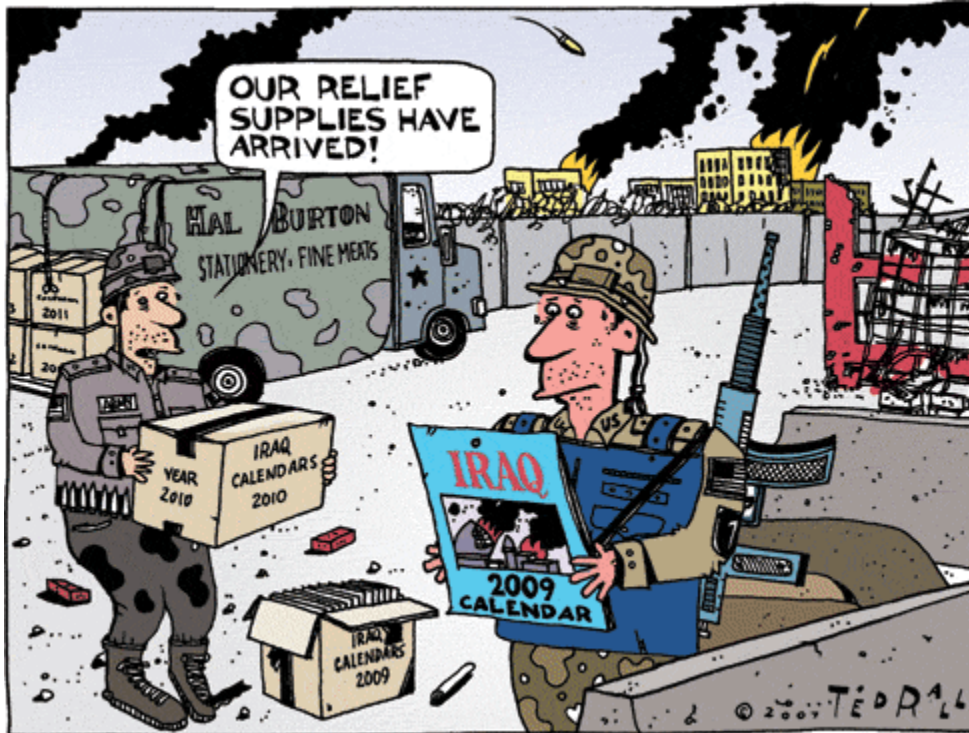


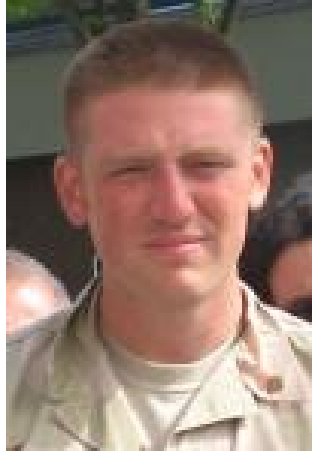
GI SPECIAL 5116:



**“The Winning Of This
War Is Impossible”**

**“All We Have Is A Numbers Game
Which General Petraeus And His
Subordinates Play With The Lives
Of Millions Of People”**

“There Is No Massive Network Of Jet-Setting Super-Villains Who Will ‘Follow Us Home’ In The Aftermath Of Iraq”



The winning of this war is impossible, the same way that multiplying large sums of numbers by a negative function will always make it negative.

Those that rally around the numbers, those that manipulate statistics in an attempt to minimize our ethical immorality, they are nothing but cowards who cannot face their own part in the destruction of Iraq and the death of over 1,000,000 Iraqis.

09/06/2007 by Evan M. Knappenberger, [Iraq Veterans Against The War]

Branch of service: United States Army (USA)

Unit: 1-4th Infantry

Rank: Cog

Home: Bellingham, Washington

Served in: Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Ft. Huachuca, Arizona; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Carson, Colorado; Fort Irwin, California; Udairi, Kuwait; Taji, Iraq

In my yearlong experience as an analyst hunting down ‘Al-Qaeda’ cells north of Baghdad, and physically guarding the fields of the area, I came to several opportune conclusions.

The first was really more of an observation: that there is no massive network of jet-setting super-villains who will “follow us home” in the aftermath of Iraq.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq is just a name, and has almost no real connection with anything outside of Iraq.

To think otherwise is folly, and I am willing to debate this only with people who have spent as much time interrogating and researching as I have.

The official assessments given to news outlets, congress, and the cabinet claiming vague threats thousands of miles away are as counter-intuitive as you might expect from an administration that not only dismisses opposing analysis, but axes the bearers of ill-tidings.

I invite any official to spend a night on Towerguard on Camp Taji with the smoke of burning trash and the port 'o-potty lake with nothing to do but talk to Iraqis, face to face, unarmed.

A good number of surviving Iraqis who have been labeled 'the terrorists' are mostly farmers and ex-army officers; they cry every night because their families have been threatened and killed.

What drives them to criminal action is the same thing that drives your deluded neighbors: they want money (without really working for it); security (at the barrel of a gun); and the power to enforce their beliefs on those they encounter.

The 'AQ' leaders? They are simply old men in dishdasha's. They steal gas for their generators (as there is no electricity), and pay their sons and nephews as agents while trying to manipulate the anarchic situation which we created in our zeal to topple a dictator.

I posit that there is no concrete 'Al-Qaeda in Iraq'; only old men that could be comical Tony Soprano imitators, and their unemployed nephews.

