between the Mahdi Army and its many competitors that has spread fear and apprehension among many of the city's estimated 1.8 million residents. One local official says about 5,000 assassinations have occurred inside the city in the past two years.

It was at a Friday night meeting when two Mahdi Army commanders and a lawyer tied to Sadr came to an Iraqi government official's home to ask about one of their senior leaders. They wanted to know if Sajad was among 26 detainees released by British forces.

Their cases were recently transferred to the Iraqi judicial system. Half had already been freed because the court deemed the evidence submitted by the British side insufficient to prosecute them. The rest have been released on bail, according to the lawyer, Yahya al-Taie.

One commander, who asked not to be named, carefully looked over a list of detainees until he found Sajad's name.

He commands fighters in the city's Garmat Ali section. His arrest last year was hailed as a coup by British forces during their offensive against militias in the city as part of Operation Sinbad that lasted from September 2006 to March 2007. Now, as the British prepare for departure, Sajad was freed.

"The arrests did not stop the rockets, nor did the rockets defeat the British," said the security source. "We needed to find an alternative solution that would calm things down a bit."

The palaces that the British will vacate have been the target of constant rocket and mortar attacks, which have declined over the past 10 days.

The British military in Basra denied interview requests. In an e-mail, spokesman Maj. Mike Shearer did not comment on whether the military was aware of, or involved in, a prisoner release in exchange for a suspension of attacks.

He said that British forces have held more than 2,250 Iraqi suspects since Jan. 1, 2004, including the 26 transferred to the Iraqi court system. They have released all but 80 prisoners.

The Iraqi official said releasing Mahdi Army fighters – combined with the absence of an excuse for militias to launch attacks on the palace – would give Lt. Gen. Mohan Hafidh, head of the Basra Operations Center appointed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, enough breathing room to stabilize the province.

But the PJCC left by the British Saturday was the scene of a four-hour looting spree Sunday, according to security officials.

“We will lessen the attacks against them (the British) and we will stop altogether if they release all our prisoners,” said one of the Mahdi Army leaders at the Friday meeting. A colleague, who appeared more senior, disagreed: “The resistance will continue until the last soldier leaves Basra.”

Indeed, overall attacks against British forces have increased despite the gradual decline in troop numbers. This year, 41 soldiers have died, compared with 29 in all of 2006.

On the streets, there is a sense of jubilation and victory over British forces.

In central Arousa Square, a street was renamed after the “martyr Jaafar Muhammad,” killed in clashes with the British.

“He’s one of my guys. One of the valiant heroes of the Imam Mahdi Army,” says a bearded company commander who gave his name as Uncle Abed.

“God has blessed us with victory over the occupation.”

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine & Soldier Killed In Anbar

31 August 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070831-02

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine and a Soldier assigned to Multi National Force-West died Aug. 29 in separate in attacks while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

82nd Airborne Soldier Killed In Iraq During Third Tour

Aug 31, 2007 The Associated Press

MOORHEAD, Minn. - A soldier from the 82nd Airborne Division died earlier this week while serving his third tour of duty in Iraq, a family spokesman said.

Army Sgt. Andrew Nelson, 22, of Moorhead, Minn., was killed Wednesday while on patrol outside of Tikrit. His family received the news from the military that night, said Todd Taylor, a family spokesman. Further details were not immediately available.

Nelson enlisted in the Army immediately after high school. He also served one tour of duty in Afghanistan. He graduated from Shanley High School in Fargo, N.D., in 2003 and also attended St. Joseph's Catholic School in Moorhead.

Valerie Ritland, principal of St. Joseph's and Nelson's cousin, said she was shocked after hearing of his death.

"It was so hard to believe," she said. "I just totally miss him."

Ritland said she remembered Nelson as being compassionate and dedicated to Boy Scouts, where he earned the rank of Eagle Scout, and to his church activities.

"He was such a person of character who showed respect for others," she said. "His mom did a good job of raising him."

Nelson was an altar server at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Moorhead, where Monsignor Mike Foltz remembered him as a young man with a big heart who was dedicated to serving others, his community, his country and his church.

Nelson is survived by his mother, Suzanne Nelson, and sister, Jessica, both of Moorhead.

Fallen Soldier Remembered For Love Of Family, Country

August 18, 2007 By Bill Archer, Bluefield Daily Telegraph

ROCK — Stan Reynolds was a hero to his family long before he gave his life for his country. The 37-year-old Staff Sgt. in the U.S. Army was the father of three young daughters — Katelyn, who recently turned 8, Kristan, 7, and Emily, 4, who will both celebrate birthdays soon. According to family members gathered Friday evening at the Reynolds home in Rock, Reynolds was a loving father to his three girls and husband to his wife, Jill, and a patriotic American.

"This was his second tour of Iraq," his uncle, Richard Bailey said. "He didn't want to go back. He knew what it was like. But he followed orders. He was patriotic and he loved this country."

Stanley Reynolds was an inquisitive young man who liked to hang around with his father and his father's buddies when they worked on farm machinery at the family's Wright Mountain Road home. His mom and dad, Sandra and the late Bernard Reynolds, provided a loving home environment during Stanley's formative years.

