

GI SPECIAL 5J19:

**“This Is Congress’ War”
“They Are Building Their
Political Careers With The
Blood Of Our Loved Ones And
Iraqis”**



Marchers on Dolores Street in San Francisco on Saturday: Reuters

[Thanks to Frank Millsbaugh, who sent this in.]

October 27, 2007 Jim Doyle, Susan Sward, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writers
[Excerpts]

On cue from a bullhorn's blast, thousands of protesters fell to the pavement on Market Street today in a symbolic "die-in" as part of a protest staged in cities across the country against the war in Iraq.

For about three minutes the demonstrators lay on the pavement, representing what organizers said were more than 1 million Iraqis killed since the war began in 2003. The protesters then resumed their march from San Francisco's Civic Center to Dolores Park.

March organizers put their number at 30,000 - old, young, workers, students, religious leaders. Police declined to give a formal estimate, but onlookers said the demonstrators definitely numbered more than 10,000.

Anne Roesler, of the group Military Families Speak Out, said her son was a U.S. soldier who had been deployed to Iraq three times and returned with post-traumatic stress disorder. “This is Congress’ war,” she said. “They have the blood of this war on their hands - they are building their political careers with the blood of our loved ones and Iraqis.”

Sharon Cornu, secretary-treasurer of the Alameda Labor Council, said it would be the first time that seven Bay Area labor councils - San Francisco, Monterey Bay, North Bay, South Bay, San Mateo, Contra Costa and Alameda - worked together to urge members to demonstrate.

Though Bay Area labor groups have been involved in earlier protests against the war, Cornu said, this was the biggest effort yet.

“More and more union members are seeing the war’s impact on our schools, transportation and health care systems because money is being spent abroad that could be spent at home,” Cornu added.

“We are working people - we make things in this country, and we want to be heard,” said Oakland roofer Leroy Cisneros, echoing Cornu’s words about the pressing need for expenditures on education and health care.

MORE:

***A Citizen Gets It 100% Right:
“I’m Not Convinced Of The Value
Of This,” Paul Doerr, 58, Said,
Motioning Around Him. “The Polls
Indicate That Everyone’s Against
The War . . . But Bush Is Still
Getting The Funding He Asks For”
Howard Zinn Gives The Answer:***

“When Enough Soldiers Refuse To Fight, This War Will Not Be Able To Go On, And We Need To Support Them Any Way We Can”

[Thanks to Joel Geier, who sent this in.]

October 28, 2007 By Stephanie M. Peters, Globe Correspondent [Excerpt]

As an antiwar rally waged behind her on swampy Boston Common yesterday, Linda Tobin and her two children crouched over a pair of dusty black boots, one of 156 pairs representing each New England casualty of the Iraq war.

“There are so many ways other than war to communicate, especially in this day and age,” Tobin said as she moved down a row of boots, part of the “Eyes Wide Open” exhibit. Her conviction brought her the 2 1/2 hours from St. Johnsbury, Vt., with six family members, including children ages 6, 4, and 2.

“It’s especially important for the kids to see this because they’re the next generation,” Tobin said.

Tobin, 36, was one of an estimated 10,000 people who gathered on the Common to listen to speakers, including historian Howard Zinn and Councilor Felix Arroyo, and march to Copley Square and back.

Zinn, author of “A People’s History of the United States,” spoke for about 15 minutes and received the loudest reception.

“You can’t have a war on terrorism; war is terrorism,” he said. “When enough soldiers refuse to fight, this war will not be able to go on, and we need to support them any way we can.”

Zinn is renowned for an antiwar speech he gave in nearly the same spot in 1971, at the height of Vietnam War protests.

Paul and Lois Doerr, of Wayland, attended that speech and said a stronger antiwar movement packed Boston Common then.

“I’m not convinced of the value of this,” Paul Doerr, 58, said, motioning around him. “The polls indicate that everyone’s against the war . . . but Bush is still getting the funding he asks for.”

MORE:

Sometimes Dreams Come True

Bush Reveals New Plan To Wipe Out Iraqi Insurgents As Unrest Breaks Out Inside The Armed Forces

[From: GI SPECIAL 5C28: 3.31.07]



Bush showing press his new anti-insurgency tactic. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

**July 4, 2008
FTA News Service**

Bush, at the North Portico of the White House today, flanked by Republican House Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio, left, and Republican House Minority Whip Roy Blunt of Mo., revealed a new weapon against insurgents in Iraq that he said will guarantee victory.

He told reporters than when he stamps his left foot, the insurgents will all disappear. "See," he said, "I am doing it now."

He added that this won't happen immediately, and that it will be necessary to keep U.S. troops in Iraq "until the power of my foot manifests itself."

He promised to stamp his foot at least once a week until Iraq is "prosperous and peaceful."

Democrat House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was quick to condemn the President's latest move.

She accused Bush of practicing the Satanic Ritual Of The Lifted Foot and added that if "this evil scheme" did not produce progress in Iraq by April 30, 2011, House and Senate Democrats would have no choice but to complain loudly and excitedly, sending him rude emails, wherever he might be by that time.

In other news, reports reached Washington this afternoon that at least five combat-ready brigades of U.S. troops have placed their commanding officers under arrest at Army and Marine bases in North Carolina, Georgia and New York today, elected new officers, and are moving on the nation's capitol to express their own views of how to end the war in Iraq.

A spokesperson for the troops, speaking for background only, told FTA News Service that as a result of their action, neither they, nor any other troops, will ever be deployed from the United States to Iraq or Afghanistan again.

However, she said that their newly-formed Joint Armed Forces Council -- made up of delegates elected from the Army, Navy, Marines, Airforce, National Guard and Reserves -- which now commands the armed forces of the United States, view it as dishonorable and cowardly to leave their brothers-and sisters-in-arms facing death in Imperial war overseas while they are safe at home.

She told FTA News "The Joint Armed Forces Council has agreed that upon arrival in Washington, and liberating it from the domestic enemies who now control the government, it will be necessary to order that all our brothers and sisters be brought home immediately."

She thanked the hundreds of thousands of citizens and veterans who are surrounding military bases all over America to show their support for the troops' decision to obey their oath to defend the Constitution and American citizens "from all enemies, foreign and domestic."

"The domestic assholes are history," she said.

"Now we have a cause worth fighting for."

MORE:

**“Two Groups In Society Which Have
The Power To Force Change”
“Labor, Because It Can Stop Production”
“The Enlisted GIs, Whose Hands Are On
The Weapons”**

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, for sending.]