The second conclusion I have come to is retrospective, and of a more stoic nature. I began with the premise that most Americans' intentions are generally good. By good, I mean morally sound according to a system of philosophy which values human life over senseless violence.

How, then, do we commit atrocities in the name of freedom and justice?

It is immediately clear there is little fundamental difference between men with guns and stolen gas ("Al-Qaeda-in-Iraq," I mean) and men with guns and stolen gas (war-supporting Americans, I mean) except some very circumstantial power vacuums.

In situations that destroy men's ethical judgment there can be no morality. I believe we can assure ourselves that the occupation of Iraq is one of these situations. And if you doubt it, then I am willing to call you deluded or uninformed, as you probably have not been an analyst in Iraq lately.

The effects of this moral shift have been felt by everyone in the world.

In our own country, war-supporters have altogether abandoned the arguments they used to drown out initial opposition to the war: deposing dictators, freedom, bringing terrorists to justice.

War rhetoric has seen corresponding erosion in the lexicographic and semantics departments, and is now one stale bromide: "win the war!"

Compare this to the epic calls for Democracy that led us into this mess.

Now, as more and more of the intellectuals both in and out of the service of the Executive branch abandon their now-impotent war rhetoric, all we have is a numbers game which General Petraeus and his subordinates play with the lives of millions of people: statistics of how many attacks a day, how many dead bodies.

In a war that is morally wrong, when we cannot possibly justify the loss we have initiated, there can be no statistical hiatus from our own guilt.

The winning of this war is impossible, the same way that multiplying large sums of numbers by a negative function will always make it negative.

Those that rally around the numbers, those that manipulate statistics in an attempt to minimize our ethical immorality, they are nothing but cowards who cannot face their own part in the destruction of Iraq and the death of over 1,000,000 Iraqis.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Friends, Family Remember Emporia Soldier Killed In Iraq



An Iraqi city forms a backdrop for this photograph taken of David Lane, 20, who was killed Tuesday while on patrol outside Rustamiyah, near Baghdad.

September 6, 2007 By Bobbi Mlynar, The Emporia Gazette

David J. Lane wasn't letting a war and 7,000 miles come between him and his plans for coming home.

Lane already had contacted friends to arrange get-togethers next year and bought a piece of property with a friend serving with him at Camp Rustamiyah, Iraq, in eastern Baghdad. They planned to open a business together when they got out of the Army.

Lane's plans died Tuesday when a device exploded near the Humvee that he and two others were using on patrol outside Rustamiyah. All three were killed.

The Associated Press reported Wednesday that the Humvee was hit with an explosively formed penetrator, a type of bomb that the U.S. alleges Iran has been supplying to Shiite militias. Iran denies the accusation.

Officials notified Lane's parents, Maria and David Lane of Emporia, about 4 o'clock Tuesday afternoon. A candlelight memorial will be held by family and friends at 9 p.m. Saturday at the National Guard Armory. The service is open to the public.

Friends of Lane, who was 20 years old, said the young man was looking forward to his homecoming, even though it was months away.

"I talked to him on MySpace all the time," said one of his friends, Denisha Seiter, 20. "...And he always ended everything with 'Peace out, E-Town.'"

Seiter and her boyfriend, Michael Watson, both communicated with Lane over the Internet. On Wednesday afternoon, Seiter had been re-reading some of the messages Lane had sent.

"I was just reading them a minute ago," she said, "and he says on one of them that he's still in one piece over there and he'll be back next year for the Fourth of July and for the fair."

Lane had entered his oversized, 4x4, 1979 Chevy pickup in the truck pull at the Lyon County Free Fair for the first time in 2005 and had pulled about 79 feet, Seiter said. He was in Iraq during this year's fair, and was eager to try it again in 2008.

"We had so much in common — music, riding four-wheelers, going muddin' in his pickup truck," Watson said.

Lane enjoyed muddin' immensely, Maria Lane said, and he'd modified the Chevy to make it as tall as he could.

"The tires are bigger than the truck, I think," she said, laughing about her son's fascination with wheeled vehicles.

And David Lane had a studious side. He'd been home-schooled after moving to Emporia four years ago from Arizona. After receiving his high school certification, he enrolled in a mechanics course at Flint Hills Technical College before circumstances allowed him to enlist in the Army.

“He loved school. History was his favorite subject,” Maria Lane said. “The Civil War was one of his favorites. He did a lot of re-enactments before he got into the Army.”

Always and forever, though, Lane wanted to be a soldier. A hearing problem caused him to have several surgeries and about two years ago, doctors put a titanium implant in his ear that made all the difference.

“He was able to get into the Army,” Maria Lane said.

After he was deployed to Iraq, the private second class kept in touch with friends and family to let them know what his life was like in the Mideast.

“He thought the days were awfully long,” Lane said. “It was hot. He was always glad to get back to the base. He felt like what he was doing was what needed to be done. He was doing the right job. He did everything that a good soldier would do.” David Lane told his mother about the children he’d befriended and talked about one Iraqi boy who came daily to the gate of the base to take orders for a tasty flat bread the soldiers had developed a taste for.

“If they gave him some money, he would run and get it hot, and it was so good,” she recalled her son saying.

Maria Lane remembered her son as a helpful young man, loyal to friends and always willing to lend a hand.

“He’d do anything for anybody that needed it. If they called him and couldn’t get their car started, any time of the day or night, he was there,” she said.