A neighbor, Mickey Hurst, recalled that Stan hung around and watched his dad, Hurst and another neighbor work on tractors. "He was always wearing a pair of short britches," Hurst said. "I remember teasing him about those being his chicken britches."

Bernard Reynolds was a Lance Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps and served in the Vietnam War. "Bernard could do just about anything," Hurst said. "He got a backhoe and some other construction equipment, but there wasn't enough work around here to keep him busy. The family moved to North Carolina, and lived down there for five or six years while Stanley and his brother, Jeff finished growing up.

"They didn't have it easy in any way," Hurst said. "They weren't the kind of people who ever had anything given to them. Everything they got, they worked for it. I think that's why I identified so much with Bernard and his family. They are good, hard-working, honest people."

Bernard Reynolds died at his home at age 57, on Oct. 27, 2005. His family encouraged people to make memorial contributions to the Princeton office of the West Virginia Children's Home Society.

Joanne Boileau, regional director of the Children's Home Society expressed her appreciation for the gifts that came to the office, but was totally unaware of a connection between Mr. Reynolds or anyone in his extended family with the Children's Home Society. "Sometimes people make gifts to the Children's Home Society that go straight to Charleston," Boileau said. "These gifts came to us."

"He loved children," Sandra Reynolds said of her husband. "That was the connection."

Stan's sister, Lu Reynolds, said her brother was attending Matoaka High School and would have graduated in the class of 1988, but the family moved to Statesville, N.C. and he finished high school in North Carolina. Lu Reynolds came back home and worked for a time in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph production department. Her co-workers remember her as being a free spirit with a deep love of family.

"She used to bring her son to work with her," Teresa Jeffery said, "and she was always talking about her brother Stanley, and her whole family."

After Stan Reynolds finished high school, he tried his hand at a number of occupations, before he becoming a trucker — an independent owner/operator.

"That was a good job for a while, but after the price of fuel went real high, it put him out of business," Richard Bailey said. "He went to school, earned his surface mining certification and went to work on a strip mining job. He was only there for about a month before he got laid off."

At the time, Stan and Jill Reynolds had two girls, and Jill was pregnant with Emily. "Here's a guy who was 31 years old, had a wife and two kids already, with another one on the way," Bailey said.

"When he joined the Army, he joked with me that he was getting a job that he wouldn't get laid off from. But he was really patriotic too. He thought it was the right thing to do."

Staff Sgt. Stanley B. Reynolds, Chief Warrant Officer Christopher C. Johnson, 31, of Michigan, Chief Warrant Officer Jackie L. McFarlane Jr., 30, of Virginia Beach, Va., Staff Sgt. Sean P. Fisher, 29, of Santee, Calif., and Spc. Steven R. Jewell, 26, of Bridgeton, N.C., died on Aug. 14, as a result of injuries they received when their CH-47 Chinook Helicopter crashed in Al Taqqadum, Iraq.

All five soldiers were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, Task Force 49, Fort Wainwright, Alaska. The Department of Defense notes that the incident is still under investigation. The Army transported Reynolds' remains as well as the remains of his four comrades that died in Iraq to Dover, Del., on Friday.

In response to the many callers who asked how they could help Stan and Jill Reynolds' young family, Rita Shrewsbury, Reynolds' aunt, said the family has established the Staff Sgt. Stanley Reynolds Memorial Fund at First Community Bank. Contributions can be made to any First Community Bank location.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete at Bailey-Kirk Funeral Home in Princeton.

Lincoln Man Among 14 Killed In Iraq Helicopter Crash

August 24, 2007 BY TRISH HOLLENBECK Northwest Arkansas Times

He was a good athlete and student, happy and active, and wanted to build a log cabin with his best friend when they got home from Iraq.

That is how people who knew Tyler Seideman describe him.

He was among 14 U. S. soldiers killed Wednesday when a Black Hawk helicopter crashed in northern Iraq. Gail True, the mother of his best friend, confirmed that he was killed in the crash.

Seideman was the son of Bill and Lee Ann Seideman of Lincoln. He was 20.

"They want to extend their sympathy to other families. They're not alone because there's 13 other families that are in the same situation right now," said family friend Joanie Hannah, speaking for the Seidemans, who did not wish to comment further.

True said Seideman and her son, Logan Biswell, who is serving in Iraq, were best friends in high school.

Both were 2004 graduates of Lincoln High School, Biswell having joined the U. S. Army before Seideman, who joined after attending the University of Arkansas for a while.

Biswell has been in Iraq for the past 15 months, his mother said, while Seideman had been serving in Iraq for about a year. They were both snipers but not in the same unit. Seideman was set to return to the United States in October for a short while, she said, before having to return to Iraq in January.

The helicopter crashed before dawn in the Timim province, which surrounds Kirkuk, about 180 miles north of Baghdad, said Lt. Col. Michael Donnelly, a military spokesman in northern Iraq.

Linda Ferguson, Seideman's English and drama teacher in high school, described his last trip home.

