

GI SPECIAL 5118:

MIRROR IMAGE



Iraqi soldiers check the identification of an American man who was driving during a curfew in the Flatbush neighborhood in Brooklyn September 8, 2007. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

Democrats Have Enough Votes To End The War Now [If They Choose To Do So]

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Sep 13, 2007 FAIR [Excerpts]

Following a pattern set when Congress passed supplemental funding for the Iraq War last May (FAIR Media Advisory, 6/1/07), major media outlets continued to "explain" the politics of the war in incomplete and misleading ways.

The point made by these media outlets again and again is that the Democrats have little power to affect policy in Iraq because it would be difficult to pass legislation over a potential Republican filibuster, and even harder to pass a bill over a presidential veto.

This sentiment is also voiced by many Democratic politicians, many of whom consider themselves opponents of the war.

But passing a filibuster- or veto-proof bill is not their only option.

As the Washington Post's Shailagh Murray and Dan Balz (9/10/07) put it: "Because of a Senate rule requiring 60 votes to shut off debate and 67 votes to overturn a veto, (Senate Majority Leader Harry) Reid faced an almost impossible challenge. Even if all his troops stood together, he started with just 49 votes."

Newsweek's Howard Fineman declared that the Democrats' powerlessness was built into the constitutional system on NBC's Chris Matthews Show (9/2/07):

"Politically, what the president has been trying to do is to keep discipline among the Republicans because as long as he can keep most of the Republicans in the Senate, in the House with him, there's no way to overturn the policy because of the way the Constitution reads.... I hate to keep coming back to the Constitution. Sixty votes to stop a filibuster, 67 to overturn a presidential veto in the Senate."

This sort of analysis was used to explain the Democrats' need to compromise with Republicans, watering down a firm withdrawal date in the hopes of winning bipartisan support.

This approach was endorsed in an Associated Press report (9/11/07) by Matthew Lee:

"If Republican support for the war holds, as it might for now, Democrats would have to soften their approach if they want to pass an anti-war proposal. But they remain under substantial pressure by voters and politically influential anti-war groups to settle for nothing less than ordering troop withdrawals or cutting off money for the war--legislation that has little chances of passing."

The problem with all these accounts is that Congress does not have to pass legislation to bring an end to the war in Iraq--it simply has to block passage of any bill that would continue to fund the war.

This requires not 67 or 60 Senate votes, or even 51, but just 41--the number of senators needed to maintain a filibuster and prevent a bill from coming up for a vote.

In other words, the Democrats have more than enough votes to end the Iraq War--if they choose to do so.

The Democratic leadership may believe--rightly or wrongly--that such a strategy would entail unacceptable political costs. But that's very different from being unable to affect policy.

To insist, as many media outlets have, that the Constitution makes it impossible for Congress to stop the war obscures the actual choices facing the nation--by confusing "can't" with "won't."

Troops Invited:

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Streetsboro Soldier Killed Jason Hernandez Dies In Roadside Bombing In Iraq On 21st Birthday



September 8, 2007 By Bob Gaetjens, Miles Jung-Kilbreath and Matt Fredmonsky; Record-Courier staff writers.

STREETSBORO -- U.S. Army Spc. Jason Hernandez's family spent Friday, a day that should have been a celebration of his 21st birthday, mourning him.

The 2005 Streetsboro High School graduate, a cavalry scout with the First Division of the Ninth Cavalry, 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, died in Iraq as a result of a roadside bombing at around 5 a.m. Friday, according to family.

His father, John, said Jason first became serious about the military "three to four months before graduating."

His service as a cavalry scout put him on the front lines in the war in Iraq. He was among those who conducted reconnaissance missions, found enemies, plotted their locations, destroyed them or called in appropriate reinforcements to eliminate them.

"He understood what he was signing up for and what it entailed," his father said. "As of today, he paid the ultimate price for those choices."

Hernandez appeared in a video posted on the Web site www.myonegoodreason.com in February, in which he talked about why he decided to join the Army. "It's important to join the Army because people need us," Hernandez said in the video. "Not just in our country -- there are people who are being oppressed, and we are the nation that stops people from being oppressed."

He said he enlisted "to get out of my house and get some adventure," adding, "It's paying for my college. It gives me a good job and an opportunity to meet a lot of cool people and make some good friends."

The Hernandez family said "about 300" visitors had come to their Pike Parkway home Friday, along with members of the media, after news of Jason's death became known.

Students at Streetsboro High School, where Jason's brother, Aaron, is a sophomore, were informed of the death at around 10 a.m. Friday. School counselors and church representatives were available for students to speak with throughout the day.

The school paid tribute to Jason during Friday night's football game between Streetsboro and Crestwood. Aaron Hernandez is a player for the Rockets and was honorary captain during the game. Before the game, members of the Streetsboro football team greeted Jason's father and his mother, Uta, as the crowd stood and clapped. An audible cry above the cheers was heard saying, "You people are heroes."

There was a moment of silence before the high school marching band played the national anthem in Jason's memory as fireworks exploded overhead afterwards. A fireworks show presented by the city after the game was dedicated to Jason and the four other soldiers with ties to Portage County who have been killed in Iraq.