David Lane had done just that for another friend, E-2 Pvt. Justin Brummett, who is stationed at Fort Hood, Texas’s Army base.

Brummett said he’d joined the Army after seeing how much Lane enjoyed serving. The two became friends three or four years ago, and when Brummett needed help, whether it was 4 a.m. or 4 p.m., Lane would be available.

“You couldn’t ask for a better friend,” Brummett said. “He was always there.”

Seiter talked about the close friendship that had developed in the relatively short time she had known Lane.

“He was amazing. He was a kind and gentle man. He’d give the shirt off his back for everybody, and everybody knew that,” Seiter said. “In that year, he became my best friend. He was so caring. He was always there to give you advice, to let you talk.

“He always had a shoulder for you to cry on.”

But crying wasn’t Lane’s way. Family and friends all say that laughing and making people laugh is one of the things he did best.

“He was full of life, just full of life,” Maria Lane, said. “He loved to joke and make people happy.”

David Lane's friends agreed.

"He's goofy and I'm goofy," said Watson. "We hit it off pretty good. We loved to do off-the-wall crazy things."

Watson really didn't want his friend going to Iraq.

"I'd just tell him he's crazy for doing it, with what's going on right now. 'I can't believe you're going, but I stand behind you 110 percent, if it's what you want to do,'" Watson remembered saying to Lane.

Watson and Seiter recalled Lane's last visit home on leave this spring, when seven friends got together for a farewell celebration and finished off the evening at the Golden Corral restaurant.

Lane gave Seiter a camouflage cap to keep for him until he came back for good. He was wearing it when he was shot in Iraq.

His bulletproof vest shouldn't have withstood the round that struck him, she said, but a scar and a lump on his left rib cage showed how close the bullet came to striking his heart.

The cap, like the memories, are something she plans to keep.

"My favorite memory of him pretty much to this day is him snorting a line of ice cream," Seiter said, laughing at the thought. "I felt sorry for the waitress that night."

Watson had buried his face in ice cream and Lane, not to be outdone, sniffed the ice cream up his nose. He said that it burned and was cold, simultaneously, Seiter said, and it brought out gales of laughter from the group.

"He made you laugh. That's why we called him 'Goofy Dave,'" Seiter said, mentioning the nickname friends had affectionately given him. "He made you laugh, no matter how sad you were."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Family Mourns Soldier Killed In Afghanistan

Aug 31, 2007 By RAY REYES , The Tampa Tribune

PLANT CITY - When Cory Clark enlisted in the Army six years ago, he had no dreams of glory. He had no desire for the military life. To Clark, the Army was an option, a paycheck, a ticket to the world outside Plant City.

It was a way to make his mother proud.

He is a hero to his family, said Wrenita Codrington, Clark's mother.

"Everybody loved him," Codrington said. "He laughed all the time. I can't believe I won't see his smile again."

Clark, 25, of the Army's 585th Engineer Pipeline Company, was killed Tuesday in Afghanistan when an improvised bomb exploded while his unit crossed a bridge, the Department of Defense said in a written statement released Thursday. Two other soldiers died in the explosion.

The 2000 Durant High School graduate, who was stationed in Fort Lewis, Wash., recently received a promotion to sergeant. He was serving his second tour in the Middle East, having fought in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

Clark expected to return stateside in February to his wife, Monica, and his four children, Malik Mitchell, 6; twins Cory Jr. and Quinton, both 3; and Kar-Yhana, 9 months. He planned to visit his mother in Plant City and enjoy her homemade peach cobbler. He told his family he would not re-enlist.

"It was going to be his last tour," Codrington said. "To watch his children scream as he left tore him apart."

Clark's laughter lingers in the Jenkins Street house where he grew up, said his 17-year-old sister, Ediena McGee.

"I keep hearing him laugh," McGee said. "I keep hearing his voice."

Codrington said that although her son received commendations and combat medals, he preferred a simpler domestic life.

"He enjoyed quiet time, to stay home and cook," Codrington said. "He enjoyed his family. He enjoyed that the most."

He also had a sharp sense of humor, said his grandmother, Gladys Randell. Clark nicknamed his sister "Monkey." He dubbed his older brother Markis "Ugly." He called himself "Handsome."

"If you met Cory," Randell said, "you would never forget him."

The self-proclaimed mama's boy developed a habit of sleeping in his mother's bed when he came home to visit, Codrington said.

"He had a notion that a mother's bed smelled better than any other," Codrington said. "He said it was a safe place. Just something comfortable about your mama, I guess." She turned to Randell and added, "Now I'll sleep in hers."

The news of Clark's death sent ripples through the community. Even those who were not acquainted with the family offered condolences.

"It brings tears to my eyes," said Plant City resident Lori Snively, who runs a support group for military families. "If there's anything I can do to give them comfort, even if it's directing traffic at the funeral, I'll step in."

Family members have made funeral arrangements for 1 p.m. Sept. 8 at the Plant City Church of God, 2103 Mud Lake Road.

Codrington said she is proud of what her son achieved. She grieves but knows Clark lived a good life.

"God gave him to me for a certain amount of time," she said. "I instill in him what I can. Then it's time to go."

TROOP NEWS

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



One casket carrying the remains of three U.S. soldiers who died in Iraq at Arlington National Cemetery September 13, 2007.

Staff Sgt. Harrison Brown, Pfc. David Neil Simmons, and Pfc. Todd Andrew Singleton were members of the 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division in Fort Benning, Georgia.