"He came back to visit here when he was on leave," Ferguson said. "He came to the school, came to visit all of his teachers. He was very proud of what he was doing. He was just great."

She said he played Daddy Warbucks in the school's presentation of "Annie" his senior year.

"He was a great kid. He was real outgoing, very charming, a jokester, smart — real smart," Ferguson said. "He was an athlete. He played football. He played baseball. Very popular."

Ed Marshall, who teaches world history and world cultures at Lincoln High School, described Seideman as a good student and "a very good athlete."

"He kept all the irons in the fire," Marshall said. "He was not only a student of mine, he was a good friend."

He said Seideman was a hard worker and "very competitive, " as well as a "standup guy" who never gave up.

Marshall, too, described Seideman's last trip home.

"He came back and thanked us for everything," Marshall said. "He was absolutely a caring person."

True described him as a happy and active young man.

"He was always up for fun," she said. "He loved sports. He was out doing something all the time."

She said he enjoyed "anything that had to do with the outdoors. He was a big fisherman, and he liked to hunt and camp."

Marshall said he plans to do some kind of memorial at Lincoln High School for Seideman, but will wait and consult with the family about it.

He and Johnny Williams, who teaches advanced placement social studies and other classes at the high school, have been instrumental in starting a memorial program in which compact discs are used to memorialize U. S. soldiers who have died in the ongoing military action in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One side of each CD is covered with black paper. The other side is reflective, and red, white and blue ribbon hangs from each disc. The name of the person who died and the date he or she died are on each disk.

“ He was real familiar with the memorial, “Marshall said of Seideman. “I’m sure he never thought his name would be up there.”

He said Seideman will be missed.

“ It’s difficult for all of us, “ he said.” Our hearts and prayers are with the family. I’ve heard many a teacher say the exact same thing today. We need to be very respectful of their wishes.”

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers from the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry regiment, 3d Brigade combat team of 82nd Airborne Division try to free a body trapped inside an armored vehicle near the city of Baqouba, 60 kilometers (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad, Aug. 28, 2007 after the Iraqi army hit an improvised explosive device. (AP Photo/Karel Prinsloo)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Occupation Airport In Kabul Attacked;

5 German, Belgian Occupation Troops Wounded



Investigators check the scene after an attack in Kabul, 31 Aug 2007

AUGUST 31, 2007 Aljazeera & The Associated Press & VOA

One Afghan soldier was killed and 10 wounded after a car bomb exploded outside a NATO military airport in Kabul, officials said.

The blast took place near a group of Afghan soldiers after apparently failing to explode during a head-on collision with a German military vehicle, one Afghan soldier said.

The car sped off and instead tore into a group of Afghan soldiers waiting at a checkpoint waiting to fly to Italy for military training.

The German Defense Ministry said the blast damaged two of its vehicles. One German soldier was wounded, the country's army command said.

The Belgian defense minister, Andre Flahaut, said four Belgian soldiers had also been slightly wounded in the attack, with one suffering minor burns. Others suffered hearing damage.

About 300 Belgian soldiers, serving with NATO's International Security Assistance Force, are in charge of security at Kabul's airport.

An Afghan soldier said the bomber had tried to ram a convoy of cars carrying foreigners. Instead, he said, most of those hit had been Afghan soldiers bound for training in Italy.

"All the shrapnel came toward us," said the soldier, who declined to give his name because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Ali Shah Paktiawa, a Kabul police official, said: "The bomber was in a car and tried to get into the airport through an entrance under the control of Isaf.

The German Defense Ministry said the blast damaged two of its vehicles. One German soldier was wounded, the country's army command said.

"A car drove fast and blew up next to a crowd of people, including Afghan National Army soldiers," said Mansur, a witness who gave only a single name. "A lot of people were left lying on the ground."

The 37-nation Isaf does not give the nationalities of its casualties.

The Isaf airport is near Kabul's main airport and in a busy area in the northeast of the city.

Florida Sgt. Killed In Afghanistan



U.S. Army Sgt. Cory Clark, 25, of Plant City, Fla., was one of three Fort Lewis Soldiers assigned to the 864th Engineer Battalion, 555th Engineer Brigade who died Aug. 28 in Jaji, Afghanistan, from wounds sustained from an improvised explosive device. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

German Soldier Wounded In Kabul

Aug 31 IRNA

A German soldier was slightly hurt in an attack in the Afghan capital early Friday morning, according to a German official.

A German military convoy, en route from Kabul airport to the German military base, was targeted in the attack, deputy defense ministry spokesperson Bernd Hellstern said at a routine weekly press briefing.

The injured trooper received outpatient medical treatment. Both military vehicles were damaged in the attack, he added.

TROOP NEWS



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

**Government Hero Leaks Secret Document:
Fears Bush Traitors Will Tamper With Report That Finds War Still Fucked And Bush Lying About It;**

“Iraq Has Failed To Meet All But Three Of 18 Congressionally Mandated Benchmarks”

The document questions whether some aspects of a more positive assessment by the White House last month adequately reflected the range of views the GAO found within the administration.