Streetsboro High Principal Jim Montaquila said Jason played football as a freshman and was a wrestler in his junior and senior year. He attended Maplewood Career Center during his junior year, but returned to Streetsboro in his senior year.

"Staff members who knew Jason have taken it very hard," Montaquila said. "I liked Jason. We all liked Jason."

Streetsboro faculty member Rob Kidd taught Jason social studies his freshman year. They developed a second connection through the Rocket Rowdies, a school spirit group that also provided support to alumni serving in the military.

He said Jason "was your typical teenage boy" who "was a bit of a character -- a little rowdy, a little challenging at times, but always under control and respectful."

Kidd said Jason changed after enlisting in the Army. He returned to his high school shortly after graduating wearing fatigues and visiting former teachers.

"He was someone you could be proud of," Kidd said. "It's a blow to us to hear about such a horrific event."

Polly Dierkens, a high school teacher and adviser to the student newspaper, The Orbiter, and the yearbook, recalled a visit from Jason in spring 2005 after he'd been enlisted for nearly a year.

"He was just so mature and had grown so much," she said. "He had grown into a really good man."

John Hernandez said he will miss knowing Jason as "the future man I should have been able to know. He was an honorable young man -- patriotic."

He said he would remember an instance when Jason "saved my life" when the boy was about 6 years old.

John said he was watching a music video when Jason started to dance in front of the screen, "kind of getting on my nerves but making me laugh at the same time." John said he was having some personal problems during that period, but seeing his son dance in front of the TV reminded him of the importance of family.

While driving home from the oil fields in western Pennsylvania where he works, John said the song played on the radio Friday morning around 5 a.m. -- about the time Jason died.

Kevin Kontorchik, a friend of Jason's since about age 8, said he drove to Streetsboro from college in Fredonia, N.Y., after hearing about his friend's death.

"He was always in a good mood," Kontorchik said. "He was always have a good time. He was always the center of attention -- the life of the party. He was probably my first friend."

"Jason's friends will miss him and are proud of him," said another family friend, Brett McClafferty, who said Jason was a born leader who knew how to follow commands.

In addition to his parents and brother, survivors include Hernandez's wife, Alisha Brecht, a Ravenna native, and a sister Angela.

Ex-McHenry Man Killed In Baghdad

September 8, 2007 By Deborah Horan, Tribune staff reporter

Their whirlwind romance began at a wedding last year with cake and dancing and toasts to the bride and groom. Six months later Keith Nurnberg and Tonya Hopkins were

married at a church in Richmond, Ill., just a week before Nurnberg, a specialist in the Army, left for Georgia to prepare for his second tour of duty in Iraq.

"It just clicked, and all of the sudden they were engaged and married," said Kimmy Nurnberg, Keith's younger sister.

For three months after that, the couple met in states in between, traveling to Kentucky and Tennessee to rendezvous every other weekend. Two weeks before Nurnberg shipped out to the Middle East, in March, they celebrated the news that Tonya was pregnant with their first child: a boy they would name after his dad.

Nurnberg, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was killed Wednesday when insurgents attacked his unit in Baghdad, according to the Department of Defense Web site.

An Army representative told the family Nurnberg, who lived with his wife in Genoa City, Wis., was killed when his vehicle was hit by a grenade, Kimmy Nurnberg said. Keith Nurnberg, who grew up in McHenry, graduated from McHenry West High School in 1999.

Hawaii Soldier Killed In Iraq War

September 11, 2007 Associated Press

The family of a Schofield Barracks soldier from Wahiawa yesterday said Army Sgt. Alexander Gagalac has been killed in Iraq.

Family members told KHON-TV that Gagalac, 28, was killed Sunday while on patrol when a rocket-propelled grenade hit his Humvee.

Gagalac and his twin brother, Alexis, joined the Army together.

The family said Alexander Gagalac re-enlisted this past July and was expected home in a couple of weeks.

His mother, Regina Gagalac, said she spoke with her son on Saturday, her birthday. She said she told him to be very careful.

Gagalac's page on the MySpace Web site said he graduated in 1997 from Leilehua High School, where he was on the varsity wrestling team.

He attended Leeward Community College from 1997 to 2000, where he majored in automotive studies. Gagalac was 5 feet 8 and was not married, according to his MySpace blog.

The day before he was killed, Gagalac posted this message on his blog:

"This is very rare that write a blog. For the past 13 months I have been living in a place that time forgot "Iraq." Now it is finally coming to an end with a few weeks to go. I can't

wait to be back home with family and friends. This has been a long time coming and it gonna feel a lot longer as it comes to those last hours that I'm here. The taste of freedom is going to be sweet. To let you in on a secret, the expected date for my arrival is the 24th of September. I'll keep my fingers cross. I hope to see you all when I get back."

Gagalac's death comes 18 days after the loss of 10 Schofield Barracks soldiers in a helicopter crash Aug. 22 in northern Iraq. The Black Hawk's four crew members also were killed. Family members of some of the soldiers were told the helicopter's tail rotor malfunctioned, causing the crash.