They were killed on April 8 by a makeshift bomb and small arms fire in Baghdad.
REUTERS/Jim Young

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, CCCO. He writes: Pics showing what happens when US bases get mortared/rocketed. Obviously taken by a GI. I found them online, and don't know who took them.



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DO NOT START WITH THEM YOU WILL NOT WIN



9/11 U of Penn IVAW Iraq Vets Panel: Sent September 13, 2007 BpVETforPEACE

Left to Right: Iraq Veterans Against The War members Jeff Mazziotta, Steve Mortillo, Shalom Keller, & T.D. Hartbarger

An IVAW Panel of Iraq Vets set the record straight on the vengeance aspect of OIF, following a 1 Act Play, "What I Heard About Iraq."

In Country: A Benefit for IVAW

Annoyance Theater 4830 N. Broadway
Chicago, Illinois
Doors Open At 7:00, Show Starts At 8:00
Suggested Donation Of \$10

From: Aaron Hughes, IVAW

On Monday, September 17, The Annoyance Theater will be hosting "In Country: A Benefit for Iraq Veterans Against the War." The night will consist of readings and performances from Iraq-era veterans and war resisters, as well as veteran performers from Chicago's improv, sketch and independent theater community.

The show will include performers from ImprovOlympic, The Annoyance Theater, Second City, and The Neo-Futurists. The actors will be writing pieces specifically for the event.

In addition, IVAW members will be speaking about their experiences, as well as performing. The night will also feature an excerpt of "Returns," a play written by IVAW member Joshua Casteel, a former military interrogator at Abu Ghraib.

The show should prove to be a powerful and engaging event and a great way to support an important anti-war organization.



Iraq Veterans Against The War Says The Troop Surge Is A Failure:

**“This War Has Been A Series Of
Lies And Illusions”**

**“We Are There With No Defined
Mission, No End Goal, And No
Indication Of How Long This Will
Take”**

“Stop The Surge, End The Occupation And Bring Our Brothers And Sisters Home Now”

This war has been a series of lies and illusions, meant to lure the American people into supporting the overall policy of international aggression that has been the hallmark of this administration.

September 13, 2007 By Matt Howard, Iraq Veterans Against the War E-Newsletter
[Excerpts]

It seems that in all measurable aspects, the troop surge has failed.

Despite what general Petraeus said before Congress, numerous preliminary reports outline what is clearly a failure in this surge strategy.

Casualties, both US and Iraqi have exceeded the numbers from last year for every month in 2007.

The Iraqi government is no closer to stability than it was a year ago, and in fact, it sometimes seems to be on the verge of collapse.

In May 2003, President Bush announced “Mission Accomplished.” More than four years later, nothing has been accomplished except a civil war, and an area of instability that has serious daily implications for Iraqi civilians and American service members.

Through 2006, an average of 2.39 service members were killed daily in Iraq. The average for 2007 has increased to 3.27.

This has occurred despite the “surge” that was meant to secure the most vital areas of Baghdad.

Not any less shocking are the casualty rates among Iraqi civilians. Sixty Iraqi civilians are killed daily, nearly 35,000 since the Samarra Mosque bombing. For the months January through August, more Iraqi civilians died in 2007 than in the corresponding months in 2006.

If the surge is working, why are more Iraqis and US service members dying daily?

In a report issued by the General Accounting Office last week, Iraq has met only three of the 18 benchmarks set by congress. It has “partially” met only four. The Iraqi government has failed on eleven of these goals.

Though it is arguable whether we should even have the right to impose our own outside goals on a sovereign nation, even if we allow that, the Iraqi government is no more stable today than it was when US troops began swarming into Baghdad more than eight months ago.

If one of the purposes of the surge was to ease security problems in order to give the Iraqi government some time to cooperate and succeed, the surge is failing in this aspect.

President Bush has said time and time again that the proof will come.

We have waited for eight months to see the results of the “surge.”

We have seen the results, and they indicate that this policy has failed, and will continue to fail.

Yet, President Bush insists that if we just wait long enough, things will turn around.

My question is; how long do we have to wait?

The surge will not correct the faults in the occupation of Iraq.

We are there with no defined mission, no end goal, and no indication of how long this will take.

This war has been a series of lies and illusions, meant to lure the American people into supporting the overall policy of international aggression that has been the hallmark of this administration.

The surge is not working, and indeed it cannot work. War will never accomplish peace. It is time for the American people to call on their leaders to hold this administration accountable, and allow the Iraqi people to govern themselves without American influence.

Stop the surge, end the occupation and bring our brothers and sisters home now.

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.

“Kokesh Is One Of A Growing Number Of Both Active And Veteran Military Members Who Are

Publicly Opposing The Continued Occupation Of Iraq”

“It’s Becoming Clear That The Democrats Don’t Really Want To End The War Before 2008, They Just Want It To Look Like They Do”

Imperial Democrat Conyers Lies And Betrays Again, As Usual



Kokesh is thrown out of the House Armed Services Committee hearing on the Petraeus report last Monday. Gerald Herbert / AP

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Sept 14, 2007 By Susanna Schrobsdorff, Newsweek [Excerpts]

As a week of antiwar activities kicks off in Washington on Saturday, Marine Corps veteran Adam Kokesh will be a familiar face.

The 25-year-old former sergeant was in the news earlier this week when he was escorted out of the House Armed Service Committee’s hearing for Gen. David Petraeus.