From: B, 17 Oct 2007 [Excerpts]

The problem is that we're trying to get the elected officials in Congress to do what we want them to do, but the truth is that they're not on our side.

They're on the same side as Bush and Cheney, and whatever differences they may have are merely tactical.

They can be pressured, to be sure, but they're not really going to put a stop to this war (for example) until they come to the conclusion that their power could be threatened if they don't.

There are essentially two groups in society which have the power to force change: labor, because it can stop production and therefore shut down the economy, and the enlisted GIs, whose hands are on the weapons.

The Vietnam war came to an end short of victory over thirty years ago because the people in power feared (rightly) that if they continued the war that the GIs would eventually refuse to fight any longer and that they could lose control of the most powerful military force in world history.

Our strategy and tactics now have to be directed toward involving labor and the GIs, especially those who are women and/or people of color.

We have to work toward the goal of strike action to stop the war or disobedience of orders by the GIs.

That doesn't mean telling workers or soldiers what to do: it means organizing action in which they can become increasingly involved.

When they become involved in the antiwar movement in massive numbers, they will know what to do without others telling them.

When this goal comes into the realm of possibility (and it will if we work in right way), the "elected" officials will make the necessary retreat, as they did in 1973-1975.

We don't have democracy in this country. We never did.

We elect a Congress by choosing between a rich lawyer wearing a blue tie and a rich lawyer wearing a red tie.

It's like getting the death penalty in Utah and choosing between being shot or being hanged. Some choice!

Change has only come about in this country when the people--we ourselves--get off our butts and take action on our own. That's happening now, but it doesn't bring results right away.

Think of it this way: it was nine years between the Montgomery bus boycott and the passage of the Civil Rights Act. It took incredible courage and sacrifice, and a lot of people died, and the struggle is not finished to this day.

But the only way we can lose is if we give up.

By the way, you can be sure that if our government has the stupidity to make war on Iran, the Iranian people will make them wish they hadn't.

They will stand up to the U.S. in the same way that they stood up to the Shah in 1979 and overthrew him.

We can follow their example, but it will require courage, patience, and intelligent planning and organizing.

The time to start is now.

"The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops." Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

**"The military are the final, essential weak point of Bush and Cheney."
David McReynolds 9.29.07**

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Resistance Spreads North

October 28, 2007 By Kirk Semple, New York Times [Excerpt]

Government officials report an increase in Taliban activity in the north this year, particularly in the northwest. The number of Taliban attacks on Afghan and international security forces in Balkh and the other relatively peaceful provinces of north-central Afghanistan has risen from last year, the authorities say.

“The Situation In Afghanistan, It’s A Total Mess”

“The U.S. Can Never Win That War, And The Main Reason They Can Never Win Is That Afghans Don’t Like Being Occupied”

October 26, 2007 Sherry Wolf interviews Tariq Ali

THE U.S. launched its first assault in the “war on terror” in Afghanistan six years ago. Today, the country remains one of the poorest places on earth, ruled by a corrupt warlord elite.

Here, TARIQ ALI, a veteran of the antiwar struggle for four decades, talks to SHERRY WOLF about the disastrous consequences of the U.S. war--and what the future holds.

SW: THIS IS the sixth anniversary of the U.S. war on Afghanistan, which a lot of people see as the “good” battle in the “war on terror,” as opposed to Iraq. Is that true?

TA: I HAVE always argued that this was essentially a crude war of revenge to hit back immediately after the September 11 attacks--for political leaders to show the American population that “we are busy defending you.” It had no other major purpose to it other than being for revenge--an eye for an eye.

The second aim of this war, as Bush spelled it out, was to capture Osama bin Laden “dead or alive.” Those were his exact words, which we shouldn’t forget. Apart from that, there were no war aims.

There was never any question that they were going to capture the country. For one, the Northern Alliance wasn’t going to resist--nor were the Iranians, who were very strong in Western Afghanistan.

Iranian leaders were hostile to the Taliban for their own opportunistic reasons, so they clambered onto the imperial bandwagon and said, “Fine, we can’t get rid of these guys, but if the Americans do, we’ll see how the situation develops.”

Then there was the Pakistani military regime, without which the Taliban would never have been in power, and which had been backing up the Taliban logistically, militarily and in every other way.

Given that the U.S. was going to use Pakistani military bases, the regime asked for a few weeks to get their military personnel out of Afghanistan before the U.S. went in.

In those two crucial weeks, of course, Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda leadership also left Afghanistan. They weren't going to wait around.

So the U.S. took Kabul with NATO help, but it wasn't difficult because there was no resistance at all. Then the question arose: What were they going to do with the country?

They couldn't find Osama, though there was a two-week period media hysteria about "reaching the Tora Bora caves" and all this kind of propaganda. They dropped all these bombs and what happened? Nothing. They destroyed the caves, but the quarry had escaped.

So what were they going to do now? It's obvious that bin Laden left the country and went to the tribal zones between Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the traditions of hospitality are very strong, and he wasn't going to be handed over.

The U.S. then implanted a puppet regime in Afghanistan.

Let's remember that Zalmay Khalilzad was Bush's chief advisor on Afghanistan at the time, and he brought in one of his cronies who once worked for the Unocal oil company, Hamid Karzai, to be president of Afghanistan. And, presto, we had a country.

The problem soon became very obvious to the West that its arrangement didn't really extend beyond Kabul and Kandahar, the two big cities in the South, during the daytime. Elsewhere, in the west of the country, pro-Iranian forces were in control. And in the North, the former Soviet republics, still heavily under Moscow's influence, were in control.

So what were they going to do with this country? The answer is nothing.

DOES THE U.S. have any support within Afghanistan?

I'VE ARGUED that there's no doubt quite a number of Afghans were relieved to have the Taliban removed--quite a few thought, well, at least now we'll have some peace and safety, and maybe some food to eat. This was also the view of quite a few liberal commentators inside Pakistan.

Some of us argued with them, saying that the Taliban might have been removed, but what would happen now? We warned them that as far as the social infrastructure was concerned, it wasn't going to change for the majority of Afghans.

That's exactly what has happened in these six years.

What people underestimate is that imperial occupations under neoliberalism reflect the priorities of the new capitalist order, where they're privatizing everything in their own countries. So what happened was that money did pour in-

-and this money was used by Hamid Karzai and his cronies to construct an elite in Afghanistan.

In the heart of Kabul, on prime land that they took by land-grabbing, the elite were and are building large villas protected by NATO troops in front of the entire population of the city and country.

It costs about \$5,000 or \$6,000 to build a cheap house for a family of five or six, but they didn't do that.