It was the largest number of Schofield Barracks soldiers killed in one incident since the Vietnam War.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



9.4.07: A US soldier from 1-40 Infantry Battalion during a foot patrol along the Tigris river south of Baghdad. (AFP/David Furst)

Blackwater Ordered To “Stop Operating” And Get Out Of Iraq After Slaughtering Civilians

[But Will They Obey? U.S. State Department Says They Have “No Notice” Blackwater Ordered Out]

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

It was unlikely the United States would agree to abandon a security company that plays such a critical role in American operations in Iraq.

The U.S. clearly hoped the Iraqis would be satisfied with an investigation, a finding of responsibility and compensation to the victims' families -- and not insist on expelling a company that the Americans cannot operate here without.

17 September 2007 BBC & CNN & By BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press Writer & By Joshua Partlow, Washington Post Foreign Service & BBC

Iraq has cancelled the licence of the private security firm, Blackwater USA, after it was involved in a gunfight in which at least eight civilians died.

The Iraqi interior ministry said the contractor, based in North Carolina, was now banned from operating in Iraq.

The order by the Interior Ministry, if carried out, would deal a severe blow to U.S. government operations in Iraq by stripping diplomats, engineers, reconstruction officials and others of their security protection.

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The U.S. clearly hoped the Iraqis would be satisfied with an investigation, a finding of responsibility and compensation to the victims' families -- and not insist on expelling a company that the Americans cannot operate here without.

American officials refused to explain the legal authority under which Blackwater operates in Iraq.

The interior ministry's director of operations, Maj Gen Abdul Karim Khalaf, said authorities would prosecute any foreign contractors found to have used excessive force.

"We have opened a criminal investigation against the group who committed the crime," he told the AFP news agency.

All Blackwater personnel have been told to leave Iraq immediately, with the exception of the men involved in the incident on Sunday.

They will have to remain in the country and stand trial, the ministry said.

The Blackwater security guards "opened fire randomly at citizens" after mortars landed near their vehicles, killing eight people and wounding 13 others, interior ministry officials said.

Most of the dead and wounded were bystanders, the officials added. One of those killed was a policeman.

A team from another security company passed through the area a few minutes afterward.

"Our people saw a couple of cars destroyed," Carter Andress, CEO of American-Iraqi Solutions Groups, told CNN on Monday. "Dead bodies, wounded people being evacuated. The U.S. military had moved in and secured the area. It was not a good scene."

Another witness, Muhammad Hussein, saw his brother killed.

"I was driving behind my brother's car and suddenly there was an explosion and firing. I tried to figure out what was happening when I saw a black convoy ahead of us," he told the AFP news agency.

"Soon after I saw my brother slump in the car. I dragged him out of the car and tried to hide to avoid the firing but realised that he had been shot in the chest and was already dead," he said.

"There have been so many innocent people they've killed over there, and they just keep doing it," said Katy Helvenston, the mother of Steve Helvenston, a Blackwater contractor who died during the 2004 ambush in Fallujah.

"They have just a callous disregard for life."

"We are taking it very seriously indeed," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told the BBC, adding that discussions were still taking place about Blackwater's status now that they had been ordered to leave.

McCormack said that while the United States tries to avoid innocent casualties, "we are fighting people who don't play by any rules" and have no problem killing innocent civilians. [That makes it OK for the Blackwater scum to kill innocent civilians too. Perfectly logical.]

There has been no official notice from the Iraqi government on revoking Blackwater's license, McCormack said, so he couldn't confirm it and declined to speculate on how it would affect protection of U.S. personnel.

When asked if Blackwater was complying with the order, a spokeswoman said she could not comment because the investigation into the incident was still in progress.

The question of whether they could face prosecution is legally murky. Unlike soldiers, the contractors are not bound by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Under a special

provision secured by American-occupying forces, they are exempt from prosecution by Iraqis for crimes committed there.

Khalaf, however, denied that the exemption applied to private security companies.

Blackwater is reputed to have a contract worth \$300m (£150m) with the state department to protect its diplomatic staff and equipment in Iraq.

TROOP NEWS

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



A U.S. doctor cleans the wounds of a U.S. soldier in the emergency room of 28th Combat Support hospital in Baghdad August 21, 2007. REUTERS/Damir Sagolj (IRAQ)

**“This Is All About Leading By
Example, Not From The Rear”
“Senior Officers And NCOs Are Cheating The
Hardworking And Courageous Men And
Women Of The Lower Enlisted Ranks”**

Letters To The Editor
Army Times

September 17, 2007

It has come to my attention that, once again, the Army's senior officers and NCOs are cheating the hardworking and courageous men and women of the lower enlisted ranks by putting stipulations on awards.

I have looked through the regulations and have found nothing in them that states what awards will be awarded to what rank or mission performed during a deployment. I do agree that some restraints should be placed on the awarding of awards, but it needs to be done smartly and not by rank.

Take, for example, a sergeant major who never leaves the security of a forward operating base and therefore is not exposed to the hazards associated with travel on the roads, yet receives a Bronze Star for service.

Then take a specialist who goes out on patrol every day for four or five hours, then has to come back to the FOB and listen to that same sergeant major yell at him for some small uniform violation — and, if he's lucky, may receive an Army Commendation Medal for his service.