August 30, 2007 By Karen DeYoung and Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Staff Writers [Excerpts]

Iraq has failed to meet all but three of 18 congressionally mandated benchmarks for political and military progress, according to a draft of a Government Accountability Office report.

The document questions whether some aspects of a more positive assessment by the White House last month adequately reflected the range of views the GAO found within the administration.

The strikingly negative GAO draft, which will be delivered to Congress in final form on Tuesday, comes as the White House prepares to deliver its own new benchmark report in the second week of September, along with congressional testimony from Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, and Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker. They are expected to describe significant security improvements and offer at least some promise for political reconciliation in Iraq.

The draft provides a stark assessment of the tactical effects of the current U.S.-led counteroffensive to secure Baghdad. “While the Baghdad security plan was intended to reduce sectarian violence, U.S. agencies differ on whether such violence has been reduced,” it states.

While there have been fewer attacks against U.S. forces, it notes, the number of attacks against Iraqi civilians remains unchanged. It also finds that “the capabilities of Iraqi security forces have not improved.”

A GAO spokesman declined to comment on the report before it is released. The 69-page draft, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post, is still undergoing review at the Defense Department, which may ask that parts of it be classified or request changes in its conclusions.

The person who provided the draft report to The Post said it was being conveyed from a government official who feared that its pessimistic conclusions would be watered down in the final version -- as some officials have said happened with security judgments in this month’s National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq.

Overall, the draft report, titled “Securing, Stabilizing and Rebuilding Iraq,” says that the Iraqi government has met only two security benchmarks.

It contradicts the Bush administration's conclusion in July that sectarian violence was decreasing as a result of the U.S. military's stepped-up operations in Baghdad this year.

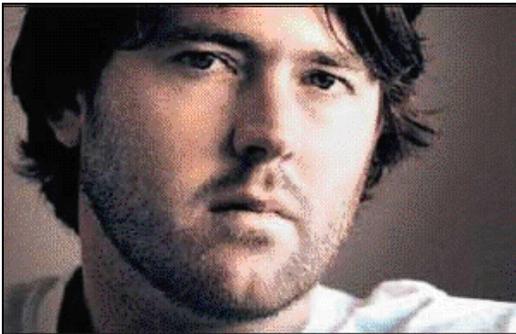
"The average number of daily attacks against civilians remained about the same over the last six months; 25 in February versus 26 in July," the GAO draft states.

The GAO draft also says that the number of Iraqi army units capable of operating independently declined from 10 in March to six last month. The July White House report mentioned a "slight" decline in capable Iraqi units, without providing any numbers.



An Iraq Veteran's Outcry

Excerpts from "Back In The Trenches: A Perspective. Whose Sacrifice?" Posted by Jeff Englehart at www.IVAW.org.



Jeff Englehart served in Iraq from 2004 to 2005. After leaving the army in 2005, Jeff joined the ranks of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).

As an American, would you be willing to watch your son or daughter go fight in this illegal occupation of Iraq and return home in a straight jacket, or worse, a flag-draped coffin?

What sacrifice are you prepared to make for this?!

Is it worth all the death and pain and misery our wars inflict on other human beings in the world?

Is it worth a never ending war sucking our economy dry and leaving us with less resources to help our own poor and needy in America?

Is it worth the infringement on civil rights both here and abroad?

Is it worth 3,300 [3,733] dead sons and daughters of liberty?
How many names will be carved on our wall?

You will never convince me that we are right when we treat other human beings so utterly inhumane. I will never believe it, **because I am a veteran of an illegal and immoral war, and I saw the immorality of it firsthand in Iraq.**

Its up to you, America, to determine the costs and ask yourself a simple question, "Is it worth it?" And then **go out and do something about it.**

Because the soldiers who are fighting this never-ending war, and the veterans who cannot get the help they need coming home, and the military families whose tears are shed when a loved one will never return are the only ones making the sacrifices...And their patience is running thin.

[Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) was founded by Iraq war veterans in July 2004 at the annual convention of Veterans for Peace (VFP) in Boston. Today, IVAW members are in 43 states, Washington, D.C., Canada, and on numerous bases overseas, including Iraq.]



Join our Peace Vigils to end the war!

Every Saturday, 1-3pm, at Rte. 59 & N. Middletown Rd. in

Nanuet, NY

For info: www.rocklandaction.org

9/1/07

Rockland Coalition for Peace & Justice

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**“In Many Ways, The Sadrists
Are Leading A Social
Revolution”**

**[A Tiny Piece Of Useful
Information Found In A Sea Of
Bullshit]**

**Mahdi Army Nationalists
Representing Working Class Iraqis At
War With Shia Collaborators
Representing Wealthy Pro-Iranians:
Bush Regime Siding With Pro-Iranians!**

Comment: T

This almost useless crock of shit about conflict between two rival political organizations deliberately leaves out the two most important facts about them. “Deliberately” because no reporter with this much access to the players could possible not know.