Dressed in a black anti-Iraq War T shirt and a desert camouflage hat, Kokesh unfurled a small sign that said GENERALS LIE, SOLDIERS DIE and was summarily

escorted out of the room while House aides struggled to get the general's microphone working.

Kokesh wasn't arrested, but if he had been it wouldn't have been the first time. In the eight months since he joined Iraq Veterans Against the War, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, the telegenic Kokesh has become a fixture on the antiwar scene giving speeches, blogging, staging mock military patrols and being arrested in cities all over country. He was on Larry King's CNN show Thursday night, and Wonkette snarkily reports sightings of Kokesh in cafes around D.C.

Kokesh, who did an eight-month tour in Fallujah in 2004, is one of a growing number of both active and veteran military members who are publicly opposing the continued occupation of Iraq.

In January, Appeal for Redress, a group of active-duty, Reserve and National Guard personnel presented a petition of 1,000 signatures to Congress calling for withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. And in August, seven active-duty soldiers took the almost unprecedented step of writing an editorial in The New York Times criticizing the military leadership and calling U.S. forces an occupying force that "long ago outlived its welcome." (Two of those soldiers died in an accident in Iraq this week.)

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), which Kokesh co-chairs, says its membership has grown slightly from 400 to 600 in the last few months—a sign they say, of mounting frustration over the war and the toll that extended deployments are taking on members of the military and their families. **[Check that bullshit: 400 to 600 is an increase of 50%. That's what the reporter calls growing "slightly" in the "last few months."]**

The drawdown of troops proposed by Petraeus and endorsed by President Bush isn't appeasing these vets. "That's a crock," says Kokesh. "When their deployments are up, there are just no replacements for them. They are stretched as thin as possible as it is, and it's tearing the military apart."

Kokesh has a complicated history with the Marines. As civil-affairs officer in the Fallujah area, he was tasked with outreach to the Iraqi population. He managed to learn enough Arabic to operate without a translator at checkpoints, was promoted to sergeant and awarded a Navy Commendation Medal. But then, but before his discharge in June, his rank was reduced to corporal for illegally bringing a pistol home from Iraq.

Halfway through his tour, Kokesh says he became disillusioned with the mission—though he still calls himself a proud Marine.

"The country doesn't need another school, mosque clinic right now," he says. "They need rule of law and they'll never get that with us as a foreign country imposing martial law."

"Somehow people think that we can't leave until the Iraqis have 24 hours a day of electricity. That's ridiculous. Electricity isn't going to give them democracy."

But what about the chaos that the Bush administration and others say will happen if U.S. troops pull out?

“Everything they say will happen if we leave will only be worse the longer we stay,” Kokesh says.

This weekend, Kokesh’s group will join PinkSlip, ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) and other activists in protesting the war in Washington. They’ve planned a Saturday “die-in” on Capitol Hill involving protesters lying down to represent Iraqi and American dead. Kokesh believes the presence of more Iraq veterans at these types of events will bolster Democrats (and the few Republicans) who support an immediate withdrawal.

But Congressional Quarterly reported midweek that many leading Democrats won’t be attending this weekend’s events.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers Jr. of Michigan has said that Democrats are concerned that their attendance “would be wrongly seen as a sign they are soft on terrorism.”

That’s the kind of thinking that keeps Kokesh going.

“If we knew that the Democrats were going to do their job ... and really be aggressive as they need to be in confronting (the administration’s) lies and spin, then we wouldn’t have to be there,” he says.

“But it’s becoming clear that the Democrats don’t really want to end the war before 2008, they just want it to look like they do.”

**“Let’s Admit Our Mistakes, And Bring
Our Troops Home...”**

**“The Self-Servers Have Taken Over Most
Of The Key Leadership Positions In The
Grades Of O-6 And Higher During The
Bush Administration”**

Sept. 10, 2007
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

I am writing in reference to the Aug. 14 article, “Casey: Army must train for conventional ops.”

If our forces had been adequately and properly trained in the tried-and-true conventional methods that had been hammered out from the end of Vietnam to the start of this so-

called war on terrorism — with specific emphasis on Afghanistan and Iraq — our troops would not be suffering such miserable deaths to the extent they have been.

Since the self-servers have taken over most of the key leadership positions in the grades of O-6 and higher during the Bush administration, the majority of folks in the chain of command have become “dumbed” and/or “numbed.”

They love it when they are not held accountable.

The military, being a closed system, is self-perpetuating. That, coupled with the blind faith and trust in the undeserving politico-military hierarchy, makes it extremely difficult to turn that ship around when it has a severely damaged rudder.

It almost always takes something drastic or horrible to bring about any significant change in an institution whose sorry leaders have been ensconced for such a long period of time.

Just maybe Afghanistan and Iraq are those drastic or horrible events that will cause the majority of American people to demand that our current administration, to include our politico-military hierarchy, be held personally accountable.

The only saving grace of this whole mess is that our troops never die in vain when their hearts and intentions are pure, when they give their lives for each other and those oppressed. I do believe our wonderful troops have suffered way more than what most of us deserve.

The spirits of our fallen comrades demand that we take corrective action immediately.

Let's beat our elected officials unmercifully with promises of doing whatever it takes to keep them from getting re-elected.

That is the only way to get their attention, because it is not possible to shame them, and besides, their children very rarely go to war.

Let's admit our mistakes, and bring our troops home while we regroup and prepare for future engagements.