More than likely, though, it will be an Army Achievement Medal.

This is how we start fixing the awards problem: If a soldier does not leave the FOB for patrols or escort missions, then the highest award possible should be the Meritorious Service Medal. This medal is almost the equivalent of a Bronze Star.

This means that FOB mayors, battle staff and many others who never set foot into a red zone will not qualify for the BSM.

Anyone awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Combat Medic Badge or the Combat Action Badge would automatically get one. This was the criterion during World War II. This would, of course, mean rewriting awards guidance.

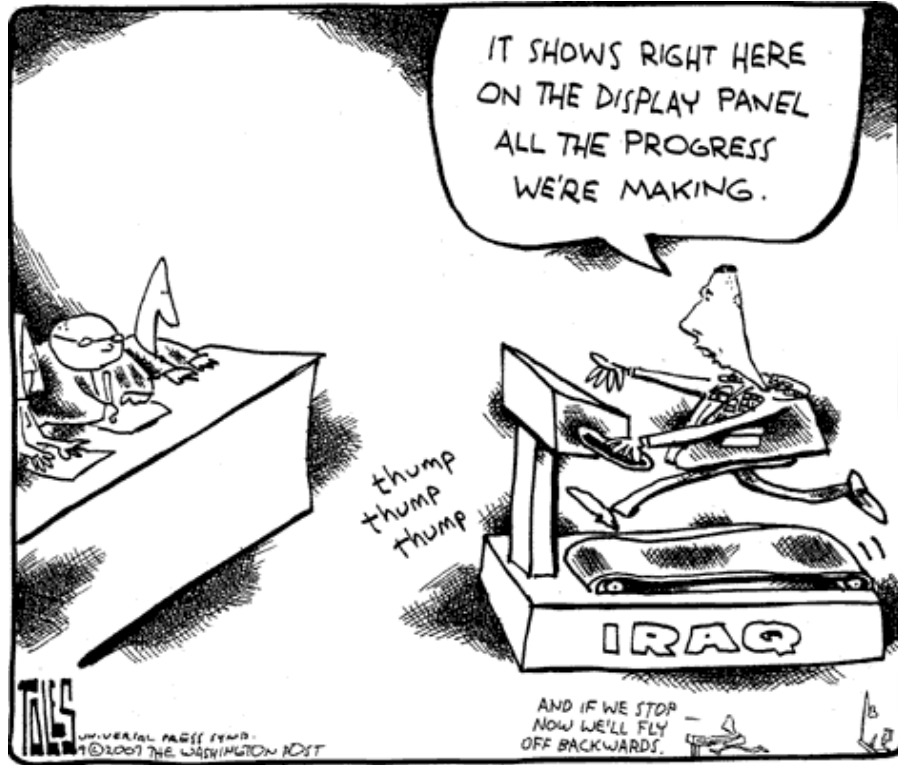
How can you say that an infantryman who has done nothing but work in a tactical operations center deserves a CIB when he has not participated in combat?

This holds true for the CMB. How can a doctor who has never treated a wounded soldier while under fire earn one? Of course, if firefights do break out in the TOC or combat area support hospitals, then personnel there should be rewarded for that.

Otherwise, the soldier or officer on the FOB who wants a Bronze Star or higher should start taking the same risks that the lowliest private takes outside the wire.

This is all about taking care of the soldier and leading by example, not from the rear.

Staff Sgt. Robert R. Weppelman
Baghdad



IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Resistance Action

16 Sep 2007 Reuters & 9.17.07 Reuters & AP & PA News

At least two policemen were wounded by a roadside bomb in the centre of the town of Tal Afar, 420 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed a member of the Municipality of Bayaa district of southern Baghdad, and killed a member of the Municipality of Doura district of southern Baghdad, a hospital source said.

Guerrillas killed a police colonel on Saturday night in the town of Ifech near Diwaniya, 180 km (110 miles) south of Baghdad, police said. Police arrested the head and a member of the town council in the aftermath of the assassination.

Ikhlas al-Shimari, a member of the Kut governing council, escaped unhurt from a bomb attack on her house overnight in the city of Kut, 170 km (100 miles) southeast of Baghdad, police said.

A pre-dawn explosion in an Iraqi army base south of Baghdad killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded ten others, a police official said. The cause of the blast inside the base belonging to the Iraqi army's Eight Division in Hillah, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, was not immediately known, the police official said.

The injured included two officers.

In Hilla, south of Baghdad, a policeman and his 16-year-old son were abducted. Their bodies were later found dumped.

A bomber targeted a police patrol on the main street of the capital's Shiite district of Jamila, next to a bustling marketplace. Two policemen were wounded in the explosion.