They spent millions of dollars constructing large villas. God knows why, since they need a permanent NATO guard to live in one of those villas. And they'll be taken away from them once the Western armies withdraw.

That created a big crisis, and coupled with it was the fact that a trigger-happy U.S. military embarked on killing innocents.

Wherever the U.S. heard gunfire, they would drop bombs. Someone should have told them that Afghanistan is a tribal society, a culture where people fire guns to celebrate--whether it's weddings or the birth of a child, they just run out and fire guns in the air. You'd have thought Americans would have been more sympathetic to this, given the gun culture in the U.S., but somehow they didn't appreciate it in Afghanistan.

So the U.S. started bombing people. Reports came of a wedding ceremony in the U.S. came and bombed the hell out of it. Casualties: 90 or 100 killed, men, women and children. And this multiplied.

HOW HAS the Taliban been able to make a resurgence?

THE TALIBAN began to regroup, rearm and fight, and it scored a few successes. What also began to happen simultaneously is that there were people who were happy to see them back--since no one else was defending them.

So they began to treat the Taliban as an umbrella organization and tell them what was going on.

Lots of people supposedly working with the U.S.-NATO occupying authorities would go tell the Taliban where the troops were going. Classic guerrilla warfare operations began, and the U.S. responded with more bombing raids. So there's a vicious circle in operation.

If you look at the newspapers over the last year and do a survey of all the reports where there were 60 Taliban were killed, 80 Taliban killed, 90 Taliban killed, you add it up and they've already killed thousands of supposed "Taliban" militia members--and the total force was supposed to be about 10,000.

In other words, if you believe these reports, then they've wiped out three-quarters of the Taliban organization, which is far from the truth. But because the U.S. is embarrassed at having killed civilians, it has to say this.

You have a situation in the country where Hamid Karzai's brother, Wali Ahmed Karzai, is well known as the largest heroin and arms smuggler in the region. He's become that because his brother runs the country.

Here's this guy who was happy running an Afghan restaurant in Baltimore and selling high-priced food to the students at Johns Hopkins--and he's now second-in-command in the country and making a fortune--a "killing," let's say.

Symbolically, this has been a total disaster.

So, far from being a "good war," Afghanistan is turning out to be a nasty, unpleasant war, and there's no way the U.S. or other Western forces are going to be able to stay there for too long.

WHAT ARE the regional powers hoping to get as an outcome in Afghanistan?

THE PAKISTANI military is hoping that the West will withdraw and some sort of coalition government will be cobbled together between Karzai and chunks of the Taliban.

This is worth stressing. Backed by the West, the Karzai regime, even as we speak, is in serious negotiations with the Taliban.

So the Taliban, which was demonized as the worst force that ever existed in the world, is now backed by the West--as long as they do a deal with Karzai.

The Taliban's first response to Karzai's offers was to say, "We won't even discuss this with you unless all foreign troops are withdrawn from the country." To which Karzai said, "That's not possible."

He thinks it's not possible because without foreign troops, he wouldn't last 48 hours.

So to sum up the situation in Afghanistan, it's a total mess.

The U.S. can never win that war, and the main reason they can never win is that Afghans don't like being occupied.

Afghans kicked out the British in the 19th century, the Russians in the 20th century, and now they're fighting again against the U.S. and its NATO allies.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

TROOP NEWS

Veterans Arrested “For Demanding That They Be Allowed To Be On The Steps Of THEIR Capitol Building”



[Photo by Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace

From: Ward Reilly
To: GI Special
Sent: October 21, 2007

Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and Veterans For Peace handcuffed and lined up, under arrest, at the U.S. Capitol, for demanding that they be allowed to be on the steps of THEIR Capitol Building

The jailed board members of those organizations had a board meeting while in jail. No sense in wasting valuable time together.

Honorable Army Major Condemns “Unconscionable” Detention At Guantanamo

27 October 2007 By Leonard Doyle in Washington, Independent News and Media Limited

An American military lawyer and veteran of dozens of secret Guantanamo tribunals has made a devastating attack on the legal process for determining whether Guantanamo prisoners are “enemy combatants”.

The whistleblower, an army major inside the military court system which the United States has established at Guantanamo Bay, has described the detention of one prisoner, a hospital administrator from Sudan, as “unconscionable”.

His critique will be the centrepiece of a hearing on 5 December before the US Supreme Court when another attempt is made to shut the prison down. So nervous is the Bush administration of the latest attack – and another Supreme Court ruling against it – that it is preparing a whole new system of military courts to deal with those still imprisoned.

The whistleblower’s testimony is the most serious attack to date on the military panels, which were meant to give a fig-leaf of legitimacy to the interrogation and detention policies at Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay.

The major has taken part in 49 status review panels.

Combatant Status Review Tribunals were held for 558 detainees at the Guantanamo in 2004 and 2005. All but 38 detainees were determined to be “enemy combatants” who could be held indefinitely without charges.

Detainees were not represented by a lawyer and had no access to evidence. The only witnesses they could call were other so-called “enemy combatants”.

The army major has said that in the rare circumstances in which it was decided that the detainees were no longer enemy combatants, senior commanders ordered another panel to reverse the decision.

The major also described “acrimony” during a “heated conference” call from Admiral McGarragh, who reports to the Secretary of the US Navy, when a the panel refused to describe several Uighur detainees as enemy combatants. Senior military commanders wanted to know why some panels considering the same evidence would come to different findings on the Uighurs, members of a Muslim minority in China.

When the whistleblower suggested over the phone that inconsistent results were “good for the system ... and would show that the system was working correctly”, Admiral McGarragh, he said, had no response.