Maybe with decent leaders, equipment and training, Americans will once again encourage our most prized assets, our children, to be proud members of our once-great Armed Forces.

Lt. Col. Dennis L. Adams (ret.)
Austin, Texas

Bust The Brass
Safety Is A Duty:

“Regardless Of The Violators’ Rank, Appropriate Actions Should Be Taken”

Sept. 10, 2007
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

Since I have been assigned to Fort Huachuca, Ariz., I have witnessed more reckless driving on post then I have ever seen before.

I began to notice that nobody drives the speed limit, and simple safety practices such as using your blinker to notify other drivers of your intentions are not practiced.

Normally, I would say that the individuals guilty of these unsafe acts were junior soldiers, but I have noticed that the majority are senior leaders.

The same stickers they use to get a closer parking spot at the commissary and PX are the same stickers I see changing lanes rapidly without using their blinkers and traveling more than 10 miles per hour over the posted speed limit.

Not only are these safety issues, they are also illegal.

Not to be one to just complain, I have a solution.

Leaders at all levels must exercise the rights and duty of enforcing the Army Safety Program.

Violators should be reported to the command and, regardless of the violators’ rank, appropriate actions should be taken.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert D. Jorgensen
Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

Marion V.A. Hospital Boss “Reassigned” – Too Many Dead Vets

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

September 15, 2007 (AP)

MARION, Ill.: The Department of Veterans Affairs has suspended all inpatient surgeries at its medical center here after an uptick in the number of post-surgical deaths, and two top hospital officials have been reassigned.

The department said Friday that it made the changes at the hospital, in southern Illinois, after an inspection Aug. 31 by the Veterans Affairs National Surgical Quality Review team.

The VA says it is investigating possible reasons for the increase in the number of deaths after certain inpatient surgeries earlier this year. Details on the investigation and the deaths were not immediately available.

The department on Thursday reassigned the hospital's director, Robert Morrel, and chief of staff, Dr. Joe Herman. Pete McBrady has been named acting director of the Marion center.

The decision to halt inpatient procedures affects only surgical care, and other center functions will continue, said Dr. Peter Almenoff, director of the VA Heartland Network.

Other VA centers and nearby private facilities are performing veterans' surgeries during the investigation in Marion, officials said.

Disabled Veterans Cheated, Fucked Over By U.S. Government: “Those Whose Federal Service Placed Them In Peril Must Stand By As Others Cut Into Line Ahead Of Them For Federal Employment” “Veterans’ Preference Is Little More Than Lofty Rhetoric, And There Is No Enforceable Mechanism In Place

Bartley identified three specific situations where veterans are not receiving what she called “even-handed” treatment: agencies canceling job postings to avoid hiring a veteran who is the top candidate; agencies issuing complicated job listings — known as certificates — that allow multiple competitions for a single job; and agencies that fill jobs outside the normal competitive exam process in which veterans’ preference would apply.

September 17, 2007 By Rick Maze, Army Times [Excerpts]

Complaints about whether veterans are getting proper hiring preferences for federal jobs have prompted a House panel to question if the Office of Personnel Management is up to the job of setting and endorsing the policy.

The House Veterans' Affairs economic opportunity subcommittee, with jurisdiction over veterans' employment programs but not over federal personnel practices, was told that despite renewed emphasis on hiring veterans, they still face obstacles.

“On nearly a daily basis, my office receives inquiries from disabled veterans who believe their preference rights have been overlooked or ignored,” said Brian Lawrence, of Disabled American Veterans.

“From their perspective, veterans' preference is little more than lofty rhetoric, and there is no enforceable mechanism in place to verify that consideration was given to their status.

“It is a bitter notion that those whose federal service placed them in peril must stand by as others cut into line ahead of them for federal employment.”

The federal law awards five points in a competitive review to most veterans and 10 points to veterans who have disabilities rated at 30 percent or more.

Meg Bartley, of the National Veterans Legal Service Program, said her organization has spent eight years reviewing and investigating veterans' preference violations.

“Our conclusion, based on discussions with individual veterans, review of numerous complaints and participation in litigation concerning alleged veterans preference violations, is there are many violations of the spirit and the letter of veterans' preference laws,” she said.

Bartley identified three specific situations where veterans are not receiving what she called “even-handed” treatment: agencies canceling job postings to avoid hiring a veteran who is the top candidate; agencies issuing complicated job listings — known as certificates — that allow multiple competitions for a single job; and agencies that fill jobs outside the normal competitive exam process in which veterans' preference would apply.

Lawrence had a similar view.

“Bureaucratic techniques used by hiring officials to avoid granting veterans their preference are common knowledge to anyone who has struggled to obtain a federal position,” he said.

Roger Tadsen, a certified fraud examiner with the Air Force Audit Agency, described a 15-year battle to receive promotions that were going to people with less experience, ignoring the fact that as a 70 percent disabled veteran, he should have received special treatment.

“It has taken almost nine years for my promotion to GS-13; the average for the majority of others is three years or less,” said Tadsen, whose military career ended after 15 years in the Air Force when he became partially paralyzed after surgery.

Tadsen said he got a sign of what he was going to face in his third year on the job when a regional chief told him he should be “satisfied with where you are because of your disability,” something he took as meaning he had slim chances for moving up.

That remark led to Tadsen filing what he said was the first of two equal opportunity complaints about treatment of disabled veteran employees.