GET THE MESSAGE? RUN, DO NOT WALK, TO THE NEAREST EXIT

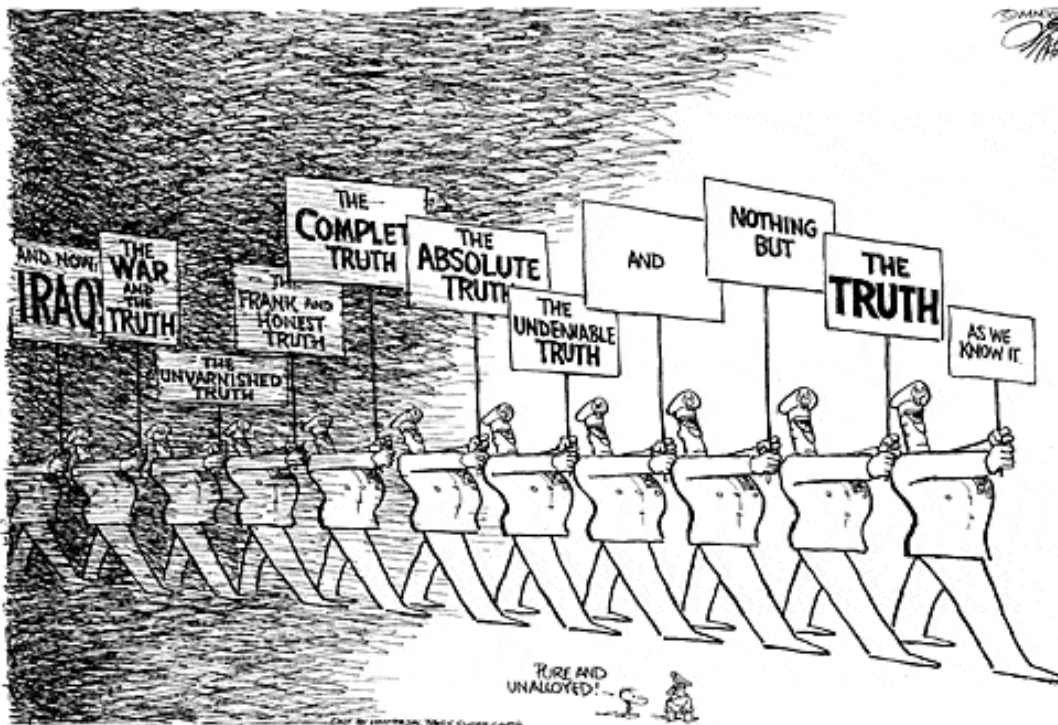


Iraqis protest the Occupation in the Shaab neighborhood of eastern Baghdad Sept. 16, 2007. Protesters burned the U.S. flag as they denounced the behavior of U.S. soldiers and called for the Iraqi government to intervene. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“No Four-Star General Arrives At His Post By Displeasing Officers And Politicians Above Him, To Say Nothing Of His Commander In Chief”



9/11

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

September 16, 2007 LES PAYNE, Newsday [Excerpt]

President Lyndon B. Johnson, the slickest of them all, resorted to sending Gen. William C. Westmoreland with a stay-the-course speech in 1967 to subdue Congress and the public when LBJ got stuck knee-deep in the quagmire of Vietnam.

As a staff officer and Ranger captain at the Military Assistance Command Vietnam headquarters, I was privy to the drafting of Westmoreland's speech in Saigon, though I didn't work on this one.

The ghost-writers were particularly proud, I recall, of the call for "resolve" at home, and of such hedging phrases as "I have seen no evidence that ..."

Westmoreland allowed no such hedging in promising victory over the communists' "war of national liberation." He told LBJ, Congress and the American public, "I can assure you here and now, that militarily this [communist] strategy will not succeed in Vietnam."

Westy, as we called him, was as eager to please LBJ as Petraeus is to please Bush.

No four-star general arrives at his post by displeasing officers and politicians above him, to say nothing of his commander in chief.

As Bush shifts his eyes toward his post-White House days in Texas, he requires Petraeus to preach the wisdom of maintaining the 30,000 surge until deep into the election-year summer of '08. (Halliburton and other multinationals expect to make billions in Iraq forever.)

In his address to the nation, Bush stuck his tongue out at Congress by envisioning an "enduring" relation with Iraq well beyond his presidency, if not forever.

If Monday's U.S. body count was maintained and extended to the date Bush plans simply to end the surge, some additional 2,700 GIs would die, with 20 times as many Iraqis.

But who in the bloodletting Bush-Cheney administration counts or cares about this senseless loss of life on all sides?

The American people have come to care and care deeply, with two-thirds wanting to end the Iraq conflict.

Their polled confidence in Bush's war policy barely clears the margin of error, at 5 percent.

Still, Congress can't find its hook.

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

The Petraeus Report: “The Institutional Rot As Well As The Class Loyalties Of The Democratic Party Are On Vivid Display”

Behind all the panting about the "heroism" of US troops, and the "sacrifices" of military families who see that dreaded military in the driveway, this is mostly about political ambition and the family feud over which party will run the executive committee for Wall Street and the defense industries.

September 12, 2007 By STAN GOFF. CounterPunch

Stan Goff is the author of "Hideous Dream: A Soldier's Memoir of the US Invasion of Haiti" (Soft Skull Press, 2000), "Full Spectrum Disorder" (Soft Skull Press, 2003) and "Sex & War" which will be released approximately December, 2005. He is retired from the United States Army. His blog is at www.stangoff.com.

Goff can be reached at: stan@stangoff.com

In military drill there is something called the preparatory command and the command of execution.