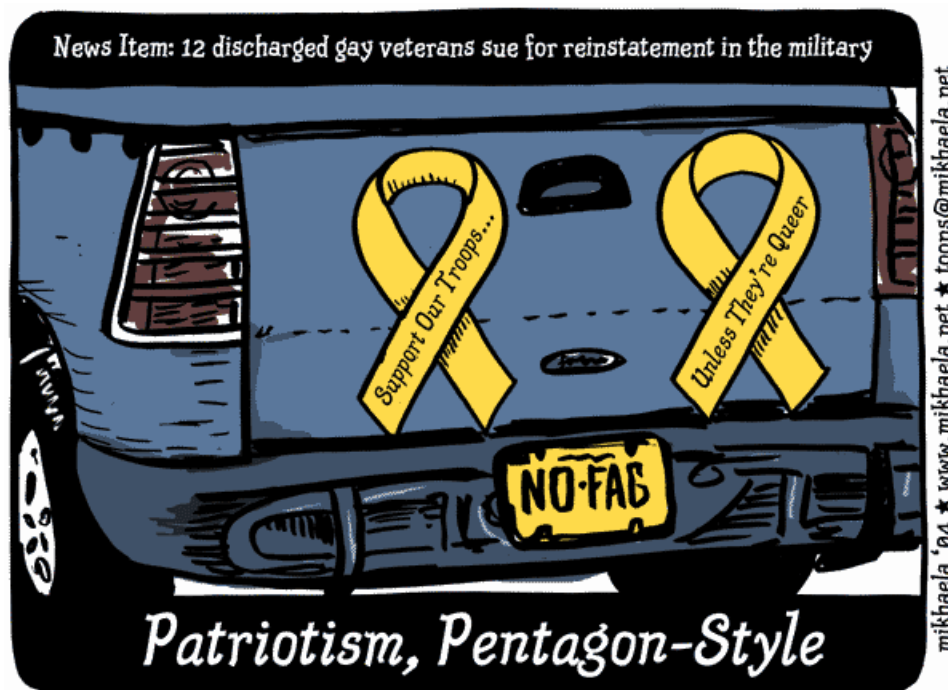
The latest criticism emerged when lawyers investigating the case of a Sudanese hospital administrator, Adel Hamad, who has been held for five years, came across a “stunning” sworn statement from a member of the military panel. The officer they interviewed was so frightened of retaliation from the military that they would not allow their name to be used in the statement, nor to reveal whether the person was a man or woman.

Two other military lawyers have also gone public.

In June, Army Lt-Col Stephen Abraham, a 26-year veteran in US military intelligence, became the first insider to publicly fault the proceedings. In May last year, Lt-Com Matthew Diaz was sentenced to six months in prison and dismissed from the military after he sent the names of all 551 men at the prison to a human rights group.

William Teesdale, a British-born lawyer investigating Mr Hadad's case, said he was certain of his client's innocence, having tracked down doctors who worked with him at an Afghan hospital. "Mr Hamad is an innocent man, and he is not the only one in Guantanamo."

OOPS: Military Recruiting Ad Posted On Gay Website



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

10.26.07 Washington Post Editorial

The U.S. military has positions to fill. Thousands of them. And, like any enterprise seeking employees, it casts a wide net to find qualified people - as long as they're not gay.

So it was the height of irony that military want ads were placed on a gay professional networking Web site last week. In fact, the placement would have made perfect sense were it not for the wrongheaded "don't ask, don't tell" policy that bans gay people from serving openly in the military.

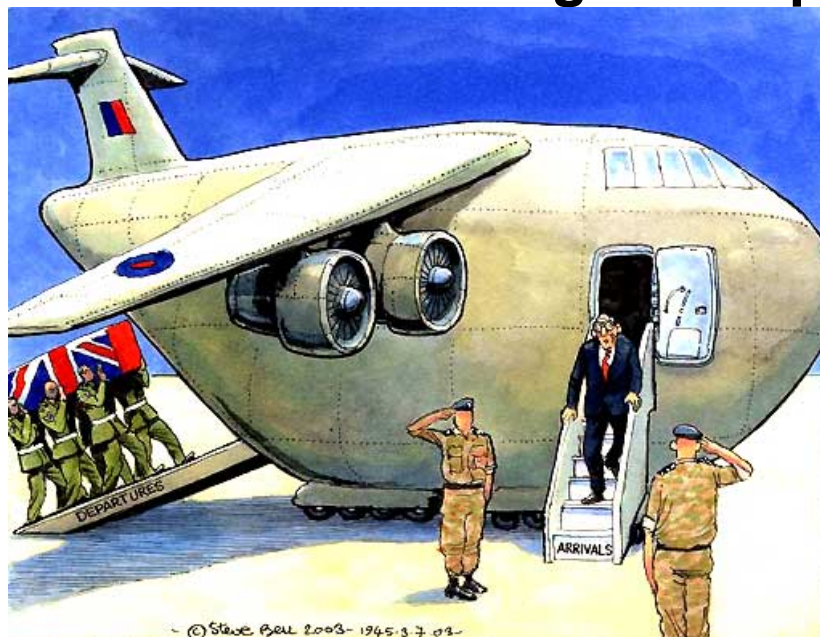
Since 1993, more than 11,000 people have been discharged from the services because of their homosexuality. Of those, 800 were in positions deemed “mission-critical” by the Pentagon. Those would be combat engineers, medical professionals and linguists (58 of whom spoke Arabic) - the very people the Army, Navy and Air Force were looking for when their job postings showed up on GLEE.com, which stands for Gay, Lesbian & Everyone Else.

According to USA Today, which informed the Defense Department of its unusual advertising venue, the Navy is looking for Arabic translators and intelligence analysts, the Air Force is looking for social workers and nurses, and the Army and Army National Guard have infantry and artillery positions available.

Mind you, the military didn't go to GLEE.com directly. The ad placements involved a mix-up with the military's private ad agency. And the listings were removed once the Pentagon was informed.

The whole sorry episode highlights the absurdity of the ban on openly gay people in the military. Israel, Australia, Britain and 21 other countries have no problem with gays and lesbians serving openly in their armed forces. With its military stretched to the breaking point, the United States should follow their wise lead. That it doesn't is as shortsighted as it is unjust.

British Senior Commander Says “No Point In Fighting On In Basra” “We Are Tired Of Firing At People”



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro]

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

28/10/2007 Gethin Chamberlain in southern Iraq, The Sunday Telegraph

One of the most senior British commanders in Iraq has claimed that there is no point in fighting on in Basra, likening British troops in the city to “Robocop” and admitting that innocent people were hurt as a result of their actions.

The officer, who spoke to The Sunday Telegraph on condition of anonymity, said commanders had concluded that a military solution was no longer viable.

“We are tired of firing at people,” he said. “We would prefer to find a political accommodation.”

The officer, who is responsible for thousands of troops, said the decision to pull soldiers out of the centre of Basra last month came after commanders concluded that using Iraqi forces would be more effective. “We would go down there, dressed as Robocop, shooting at people if they shot at us, and innocent people were getting hurt,” he said.

“We don’t speak Arabic to explain and our translators were too scared to work for us any more. What benefit were we bringing to these people?”