So, as you read, keep this in mind:

1. The Mahdi Army is opposed to the occupation of Iraq. Their enemy, the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq, is for the occupation the Iraq, and has been part of every government of traitors and collaborators since the invasion.
2. The Mahdi army is fiercely nationalist, rejecting outside influence in Iraq. The Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq is friendly to and under considerable influence from the government of Iran. Iran funded them and gave them a home while Saddam Hussein was in power

Gee, now why do you suppose the man who wrote this, Hamza Hendawi, doesn't want you to know that? Could it be for the same reasons the U.S. Military Command in Baghdad doesn't want you to know that?

The most useful information is way at the end: the Mahdi Army is an expression of Iraqi working class people who are for a social revolution.

And guess what: the traitors and collaborators of the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq just happen to be rich, powerful ruling class Iraqis who don't give a shit about anything by their own wealth and power: the class enemies of the Iraqi workers.

Sounds familiar.

Could that be why the Supreme Islamic Council and the Bush scum in charge of the Occupation play kissy-face so well?

Aug 31 By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press

The major players in the power struggle in the south are the Mahdi Army militia loyal to anti-American [translation: "anti-Bush occupation nationalist"] cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq, the country's largest [lie] Shiite political party [translation: party loyal the Occupation Dictatorship] and the patron of the Badr militia [trained and organized in Iran and paid for by the Iranian government].

The rivalries boiled over into deadly clashes Monday and Tuesday in the holy city of Karbala during a major Shiite religious festival. Dozen of people were killed. In an apparent bid to deflect criticism of the Mahdi Army over the violence in Karbala, al-Sadr announced Wednesday a "freeze" of the militia of up to six months to allow for its restructuring.

The move was followed by reported threats by al-Sadr aides that the feared militia would resume its activity if the arrest of Sadrist officials did not stop.

Tensions have been building up in the south in recent weeks, with two provincial governors assassinated and clashes erupting in several cities between the Mahdi Army and Badr militiamen.

Al-Sadr's supporters are primarily poor Shiites who gain from the services offered by the group and obtain a sense of empowerment through membership of the Mahdi Army.

In contrast, the Supreme Council is perceived as a magnet of middle- and upper-class Shiites and enjoying the endorsement of the wealthy and traditional clerical leadership.

"In many ways, the Sadrists are leading a social revolution," said Joost Hiltermann, Middle East director of the International Crisis Group, a respected research agency based in Brussels, Belgium.

“It is a struggle against the traditional political class and the wealthy merchants of the Shiite shrine cities who support the Council,” Hiltermann said.



Iraqi nationalists who favor the Mahdi Army march in Najaf, 160 km (99 miles) south of Baghdad, August 31, 2007. Thousands of Mahdi Army supporters held a rally in Najaf denouncing the violence of The Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq in Kerbala last Tuesday and Wednesday. REUTERS/Ali Abu Shish

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“The 49 Remaining Men Of Alpha
Company, (Americal Division)
Refused To Move Back Into Combat”**

GI REVOLTS

**The Breakdown of the
U.S. Army in Vietnam**



By Richard Boyle

~~40¢~~

[Published by United Front Press, May 1973]

COVER PHOTO ABOVE:

“After five days of heavy fighting in the AK Valley, the 49 remaining men of Alpha Company, (Americal Division) refused to move back into combat.

“Here they listen to a “pep talk” from a colonel.

“ – September 1969.”

For more, including more about Alpha Company:

“Combat Refusals Came To Include Increasingly Large Groups Of Soldiers”

“These Uprisings Are Only The Most Dramatic Expressions Of The GIs’ Refusal To Fight In Vietnam Or To Obey Military Authority”

Excerpts from THE NEW WINTER SOLDIERS: GI AND VETERAN DISSENT DURING THE VIETNAM ERA; Richard R. Moser; 1996; RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESS; New Brunswick, New Jersey

Most antiwar soldiers came from the working class.

A survey of 172 Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) members in 1971 shows that a majority were from working-class backgrounds, with nearly every antiwar veteran having identified with conventional politics prior to the war.

Although only 7 percent claimed to have been radical before their service, 67 percent described themselves as radicals by the time of the survey. Twenty-four percent identified themselves as Roman Catholics. In the large New York City VVAW chapter the majority of members were also Catholics, many of whom had been altar boys.

Soldier resistance grew from the direct involvement of American soldiers in war and combat in Vietnam. Duncan’s memoir, The New Legions, recalled the conflicts war experience created.

“Do you have any idea why we are here?” . . . Kovacs almost exploded.

“Of course I know why we’re here -- to fight the Viet-Cong . . . the Commies. . . the people trying to overthrow the government.”

“Did you ever stop and think,” Kane interrupted, “that the reason they fight the government is that they know it’s as rotten as we do?”

Kovacs looked ready to take a swing at Kane. . . . “You think you’re smarter than the president?” . . . “Ah, that’s why you are here. . . . The president sent you. Being God, he’s infallible.” . . . Kovacs glared at me and shouted, “You both talk like traitors. . . like beatniks!”

“Kane, probably thinking of his eighteen years in uniform, almost choked. “Why are we traitors?” (Kovacs) “Because you’re talking about such things. “The president is the commander-in-chief. If he says ‘Go to Vietnam,’ we go to Vietnam. . . . You obey orders. . . . A soldier is not supposed to get involved with politics.”