These were the two commands, followed in lockstep by the press yesterday:

Prepare to kiss ass.

Kiss ass.

Or should I say David Petraeus' ass, followed by a whole raft of retired generals who were immediately featured on the television "news" to re-spin the Petraeus' spin, where he used the terms "al Qaeda Iraq" and "ethno-sectarian" about 2,000,000 times apiece in the space of a few hours.

Members of Code Pink and Iraq Veterans Against the War, who had infiltrated the hearing room, were serially arrested when they took their turns shouting things like "How long will you listen to these people?" and "Liar!" from the back of the room.

God bless 'em.

The articulate, level-voiced General, though he only went to combat when Bush invaded Iraq, has more fruit salad on his chest than any veteran of three previous wars.

Cheney's input was in evidence in the psyop, mantra-like repetition of the key phrases as a form of mass mesmeric suggestion... "al Qaeda Iraq" ... "ethno-sectarian"... "al Qaeda Iraq" ... "ethno-sectarian"... "al Qaeda Iraq" ... "ethno-sectarian"... "al Qaeda Iraq" ... "ethno-sectarian"...

All designed to instill the same refrain we heard in the runup to the war, Iraq associated with 9-11...oh, that's tomorrow! Surprise!

...and of course, the war is an affair of those ethno-sectarian primitives (the former guerrillas who were handed Anbar Province have been re-spun into "tribal" leaders and sheiks").

The US occupation force (therein referred to as "coalition forces") is just there trying to keep them from slaughtering each other, provoked as they have been by who?

Oh yeah, "al Qaeda Iraq."

Rumsfeld's ghost made its early appearance with the charts and graphs. Metrics, anyone?

The Commander-in-Chief, in rallying the most revanchist sectors of his diminishing base, recently invoked Vietnam and the betrayal thesis: that liberal press and those left-wing hippies undermined the war effort, and if we could have killed just a million more Vietnamese, goddamit, we'd have won.

With Rumsfeld's metrics in Petraeus' mouth yesterday, we have squared the circle with the simultaneous reincarnation of Robert McNamara and William Westmoreland.

Light at the end of the tunnel, anyone?

No Cheney-Rumsfeldian tableau is complete without its diabolus ex machina -- Iran naturally.

Petraeus invoked Iran early and often, beginning with the now widely accepted and completely unsupported claim that Iran is supplying weapons to Iraqi "insurgents."

This is one that provoked the arrest of a Code Pinker in the back benches, when she shouted "That's a lie!"

She was right, of course.

This phony claim, originated out of the Public Affairs offices of the Pentagon, has nonetheless become an article of faith with the "journalists" of the American corporate fourth estate.

The most enjoyable and potentially redemptive aspect of the whole dog-and-pony show were the handful of Congress members who -- under pressure from war-weary

constituents and the polls showing rock-bottom approval ratings for the newly-empowered Democrats -- lit into Petraeus with a vigor seldom seen in the hallowed halls of hearingdom.

Congressman Tom Lantos (D - California) assaulted the credibility of the administration with an unusual enthusiasm, with -- of course -- a ritual denunciation of Iran, and called for immediate withdrawal of US forces. Fellow Californian Loretta Sanchez as much as called Petraeus and his co-conspirator Crocker liars.

Others weighed in, along partisan lines mostly. Nothing shocking there, though my gut tells me that the California Democratic Party -- holding within its embrace Barbara Lee, the sole Congressional dissenter against the resolution granting the Bush administration war-making powers -- is thinking about its besieged national Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, now facing an electoral challenge from Cindy Sheehan.

Unfortunately, this is the backdrop.

The 2008 elections, not the charnel house of American occupation in Iraq.

Behind all the panting about the "heroism" of US troops, and the "sacrifices" of military families who see that dreaded military in the driveway, this is mostly about political ambition and the family feud over which party will run the executive committee for Wall Street and the defense industries.

Not a single member of Congress yesterday cited the most recent extrapolation of Lancet Report showing that around a million Iraqis have been "sacrificed" by the occupation. In a typical US neighborhood with families averaging four, this would be represented by a funeral in every sixth house.

'Spouse I've said this before, but the target of our misbehaviors (at least Code Pink and IVAW were on hand to disrupt yesterday) must be the Democratic Party. They can ignore another protest on the National Mall, but they can't ignore people occupying their local Congressional offices. These occupations to end the occupation need to become ubiquitous.

Last year, I shocked many colleagues by recommending they vote for Democrats across the board in 2006, but folks didn't read the fine print. We needed to put these people in power to expose them. They were taking cover in the "we're-just-a-minority" bunker.

Now they are in the open, and the institutional rot as well as the class loyalties of the Democratic Party are on vivid display.

What we saw o Monday, aside from the Petraeus-Crocker Show, in the loss of good manners by a few Democrats, was a display of the latent power of a wakeful people.

The Code Pinkers and Iraq Veterans Against the War represent a minority in American politics right now, just as anti-slavery advocates once were. But let there be no confusion; this minority -- which numbers now in the millions -- has the power to put its principles into action in an instrumental way: by threatening the fortunes of one of the ruling class parties in the United States on the issue of a criminal imperial war.