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier walks near a damaged humvee after in Karradah, central Baghdad, Oct. 10, 2007. A roadside bomb went off targeting an American patrol eastern Baghdad, with no immediate information about casualties. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



U.S. army medic Jeff Molles (R) with the Charlie Company 2-227, Aviation Battalion called "Witchdoctors", takes care of an injured U.S. soldier after they landed at the 28th Combat Support hospital in Baghdad October 7, 2007. REUTERS/Fabrizio Bensch

**Israel:
Friends Of Imprisoned Soldiers Throw
Their Guns Down In Front Of Battalion
Commander's Office In Protest, Refuse
To Carry Out Orders**

[Thanks to Max Watts, who sent this in.]

10.16.07 Yossi Yehosua, Ynet News - Israel

Paratroopers from the 890th battalion took off their weapons and placed them in a pile in front of their battalion commander's office in protest over a decision to send some of their brothers-in-arms to prison.

The conflict began when soldiers from the 'spearhead' and 'auxiliary' companies from the battalion began singing songs poking fun at each other during meals in the cafeteria. The teasing escalated into the exchange of barrages of tomatoes, then rocks and finally, a smoke grenade was thrown.

Following these incidents, seven soldiers—two from the spearhead and five from the auxiliary—were sent to army jail.

To show their disagreement, soldiers from the auxiliary company threw down their arms and refused to follow orders. Yaki Dolef, the battalion commander of 890, sentenced seven more soldiers to between 42 and 56 days of jail time—considered severe sentences—for their acts of protest.

According to the soldiers, those who were sent to prison were chosen arbitrarily without any evidence implicating them.

The soldiers accused the battalion commander of choosing soldiers considered leaders within the company in an attempt to break the rest of the soldiers' will and find out who was responsible for throwing the smoke grenade.

The parents of the imprisoned soldiers reacted angrily and said their children should not be tried without any evidence of their guilt.

The soldiers from the auxiliary company claimed that they were just trying to show solidarity with their imprisoned comrades.

The 4th Annual Staten Island Freedom And Peace Festival: “We Support Iraq Veterans Against War And Show Solidarity With Their Fight To Bring Justice To Stop An Illegal, Immoral War”

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, Military Project, who sent this in.]

The event will be held November 3, 2007 in Tappen Park, on Bay St. between Canal St. and Water St., in the Stapleton section of Staten Island, from 12 noon to 6:00 pm.

Organized and sponsored by Peace Action Staten Island (PASI) and People Against Oppression and War (PAOW), this festival is about activism and entertainment, because work can be rewarding.

The primary goal of the festival is to provide a forum in which civil discourse can elevate the public's role in a democracy, from spectator to participant, based on informed opinion.

All are welcome to spend some or most of their day here, sharing knowledge, so we all have power. This unique Staten Island event is meant to be lively and empowering.

Browse staffed information tables from several different peace groups, both local and national. See examples of how to effect positive social change, and talk about issues that impact all of us. Most notably right now, of course, is the Iraq war.

We support Iraq Veterans Against War (IVAW) and show solidarity with their fight, the people's fight, to bring justice to stop an illegal, immoral war.

Listen to them, and speakers from other social justice groups, as they talk about the brutal reality of what this political leadership has done to the world, in our names.

Public power, not private control; that'll be a theme for the day. Past speakers include Reverend Dan Berrigan, direct action pacifist for more than a half-century, and Norman Siegel, the noted civil rights attorney who proudly represents the public interest in the streets and in the courtroom.

To celebrate strength in diversity, enjoy a plethora of entertainment: live music from a variety of genres, traditional and slam poetry, street theatre, comedy, picture and other performance art, too.

For kids, we've got a Peace Mural to paint with the folks from Universal Temple of the Arts, puppet shows, face painting, and a short play from the Children's Theatre Company.

For more information concerning the schedule, performers, speakers, and activist groups, please call 718-393-8497.

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

AWOL Solider Charged With Stealing 200-Pound Pumpkin

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

10/08/2007 By Rebekah Sungala, Herald-Standard

An AWOL solider was arrested Thursday after state police found him in the bed of a pick-up truck with a 200-pound pumpkin.

Police arrested 20-year-old Jordan Ivill of Bentleyville, who is accused of deserting the U.S. Army, after he and two other men allegedly stole the oversize pumpkin from a store display.

Ivill was arrested on a warrant issued by the U.S. Army for desertion, police said. The warrant accused Ivill of leaving the Fort Benning Army base in George, court records show.

In a written report, trooper Martin S. Gonglik said police were on routine patrol in Bentleyville when a pick-up truck was spotted pulling out of Jet's Food Center parking lot at a high rate of speed around 1:30 a.m. Thursday.

Gonglik stated that police followed the truck and observed Ivill and another man sitting in the bed of the truck drinking beer.

Police initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle, and Gonglik said the 200-pound pumpkin was found in the bed of the truck with the men.

Gonglik said the pumpkin had been on display in front of Jet's Food Center.

Police said Ivill was taken into custody on the desertion charges. He was arraigned before Magisterial District Judge William Pelkey and jailed on a \$50,000 bond.

Gonglik said the other two men - a 20-year-old Ellsworth man and a 23-year-old Bentleyville man - will be charged with theft by unlawful taking.

Police said the pumpkin was returned to the store it was stolen from.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Chickenhawk Down #1



10/22/2007 by Justin C. Cliburn [Iraq Veterans Against The War: ivaw.org/]

Branch of service: Army National Guard of the United States (ARNG)

Unit: 1st Battalion 158th FA Oklahoma ARNG

Rank: SPC

Home: Lawton, Oklahoma

Served in: LSA Anaconda: MSR Patrol, one month. Camp Liberty, Baghdad: PSD/IP Training, ten and a half months.

I walked into my Political Theory class last January and immediately noticed Matt sitting at a desk with a familiar, satisfied smile on his face. I didn't know Matt, but I knew that smirk. I couldn't place it, made a mental note, and moved on.

April came and the semester was almost over.

Before the period began one morning, a few students were discussing when they had first registered to vote, a rousing discussion in a poli sci class, I guess. Matt was standing with his hands in pockets and, looking directly at me, said with great gusto, "I remember the day my registration card came in the mail, and it said Republican."

He stood there, staring at me with that same satisfied smirk on his face. After what seemed like an eternity of silence he asked (more like indicted), "You're a Democrat, aren't you?" Then it hit me; I had seen that smirk before . . . on the face of George W. Bush.

Matt and I got along fairly well in that class, mostly because I didn't speak too much about the war as it didn't come up in conversation very often.

I heard him speaking to others about the war and listened from a distance as he pretended to know everything it.

I laughed to myself as he talked about how honorable military service is; if it were so honorable, why was he in my college classroom and not living on Pad 15 at Camp Liberty, Baghdad, Iraq, I thought.