“Why not?” Kane asked. “We should be the first person concerned with politicians and what they decide.” . . . “We must obey all orders -- is that right. . . even if we know they are wrong?”

As early as 1965 the expression of soldier discontent began to increase, with growing individual refusals to follow orders.

In June 1965 West Point graduate and special forces officer Lieutenant Richard R. Steinke refused a direct order into a combat zone because of his disapproval of U.S. policy in Vietnam. In June 1966 Private Adam R. Weber, Jr., of the 25th Infantry Division, was sentenced to a year in prison for his refusal to bear arms in Vietnam.

In a letter from October of that year, Captain William Wilders of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, described some of the rigors of combat and then the reaction of the troops:

“We don’t have too many cases of battle fatigue, but we do have a goodly number of people who after a certain point just refuse to go out anymore and end up being court-martialed. And to tell the truth it’s hard to blame them.”

What a “goodly number” meant and how widespread such resistance was in 1966 is difficult to tell. Wilders’s sympathy for combat refusals does hint at a surprising acceptance of such acts by officers.

These few cases are among the earliest documentation of combat refusal, which was later to become one of the most effective forms of GI resistance.

Starting in 1968, there was a rapid increase in incidents of combat refusal, resulting in at least ten major mutinies and perhaps hundreds of minor ones, many unreported.

Serving in the 1st Infantry Division from August 1967 to August 1968, Guillermo Alvidrez remembers, “We had a barrack-full of guys waiting for court-martials for refusing to fight. They felt it wasn’t worth it. “

There were sixty-eight recorded combat refusals in 1968 alone.

In August 1969 Alpha Company, 3d Battalion, 196th Light Infantry refused an order to attack. In a response that can only underscore the political sensitivity of the refusal, the forty-nine men were not reprimanded.

In May 1970 sixteen soldiers from Fire Base Washington refused to go into Cambodia. Private Harry Veon wrote the GI press, "We have no business here. We have enough trouble in Vietnam. Sixteen of us refused to go. We just sat down. Then they promised we wouldn't have to go to Cambodia."

A week later, a group of men in the 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry refused to board helicopters.

In December 1970 Lieutenant Fred Pitts and twenty-three men of C Company, 2d Battalion, 501st Infantry refused a command to advance.

Combat refusals were often led by squad leaders, men who maintained close relationships with the average soldier. Squad leader Dennis Kroll was a veteran of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and led such an action in the spring of 1970. His recollection below re-creates the dialogue between the reluctant soldiers and their officer.

"One day there were these ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam - South) working out close to us. They kept going up this hill and the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) had a 51 caliber out there. They'd get halfway up -- they'd come back down. Then the Phantoms would work out. They'd start back up -- they'd didi-mau (run) off the hill. This went on all day.

"Our platoon leader says, 'All right saddle up. . . . We'll show em!'

"Everybody was just. . . 'What's your problem?' 'It's their hill, their objective.' (Officer) 'Well, they're refusing to go back up. Let's go show them what we can do.' (Kroll) 'Fuck you -- it's their territory. If they don't want it, I don't want it.'

"That caused enough mumbling within the platoon that he lost face and said, 'Fuck it.' . . . He called me in the tent. He was going to be lenient and give me an article 15 for refusing an order. I just said, 'I refuse the article 15, I want a court-martial.'

Scenes like this were repeated scores of times in Vietnam.

In the 1st Cavalry Division alone, there were thirty-five cases of combat refusal during 1970.

At times, entire units refused combat orders.

In March 1971, fifty-three soldiers in Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, refused to go into combat, citing inadequate reasons for their mission.

In one of the most highly publicized of these events, fifteen men from Firebase Pace refused to go out on what they considered to be a suicide patrol. Sixty-six men from that base sent a letter of protest to Senator Edward Kennedy claiming that they were

continuing to play an offensive role despite the officially declared defensive posture of Vietnamization.

In the C Company, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, seven African Americans refused combat duty, claiming that racist commanders were exposing them to undue risk. According to Representative Paul McCloskey of California, an entire platoon of the 1st Brigade, 5th Mechanized Division refused combat.

In the later years of the war combat refusals came to include increasingly large groups of soldiers.

In April 1972, for example, one hundred men of C Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Brigade, refused an order to advance.

In 1967-68 Colonel Tom Ware experienced two combat refusals of the men under his command. By 1972 Ware observed the increasing dimensions of combat refusal when the "Phu Bai 13," thirteen African American soldiers from the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, refused orders, occupied a barracks, and issued a list of demands.

Combat refusals were complicated events in which good soldiers hesitated or chose not to court death for questionable goals or risky battle tactics.

In *Soldados: Chicanos in Viet Nam*, infantryman Charley Trujillo recalls a 1970 combat refusal in the Americal Division. After a devastating direct assault on a Vietnamese position resulted in fifteen casualties, Trujillo and his company refused combat.