Misbehavior works.

Delegitimate.

Disobey.

Disrupt.

Troops Held Hostage



From: Don Bacon
To: GI Special
Sent: September 17, 2007
Subject: Troops Held Hostage

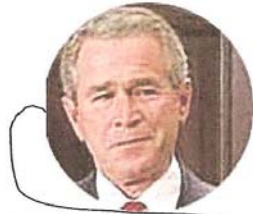
President Bush, in his radio address on September 15th, said: "The principle that guides my decisions on troop levels is "return on success."

"The more successful we are, the more troops can return home."

**Human Shield Against Start Of Iraq
War Appealing Bush Regime
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"A Governmental Agency That Brings A
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The Same One That Determines Their Guilt”

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“OFAC can offer no proof that she performed any services to the Iraqi government or any Iraqi individual.

"It boils down to unprovable trivia: did she pay for her own food while she was in Iraq, thus supporting the Iraqi economy? This flimsy reasoning can be challenged by a motion to re-argue.

From: Judith Karpova
To: GI Special
Sent: September 11, 2007
Subject: A press release, a request, a party invite, from Judith Karpova

September 11th, 2007

Dear Friends,

Well, a year has gone by since my September 11th hearing before the 3-panel Federal Court of Appeals in New York, where my lawyer, Michael Sussman and I contested my fine for traveling to Iraq as a Human Shield.

On August 28th the court ruled against my case.

We believe the basis of the 3-member Appeals Court decision is quite flawed.

No proof has ever been brought forward by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) regarding their charges that I violated the travel ban against Iraq. No hearing was ever held. The strangest part of the decision involves the fact that the Director of OFAC changed between 2004 and 2005. Most oddly, the court resolves the issue of whether OFAC violated impartiality (by both bringing the charges and finding me guilty), by saying that since the original person who brought the charge -- Director Richard Newcombe -- is not the same as the person who decided I was guilty -- Director Robert Werner. So therefore there was no bias.

Michael Sussman and I have decided to proceed to the full, "en banc" 13-member 2nd Circuit Federal Appeals Court with an appeal.

This means that once again I ask for your financial help in meeting legal expenses.

This time there's a perk.

A great local restaurant/event venue is graciously allowing me to hold a fundraiser Dance Party: the beautiful NEW WORLD HOME COOKING in Saugerties, NY, is hosting the party on October 21, from 1 to 4.

Our fabulous local musicians are turning out, I'll pack the audience so someone requests a brief excerpt of my book, now completed, there's food, Iraqi art and Iraqi artists, a very few very brief speakers and of course the beautiful MidHudson Valley in it's autumn rock-star dazzle.

If you can't make it I promise I'll send digital pics.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. My phone # is 845 626-7355

You can send donations to, and also get info from my lawyer,

Michael Sussman, Esq.
Sussman & Watkins
40 Park Place, PO Box 1005
Goshen, NY 10924
sussman1@frontiernet.net
845 294 3991

If you send them directly to him, just put "Karpova Appeal" on the memo line. If you want, you can make checks out to him and send them to me, and I'll send you a thank you card, which will be worth money when I'm famous:

Judith Karpova
213 Sundown Road
Kerhonkson, NY 12446

Below is the Press Release that went out to the media. Please feel free to forward.

Love and Peace,
Judith Karpova

IRAQ HUMANITARIAN TRAVELER GOES TO THE FULL FEDERAL COURT

PRESS RELEASE – September 11th, 2007 [Excerpts]

In the penultimate step before considering whether to take her case to the Supreme Court, Judith Karpova of Kerhonkson, NY, has challenged the 3-member Second Circuit Federal Court of Appeals in their August 28th ruling against her for travel to Iraq prior to the 2003 war.

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) department of the US Treasury Department is attempting to fine her for her, saying her trip to Iraq contravened the 1990 Iraq Sanctions Act.

"It's a peculiar ruling," states her attorney, Michael Sussman of Goshen, NY. "They don't think the government showed that she performed any services to Iraq. And they're uneasy about whether she received due process.

"A governmental agency that brings a charge against a citizen should not be the same one that determines their guilt.

"But they get around this by saying that the OFAC Director who brought the case against my client and the one who made the final ruling against her are two different people. Therefore, they say, there's no risk of bias.

“OFAC can offer no proof that she performed any services to the Iraqi government or any Iraqi individual.

“It boils down to unprovable trivia: did she pay for her own food while she was in Iraq, thus supporting the Iraqi economy? This flimsy reasoning can be challenged by a motion to re-argue.

“The truth is that she met Iraqi people face to face and told their stories to us here in the US, to try and stop the war and save their lives. We believe it is political persecution, and are going forward to defend her.”

Karpova has just completed a book on her time in Iraq and her take on the forces at work in Iraq and in the Middle East now.

Karpova was among over 20 US citizens who participated in the Truth, Peace and Justice Human Shield Project to Iraq, along with close to 400 others from over 30 countries, in January and February 2003.