Veterans’ preference laws apply to hiring and to handling of reductions-in-force but not to promotions — although there has been talk of adding promotions, transfers, reassignments and reinstatement to the list of situations under which being a veteran would be a bonus.

That Says It All

September 17, 2007 By Rick Maze, Army Times [Excerpt]

Over Bush administration objections, the Senate has passed a \$109.2 billion funding bill covering veterans’ programs, military housing and military construction.

The Bush administration is unhappy mainly because the bill contains \$4 billion more in funding than its own original plan, with most of the extra money going to veterans’ health care programs.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“What A Recruitment Poster This Is!”

September 14, 2007, By Mark Morford, SF Gate Columnist [Excerpts]

What a recruitment poster this is.

Come fight in the American military.

We're exhausted, overstretched, bewildered.....have almost zero idea what we're actually fighting for, and serve under a Commander in Chief who cares more about trying to shore up his wretched legacy than for the loss of American life.

Oh and by the way, odds are extremely high you will return home permanently wounded, traumatized, or brain damaged.

OCCUPATION REPORT

60% Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops Dead: Big Surprise



A foreign occupation soldier from the USA stops Iraqi citizens walking down a street in New Baghdad, southeast of Baghdad September 13, 2007. REUTERS/Carlos Barria



A U.S. soldier hold Iraqi citizens at gunpoint outside in the street after their home is invaded by occupation soldiers in an area known as New Baghdad, southeast of Baghdad September 13, 2007. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

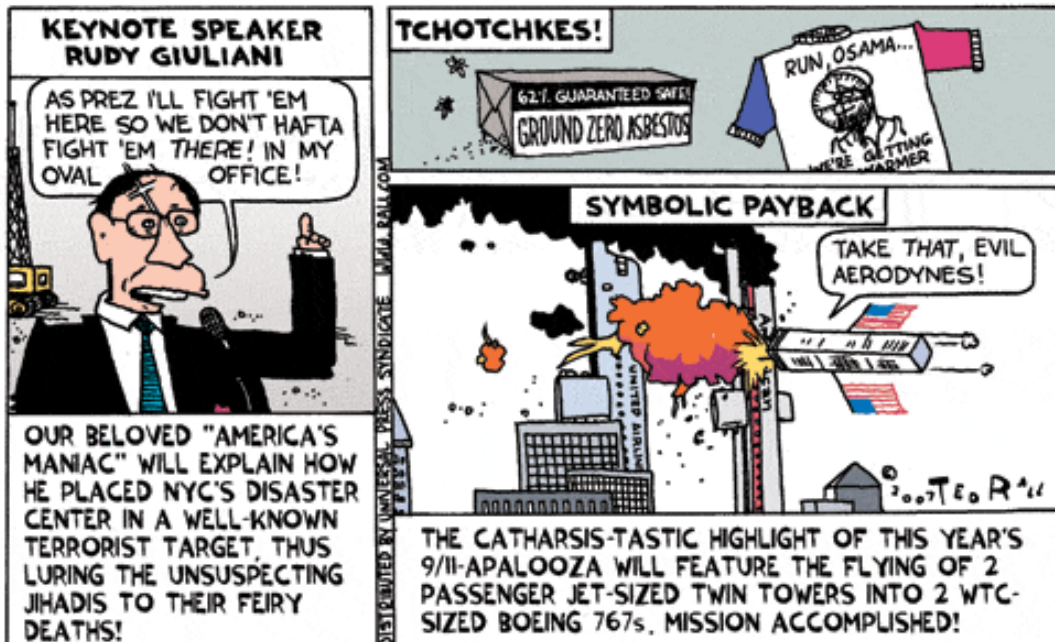
[61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes

Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist by any means necessary. T]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

YOU ARE COMMANDED TO COMMEMORATE THE CELEBRATION OF
5TH ANNUAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1ST ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11
WHERE YOU WILL SEE THE FOLLOWING **STARTLING ATTRACTIONS** :



CLASS WAR REPORTS



**“When The Agents Told Hernandez
To Stay Inside And Not Take Any
More Pictures, She Responded
Defiantly”
“They Grudgingly Conceded That She
Had A ‘Constitutional Right’ To Protest”**

September 14, 2007 By David Rapkin, Socialist Worker

THE TYPICALLY arrogant agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) found themselves on the defensive in Los Angeles in the face of a small number of confident and determined community members who stood up to them early on September 6.

After watching ICE stake out and begin to intimidate a close-knit South Central LA neighborhood at 6:30 a.m. with six vehicles and numerous agents, Cristina Hernandez, her family and friends succeeded in driving the agents away and saving the family that agents tried to apprehend and deport.

As agents entered a private apartment in an attempt to arrest an undocumented family, Hernandez confronted other agents in the street.

Already, she and her brother had moved around the block, photographing ICE vehicles.

The agents demanded she and others show ID, and that she surrender her camera. Hernandez produced an ID, but refused to give up her camera.

Her confidence split the agents, with one contradicting the other and admitting that it was indeed legal for people to take photographs.

When the agents told Hernandez to stay inside and not take any more pictures, she responded defiantly, telling them, “I plan to go right in my house, make a poster and walk right back out with it, because what you are doing is wrong.”

Taken aback, they grudgingly conceded that she had a “constitutional right” to protest.

Meanwhile, ICE agents had entered a nearby apartment and were preparing to arrest the occupants, who were unable to produce documents.