"I was feeling very angry, especially toward the officers. . . . Some of the gringo soldiers would at times get angry at me because they thought I was gung ho. I didn't feel I was gung ho; I just felt that I had to do my best. Just because I felt that way did not mean I should be cannon fodder. . . . Some of the black soldiers were saying things like, "The war's at home." This made me think for a while.

"We were told that we were going in again in the morning. I along with some of the other soldiers told them that we refused to go in again. There wasn't any sense in it. . . .

"A new company commander was brought in. He . . . gave us a real good pep talk, just like those charismatic football coaches do. However, that didn't convince me or many of the other soldiers. We argued among ourselves through the night, the majority being against going in."

Although Trujillo's reluctant company eventually did return to combat, and this seems typical of many combat refusals, his story demonstrates how negotiations and debate had replaced commands and obedience.

The air force also suffered combat refusals.

As a protest, combat pilots Captain Dwight Evans and Captain Michael Heck refused to fly missions. Heck, a veteran of 175 missions and holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross, realized that his targets were hospitals and civilian sectors; he cited Nuremberg principles and refused to fly. He explained his position by stating, "I came to the

decision that any war creates an evil far greater than anything it is trying to prevent. . . . The goals do not justify the mass destruction and killing. “

Four other airmen who refused to fly B-52 missions joined Representative Elizabeth Holtzman of New York in a suit challenging the legality of the Cambodian bombings. These bombings, which exacted a heavy toll among civilians, led to a crisis of morale among B-52 bomber crews.

Mutiny in the Navy also took on significant proportions.

The USS Kitty Hawk had suffered mounting racial tensions during its long 1972 combat tour. Heading back to the United States, the Kitty Hawk put in at Subic Bay, Philippines, but was unexpectedly ordered to return to Vietnam.

According to a House Armed Services Committee report, the rescheduling seems to have been the result of sabotage on board the USS Ranger and the USS Forrestal, the Kitty Hawk's sister ships and replacements. Expecting relief from the tensions of war, the sailors found themselves back in the Gulf of Tonkin.

A hundred African American sailors assembled for a protest meeting over racial discrimination. A foolhardy attempt to suppress the demonstration with a detachment of marines backfired, and fighting broke out. Roving bands of black and white sailors clashed for hours.

On November 3, 1972, one of the most serious mass mutinies in U.S. naval history occurred aboard the USS Constellation, paralyzing the ship.

Following attempts to suppress a dissident organization of African American seamen, a sit-in over racism was staged by eighty African American sailors. Over 130 sailors, including some whites, were put ashore at San Diego, where they held another protest. The dissident sailors then refused to board the ship when ordered.

These highly publicized and well-documented uprisings are only the most dramatic expressions of the GIs' refusal to fight in Vietnam or to obey military authority.

Army documentation suggests that a thousand smaller incidents of combat refusal occurred. Court-martials for serious resistance, including insubordination, mutiny, and willful disobedience, show 252 cases in 1968 and 382 cases in 1970.

These figures reflect only cases brought to court-martial and certainly imply a more widespread impulse toward war resistance.

These defiant actions pushed officers to test the troops before commands were issued.

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 REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

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



A damaged building after an overnight raid in the Azamiyah neighborhood by foreign occupation troops from the U.S. July 12, 2007, in Baghdad. U.S. soldiers used explosives to gain entry, destroying the building and a home. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

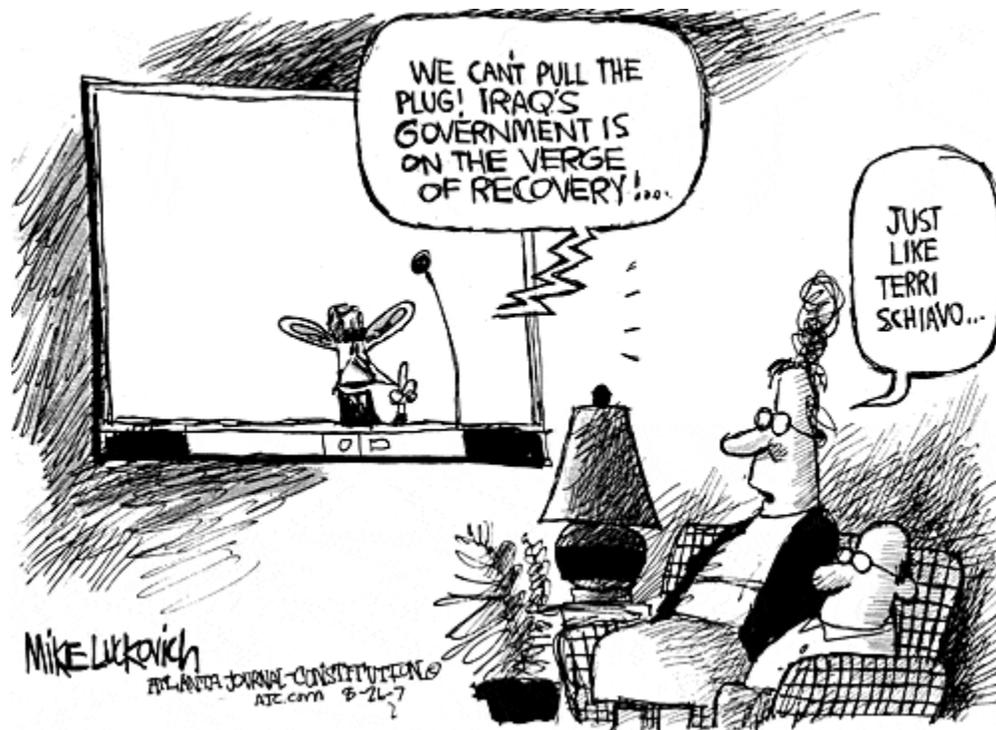
[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