The goal of the project was to draw international attention to the possibility of a repeat bombing of the civilian infrastructure which Iraq suffered in the first Gulf War, by having people from many countries live at such infrastructure sites. Facilities such as water treatment plants, power generating stations and food storage silos were destroyed during the Gulf War, and the ensuing thirteen-year sanctions regime against Iraq hindered their repair.

According to UNESCO, the death of over a million Iraqis — most of them children — from dehydration and diseases associated with contaminated water, is due to the Gulf War destruction of these facilities. Members of the human shield project volunteered to be sited at such facilities and many stayed throughout the bombing.

"It's more than four years down the road," says Karpova. "And that road is piled with Iraqi and US bodies. This administration used the pretext of September 11th to attack another country which never harmed us or threatened us.

“They destroyed its economy, its infrastructure, killed yet another million of its people and drove millions more out.

“The ongoing US occupation is a disease inflaming Iraq and ripping it apart, and the oil companies are watching like vultures to scavenge through its fragments and feed.”

Now this administration has Iran in its crosshairs, and the whole syndrome will keep spreading. It's the ordinary US citizen who's footing the bill as our own bridges and schools fall apart.

We can't afford homes, health care, education for our children. How long can it go on before this administration pulls our own house down, here in the US? This is what I wanted to stop. I hoped by going to Iraq and conveying the humanity of the Iraqi people, to give our country pause before it destroyed them.

But no-one's humanity counts in this agenda of profiteering off of disaster and war. The treatment of the September 11th firefighters showed us that. New Orleans showed us that.

The treatment of our own Iraq War veterans shows us that. How many countries and their innocent civilians are going to die? How many more of our own cities, how many more of our own people will be forced into poverty and considered disposable?"

Sussman has filed to have Karpova's case heard before the full-panel, thirteen member "en banc" Second Circuit US Court of Appeals.

Judith Karpova
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Kerhonkson, NY 12446
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dahlia@wildblue.net

Attorney for Karpova:
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NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

GI SPECIALS BY MAIL FREE FOR ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE A SELECTION OF GI SPECIALS MAILED TO YOU, EMAIL YOUR ADDRESS TO: CONTACT@MILITARYPROJECT.ORG OR DROP A LINE TO: BOX 126, 2576 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10025-5657 USA

Please say how many you wish sent.

NOTE WELL: They will all be different issues of GI Special to satisfy DOD regs that you may possess copies, *provided you don't have more than one of the same issue.*

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. 1-40 Cavalry Squadron interrogate an Iraqi citizen during a night armed home invasion 08 September 2007. (AFP/File/David Furst)

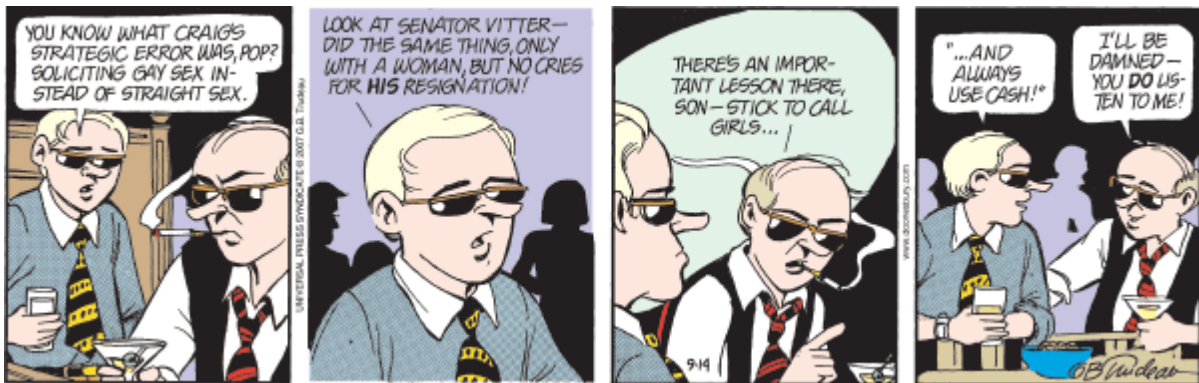
[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't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

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate

they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

Received:

Solidarity From Brasil

From: dr.gildo
To: GI Special
Sent: September 16, 2007

HEY AMIGO THOMAS, THIS IS ONLY TO SAY HELLO AND TO SAY I AM CONTINUING READING YOUR IMPORTANT "JOURNAL". I THANK YOU SO MUCH AND WORDS CAN'T DESCRIBE YOUR WORK.

IN THIS LAST GI REPORT I SAVE THE PHOTO OF AN IRAQI BOY NEAR OF AN U.S. SOLDIER WITH A PAPER IN HANDS WHERE READ" NO NO AMERICA". THIS PHOTO IS REMARKABLE.

I ALSO I WANT TO SAY HOW SAD IS TO SEE SO MANY YOUNG SOLDIERS ALL DIED. THE SAME I HAVE TO SAY IN RESPECT OF IRAQI YOUTHS.

PLEASE, THE IMPORTANT AMERICAN PEOPLE, PROUD OF MANY PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD PRIORLY OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION, DO SOMETHING TO STOP THIS SHAME WAR.

BYE, MEUS RESPEITOS,

CORDIALMENTE GILDO

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

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

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