Even though I saw these contradictions, I let him have his fun for the most part and kept to myself, but every time I have seen him since, I immediately think to myself "Chickenhawk."

Fast forward to the Fall semester and we again have a political science class together.

We've gone toe to toe in debating the war and I've laughed in his face as he cites his source for how great the situation on the ground is: one of my comrades whose job in Iraq was to escort the Colonel the four miles from the palace on Camp Victory to a palace in the Green Zone three days a week.

After dropping the Colonel off, his big decisions were whether he should eat at Michael's Restaurant; go to the food court; or swim at Liberty Pool. Decisions; decisions.

We've agreed to disagree in the end, but I always come away thinking of him more and more as a chickenhawk who thinks that supporting pre-emptive strikes and hawkish policies makes up for his fat, rosy cheeks and complete lack of aggression.

So, you can imagine the spike in respect I gained for the man when I heard him refer to himself as a Chickenhawk.

We were talking about fantasy football and comparing team names, which are half the fun of creating a team. My fantasy football team's name is and always has been "Arrogant Americans." It's self-deprecating and somewhat of a political statement, but, most of all, I find it funny.

"My name has always been The Chickenhawks." Matt said with that smirk on his face. I almost choked on my gum I laughed so hard. "I appreciate the fact that you can poke fun at yourself, man." I said with a smile on my face.

"What do you mean?" the Chickenhawk replied.

"What is a Chickenhawk?" a woman asked from the peanut gallery.

"It's a funny-looking animal with a funny name; there was a cartoon about one." Matt answered her with a stern determination in his voice.

". . . or it's what you call someone who supports war and the military but is too afraid to ever serve in one himself." I added.

"I've never heard that!" was his immediate, adamant reply.

"It's true, man; look it up," I told him in between laughs.

His face was now as red as ever and he looked angrier than I had ever seen him.

"It's just a stupid cartoon named Foghorn Leghorn; that's all it is!" he said, seemingly trying to convince himself that the irony was all a fluke.

I had to go and politely excused myself, but I still laugh to myself every time I see his red and embarrassed face in his mind. Each time I see that arrogant, "Dubya" smirk on his face, I'll think of the "Chickenhawk" face and die laughing at the sweet irony that I couldn't have scripted any better myself.

Arrogant Americans versus The Chickenhawks sounds like it could be an intrasquad scrimmage, but, sadly, only one of the coaches would appreciate the satire.

MORE:

Chickenhawk Down #2

“It Is Time That These ‘Patriots’ Are Recognized For The Chickenhawks That They Are And Either Back Up Their Shallow Words With Actions Or Just Shut Up”

22 October 2007 By Camillo “Mac” Bica [United States Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran]

Recently, at a community forum on the war in Iraq, three individuals who termed themselves collectively as the “Patriots” made the argument that the war in Iraq was, and continues to be, necessary and important to fighting the war on terrorism, creating stability in the Middle East, and perhaps, even to prevent World War Three.

Interestingly, none of the three “patriots” were, are, or intend to become members of the military. Nor were any of their immediate families.

In response to my question about whether this fact somehow jeopardizes their credibility on the subject and the force of their argument, together the patriots formulated the response that they did not believe it necessary to join the military or to have family members who do, in order to be patriotic, to recognize a serious threat to our country, and to conclude, however reluctantly, that war is a necessary, legal, and moral response in such dire situations.

Given the difficulty the military is experiencing in meeting its recruitment quotas, I don’t think it farfetched to view these three individuals as representative of many of those self proclaimed patriots who continue to support President Bush’s occupation and escalation of the war in Iraq.

For purposes of argument, I will accept that such patriots - those who remain personally unaffected by the war in the sense that neither they nor members of their family serve in the military - sincerely believe in the justness and morality of their position.

For why else would sane and rational human beings advocate an enterprise that results in the deaths and injuries of so many Americans and Iraqis and support the expenditure of billions of dollars that could certainly be better spent on health care, education, developing alternative fuels, etc. Though it may be the case that greed and ambition has and continues to motivate unscrupulous individuals and corporations to urge and support war, I am going to accept that these patriots are not “war profiteers.”

To urge that our nation continues, even escalates, the occupation and war in Iraq, entails the belief that Iraq poses a real and imminent threat to our national security, to our economy, and to the values we hold most sacred.

In the face of such a threat, the patriots argue, war is justified, perhaps even morally required. There is, as well, a dire sense of urgency as “we cannot wait for the final proof - the smoking gun - that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.”

Not being a pacifist myself, I accept, at least theoretically, the patriots’ general contention that sometimes, as in a response to aggression, war may be a moral and legal recourse of last resort.

Rational analysis will show, I think, that the patriots’ argument advocating and supporting war while at the same time “choosing” not to participate or to have their family members participate, is, at best, confused and inconsistent, at worst, disingenuous and dishonest.

Since war requires a citizenry willing to make great sacrifices in behalf of national defense, if the patriots have no intention of fighting the war themselves or of sending their children to fight, then clearly they must reject the validity of their own argument.

That is, they must believe that the threat is not real, or imminent, or, perhaps, not serious enough to warrant risking their own lives or well being or that of their family members.

Since we conceded, however, that our patriots are sincere in their belief that the war in Iraq is necessary and must continue, they must believe the threat posed by Iraq is real, immediate, and grave. So I guess we must rule out this explanation for their non-participation.

Another possibility is that perhaps these patriots do not love America sufficiently to be willing to make the necessary sacrifices in its behalf.

Again, since we conceded the verisimilitude of their patriotism, we must rule out this explanation as well.

The only possibility that remains, I think, is that the unwillingness of these patriots to participate in what they argue is a necessary war is indicative of their belief that they and their loved ones are somehow exempt, perhaps for reason of affluence, power, status, or ethnicity, from the inconveniences and risks entailed by fighting in war.

They are arguing essentially that America must continue to the occupation and war in Iraq, and that it is the obligation of other people, and of other people’s children, to make the necessary sacrifices.

Certainly, civilians and non-veterans can be patriotic. Surely, they can recognize a serious threat to our country, and conclude that war is necessary to maintain our freedom.

Patriotism requires, however, especially in a democracy with an all volunteer military, that the onerous burden of national defense be shared by all who love America - by all of America’s citizens.

When war is just and necessary, we are all equally bound, rich and poor, powerful and powerless, not to the extent that wealth and position can enable avoidance of sacrifice, but to the extent to which we are capable of serving. Justice requires that the burden be shared fairly by all who benefit from living in this nation.