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

"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!**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



The Wounded Soldier Told Him: “We Don’t Need More Armor. We Need To Get Out Of There” But The Traitor Reid Doesn’t Give A Shit What The Soldier Told Him; He Promises Compromise With Republicans That “Would Not Set Withdrawal Terms”

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

August 31, 2007 By Shailagh Murray, Washington Post Staff Writer[Excerpts]

LAS VEGAS -- Saying the coming weeks will be “one of the last opportunities” to alter the course of the war, Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) said he is now willing to compromise with Republicans to find ways to limit troop deployments in Iraq.

One measure Reid said he will seek to resurrect would tighten rules on the use of troops by requiring soldiers’ leave times to be at least as long as their most recent deployment.

The proposal, offered by Sen. James Webb (D-Va.), would not set withdrawal terms, but it *could* effectively *limit* U.S. force levels.

[W]hen Frederick E. Pokorney Jr., a 31-year-old Marine from Tonopah, died on March 23, 2003; he was the first Nevada resident to be killed in Iraq. Reid called Wade Lieseke, the man Pokorney considered his father, to offer condolences. When Lieseke told him,

“This war is worthless,” he was taken aback. “I’m not sure that’s right,” he thought to himself. But with every new call, Reid later said, “I reflected back on that.”

Reid also recalled his first visit to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. “I say to this young man -- he’s missing part of one leg and the other one’s up in a sling, and I try to be nice -- ‘I know we need to go get you more armor.’“

The young man responded: “We don’t need more armor. We need to get out of there.”

LIAR SOLDIER-KILLER

**DOMESTIC ENEMY
DESPICABLE PIECE OF SHIT**



varifrank.com/images/Preacher_Reid.jpg

**WANTED FOR THE MURDER OF U.S.
TROOPS AND CITIZENS OF IRAQ:
THE TRAITOR REID**

**“Vote For Vets” Means Vote For
Death;
In 2004, Support For Kerry, Who
Wanted 40,000 More Troops In
Iraq;
In 2007, They Want You To Die In
Vain In Afghanistan Instead of Dying
In Vain In Iraq:**

Ex-Officer Runs Operation Fronting For Imperial Democrats Trying To Fool America

August 30, 2007 By Noam N. Levey, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

NEW YORK -- Jon Soltz rapped his pen on a conference table as he ran through plans to take on politicians [Republican politicians that is] who back the war in Iraq.

He raged about a war protest [involving Iraq Veterans] scheduled for Memorial Day: "It's offensive. I can't defend that."

But in a little more than a year since he launched VoteVets.org, Soltz has helped transform the war debate in Washington by channeling the raw anger and frustration of many Iraq vets into a political campaign both sophisticated and visceral [for Democrats].

They accuse Republicans [but not Democrats] of recklessly sending troops to war without the right equipment and failing to care for thousands of wounded and traumatized vets.

Soltz works closely with liberal [translation: against immediate withdrawal from Iraq and for Hillary Clinton] groups such as MoveOn.org as well as influential military officers like retired Army Gen. Wesley K. Clark [who is publicly opposed to bringing the troops home now, and for killing more U.S. troops in Iraq.]

An encounter with a famous veteran from another era set him on a new course.

In the spring of 2004, Sen. John F. Kerry, the Massachusetts Democrat, made a presidential campaign stop in Pittsburgh. Soltz went, curious about one of the generation's most famous opponents of the Vietnam War. He introduced himself, and the two men spoke briefly. Afterward, Kerry called Soltz at home.

Soltz volunteered for the Kerry campaign, organizing outreach to veterans in Pennsylvania. [And by so doing, endorsed Kerry's demand to send 40,000 more troops to die in Iraq, and Kerry's demand to attack Fallujah before the election. Soltz is up to his neck in blood.]

He grew passionate about the need to get U.S. troops out of Iraq and into the hunt for Al Qaeda's leaders.

"From the get-go, he didn't want to be 'antiwar,' " said Ed Vick, a longtime Republican political consultant and Vietnam veteran who sits on the VoteVets board.

He strategized with an advisor about a VoteVets fundraiser in the Hamptons.

It was to be hosted by one of the Democratic Party's biggest donors, but Soltz wanted to feature a Republican, retired Maj. Gen. John Batiste, who left the Army

to protest the war in Iraq. [And who is also flatly opposed to immediate withdrawal from Iraq. He too wants to keep the war going longer while more U.S. troops die.]

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

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