But the commotion on the street, created by an increasingly confident Hernandez and her family, apparently caused the agents in the apartment to stop what they were doing and leave the premises. As soon as they left, the family escaped.

“I don’t think this was a simple mistake,” Hernandez, a member of the International Socialist Organization, said later. “I think they realized they were actively being watched and decided to abort the arrest.

“I think this proves the importance of our work.

“What they are doing is illegal, and they benefit from the fear they create in people to continue. I saw them break down when they realized that I would not back down.”

Unfortunately, a car from the LA County Sheriff’s Department soon arrived in an obvious and illegal coordinated sweep. With ICE assistance, the sheriff’s deputies arrested an African American man from the neighborhood.

As soon as ICE drove away, Hernandez got on the phone and called her comrades and allies in the local Emergency Response Network (ERN), formed several months ago to allow activists to respond at a moment’s notice to ICE raids and other anti-immigrant attacks.

ERN activists quickly organized an afternoon protest and press conference, which drew five Spanish-language media outlets and about 25 activists and concerned neighbors.

“The entire climate in the neighborhood changed from early in the morning to the afternoon,” said Hernandez. “We need to continue building the ERN and other networks so that ICE trembles every time they go into one of our neighborhoods.”

The small but spirited afternoon protest was especially effective at drawing in African American neighbors, some of whom were ready to stand with their Latino neighbors at the protest.

Many others expressed sympathy and outrage that a family had been attacked in their apartment for the “crime” of working and raising children.

Sadly, the family was terrorized by the assault to the point that they are moving away from the community, even though they told Hernandez they have nowhere to go. They told Hernandez that when ICE was coming into their apartment, they called a brother, crying, and told him to “please take care of the baby because we’re going to be deported.”

Yet the family was also “very, very thankful,” according to Hernandez. “Although they are very terrified by the whole situation, they gained at least a little confidence by the media attention and our protest. They felt our presence created a safety net for them.”

All participants agreed that the difference made by Hernandez’s quick action and the ERN protest later is the most important lesson from the day.

“I learned that it is important to stand up against ICE,” said Hernandez. “In this case it saved a family from deportation, but it was also important because it set a precedent.

“Communities can respond to ICE raids with courage instead of fear. So what we need are more of these types of responses in every neighborhood so that ICE can stay away from our families. People are tired of being victims.”

A Bankrupt Empire On The Edge: Dollar's Fall In Value Raising Fear Of Collapse

[The reporter misses the most important point: Would you buy currency issued by a government run by George W. Bush that’s determined to keep on with a failing war draining all the money out of the country? Fuck no. The empire is bankrupt. Everybody knows it. At this point, Mexican pesos are a far safer, more profitable investment, and that hasn’t been so for about 200 years. They got silver, gold, oil, weed, and a government that didn’t think it would be a smart move to go invade some nation full of kick-ass warriors with a 5000 year history of chewing up invaders. T]

September 13, 2007 By Carter Dougherty, The International Herald Tribune [Excerpts]

FRANKFURT: Finance ministers and central bankers have long fretted that at some point, the rest of the world would lose its willingness to finance the United States' proclivity to consume far more than it produces - and that a potentially disastrous free-fall in the dollar's value would result.

But for longer than most economists would have been willing to predict a decade ago, the world has been a willing partner in American excess - until a new and home-grown financial crisis this summer rattled confidence in the country, the world's largest economy.

On Thursday, the dollar briefly fell to another low against the euro of \$1.3927, as a slow decline that has been under way for months picked up steam this past week.

"This is all pointing to a greatly increased risk of a fast unwinding of the U.S. current account deficit and a serious decline of the dollar," said Kenneth Rogoff, a former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund and an expert on exchange rates.

"We could finally see the big kahuna hit."

So long as Americans buy more than they earn from exports - and they did, creating a current account deficit of \$850 billion last year - the rest of the world financed the binge by bringing dollars into the United States for investment in stocks, bonds, real estate or other assets, thereby preserving demand for the dollar.

The continued appetite for U.S. investments stemmed from a track record of strong economic growth and a financial system that has been remarkably resistant to shocks.

But the latest turmoil in mortgage markets has, in a single stroke, shaken faith in the resilience of American finance to a greater degree than even the bursting of the technology bubble in 2000 or the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, analysts said. It has also raised prospect of a recession in the wider economy.

While most economists just a few months ago would have dismissed the prospect of a dollar collapse outright, they now are debating the possibility that something on par with the dollar debacle of the 1970s might just happen again.

When a currency collapses, the central bank can push up interest rates to attract needed investment, but strangle the economy in the process.

Alternatively, it can let the currency fall and watch prices of imports - and eventually competing domestic goods - rise sharply.

After a run of strong growth, the U.S. economy has lurched into a phase of slower expansion, and last Friday the most serious warning sign appeared - an outright deterioration in employment growth.

Since the middle of last year, the dollar, weighted for trade flows, has fallen steadily against a broad range of currencies, according to data collected by the Fed.

The problem, as every economist knows, is that the current account deficit - about \$770 billion - is still colossal in absolute terms.

And foreigners are being asked to provide those dollars at a time when the subprime turmoil is threatening to spill over into the broader economy.

Put another way, at a time when the psychology of crisis has gripped financial markets, intangible attitudes toward the dollar have become all the more important. And with growth strong elsewhere in the world, there are appealing places to go besides the dollar.

"The problem is that the deficit is still very, very large," Jen said. "And there are plenty of other investment opportunities outside the United States."

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