Freedom is not free, you know.

Perhaps one may even argue that those who benefit most from their freedom, those who have become wealthy by availing themselves of all that America has provided, have even a greater obligation to serve than does those who have benefited least - the poor and the destitute.

My advice, therefore, to those patriots who would argue that the occupation and war in Iraq must continue is that they must re-evaluate their position.

Unless they are willing to fight in the war themselves, and/or encourage their family members to fight as well, they must abandon their support for the war and argue instead for its immediate cessation.

It is time that these “patriots” are recognized for the chickenhawks that they are and either back up their shallow words with actions or just shut up.

Camillo “Mac” Bica, Ph.D., is a professor of philosophy at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. His focus is in Ethics, particularly as it applies to war and the warrior. As a veteran recovering from his experiences as a United States Marine Corps Officer during the Vietnam War, he founded, and coordinated for five years, the Veterans Self-Help Initiative, a therapeutic community of veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He is a long-time activist for peace and justice, a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and a founding member of the Long Island Chapter of Veterans for Peace. Articles by Dr. Bica have appeared in Cyrano’s Journal, The Humanist Magazine, Znet, Truthout.org, Common Dreams, AntiWar.com, Monthly Review Zine, Foreign Policy in Focus, OpEdNews.com, and numerous philosophical journals.

**“IF YOU SUPPORT BUSH’S WAR, WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE?
SHUT UP AND SHIP OUT”
– Iraq Combat Veteran in GI Special, 2005**

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.



Everytime Dick Cheney takes a breath, he murders somebody.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
October 25, 2007

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“The Soldiers Described How The
Violence Was Encouraged By
Some Commanders”**

**“Confessions Of Frequent Brutal
Assaults Against Palestinians”**

“Just Like That, For No Reason - He Didn't Throw A Stone, Did Nothing - Bang, A Bullet In The Stomach”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

October 21, 2007 Conal Urquhart in Jerusalem, The Observer [Excerpts]

A study by an Israeli psychologist into the violent behaviour of the country's soldiers is provoking bitter controversy and has awakened urgent questions about the way the army conducts itself in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Nufar Yishai-Karin, a clinical psychologist at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, interviewed 21 Israeli soldiers and heard confessions of frequent brutal assaults against Palestinians, aggravated by poor training and discipline.

In her recently published report, co-authored by Professor Yoel Elizur, Yishai-Karin details a series of violent incidents, including the beating of a four-year-old boy by an officer.

According to Yishai Karin: 'At one point or another of their service, the majority of the interviewees enjoyed violence. They enjoyed the violence because it broke the routine and they liked the destruction and the chaos. They also enjoyed the feeling of power in the violence and the sense of danger.'

In the words of one soldier: 'The truth? When there is chaos, I like it. That's when I enjoy it. It's like a drug. If I don't go into Rafah, and if there isn't some kind of riot once in some weeks, I go nuts.'

Another explained: 'The most important thing is that it removes the burden of the law from you. You feel that you are the law. You are the law. You are the one who decides... As though from the moment you leave the place that is called Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) and go through the Erez checkpoint into the Gaza Strip, you are the law. You are God.'

The soldiers described dozens of incidents of extreme violence.

One recalled an incident when a Palestinian was shot for no reason and left on the street. 'We were in a weapons carrier when this guy, around 25, passed by in the street and, just like that, for no reason - he didn't throw a stone, did nothing - bang, a bullet in the stomach, he shot him in the stomach and the guy is dying on the pavement and we keep going, apathetic. No one gave him a second look,' he said.

The soldiers developed a mentality in which they would use physical violence to deter Palestinians from abusing them.

One described beating women. 'With women I have no problem. With women, one threw a clog at me and I kicked her here (pointing to the crotch), I broke everything there. She can't have children. Next time she won't throw clogs at me. When one of them spat at me, I gave her the rifle butt in the face. She doesn't have what to spit with any more.'

Yishai-Karin found that the soldiers were exposed to violence against Palestinians from as early as their first weeks of basic training.

On one occasion, the soldiers were escorting some arrested Palestinians. The arrested men were made to sit on the floor of the bus. They had been taken from their beds and were barely clothed, even though the temperature was below zero.

The new recruits trampled on the Palestinians and then proceeded to beat them for the whole of the journey. They opened the bus windows and poured water on the arrested men.

The debate has contrasted sharply with an Israeli army where new recruits are taught that they are joining 'the most ethical army in the world' - a refrain that is echoed throughout Israeli society. In its doctrine, published on its website, the Israeli army emphasizes human dignity. 'The Israeli army and its soldiers are obligated to protect human dignity. Every human being is of value regardless of his or her origin, religion, nationality, gender, status or position.'

However, the Israeli army, like other armies, has found it difficult to maintain these values beyond the classroom.

Yishai-Karin, in an interview with Haaretz, described how her research came out of her own experience as a soldier at an army base in Rafah in the Gaza Strip. She interviewed 18 ordinary soldiers and three officers whom she had served with in Gaza.

The soldiers described how the violence was encouraged by some commanders.

One soldier recalled: 'After two months in Rafah, a (new) commanding officer arrived... So we do a first patrol with him. It's 6am, Rafah is under curfew, there isn't so much as a dog in the streets.

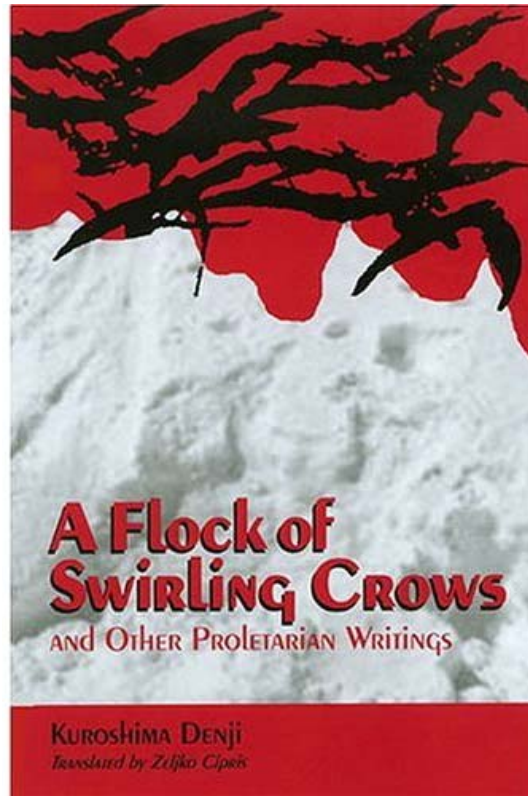
"Only a little boy of four playing in the sand. He is building a castle in his yard. He (the officer) suddenly starts running and we all run with him. He was from the combat engineers.

'He grabbed the boy. I am a degenerate if I am not telling you the truth. He broke his hand here at the wrist, broke his leg here. And started to stomp on his stomach, three times, and left. We are all there, jaws dropping, looking at him in shock...

'The next day I go out with him on another patrol, and the soldiers are already starting to do the same thing.'

The longer a unit was left in the field, the more violent it became.

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z



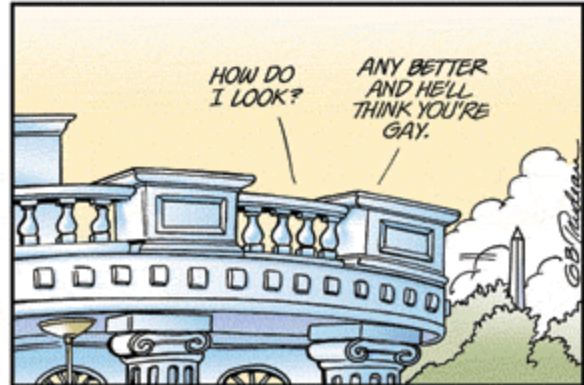
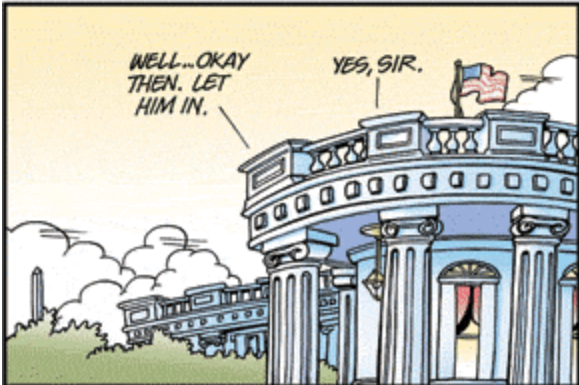
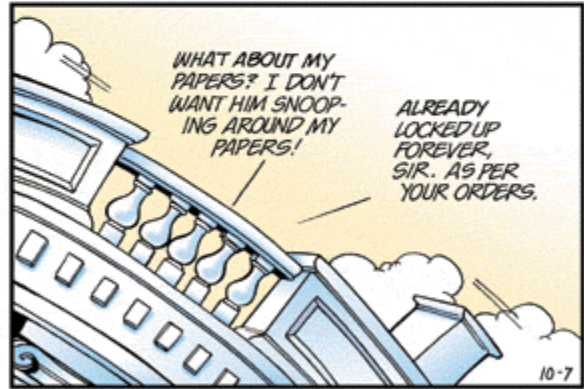
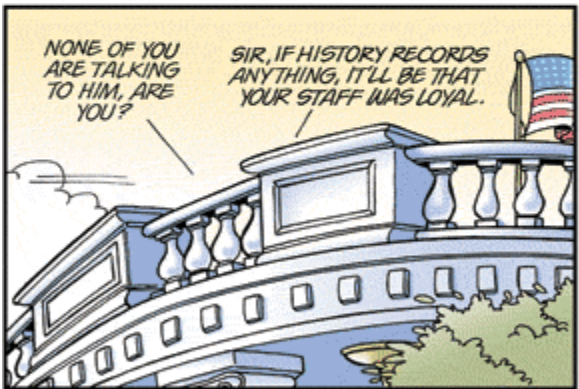
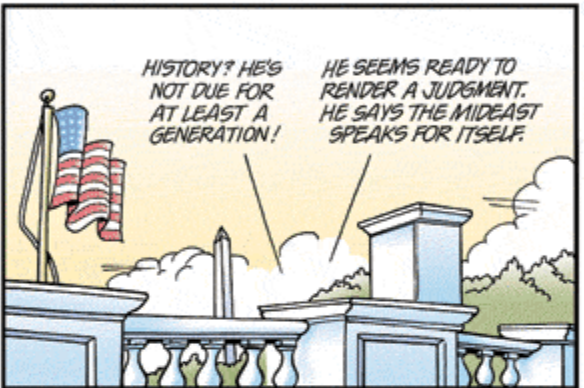
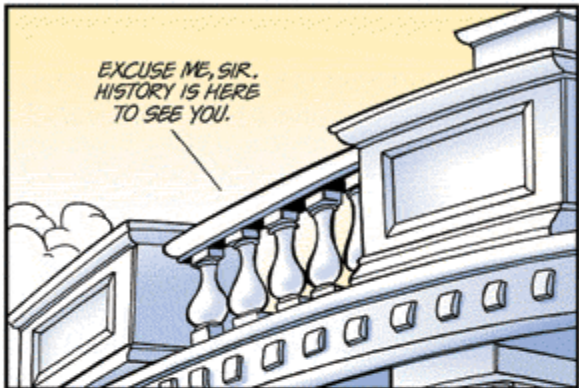
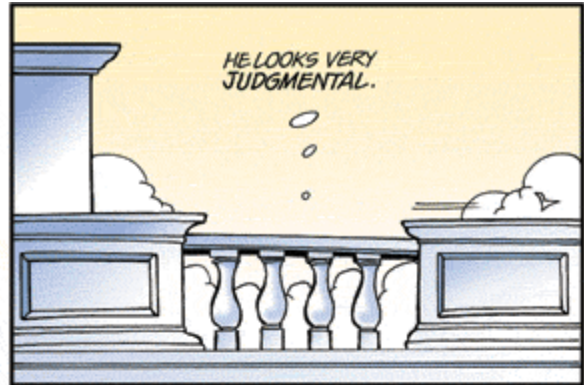
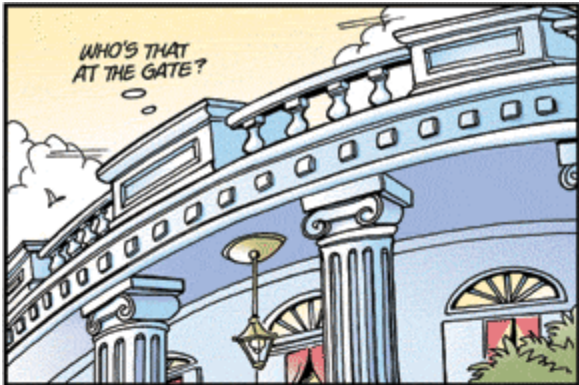
[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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