

**GI SPECIAL 6A5:**



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

***Petraeus' Bed-Time  
Story:  
The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy Of  
Doom  
"My Friends In The 4th Infantry  
Are Back In Baghdad"***

**“They Know That The Present  
Calm Is Waiting To Be Shattered  
Like A Bottle In A Biker Bar At  
0200”**

**“They Are Scared That, When The Shit  
Hits The Proverbial Fan, We Won’t Stand  
A Chance”**



**You can’t leave because I’m stop-losing you, and I will be going to the big party soon with all the other retired generals. You children go to sleep now.” Petraeus turns out the lights, and shuts the proverbial door, leaving the story unfinished.**

**What do you think happens next?**

12/29/2007 By Evan M. Knappenberger [Iraq Veterans Against The War]

**So my friends in the 4th Infantry are back in Baghdad; the ones that didn’t re-up for another tour, that is.**

**And what is the word on the street? Surprise: violence is down.**

**But what does this mean?**

**What are the implications of this drop in violence?**

**Petraeus and his minions want the world to believe it is because of the surge-ops, but the guys in the S-2’s know better.**

**The real story has something more to do with the massive amounts of money being paid to insurgents -- THAT'S RIGHT THEY SAME GUYS THAT KILLED OUR BUDDIES LAST YEAR -- to not attack us this year.**

**More likely, it might have something to do with the fact that we have just armed a corps-sized element of Sunni militia with shiny new weapons and the "next-generation" of equipment and uniforms.**

**Despite the dashing narratives made up by the master story-tellers wearing stars on their collars, the poor guys in the 2-shops are scared.**

**They know that the present calm is waiting to be shattered like a bottle in a biker bar at 0200.**

**They are scared that, when the shit hits the proverbial fan, we won't stand a chance.**

**They realize that our guys are tired and that we never expected to be into this occupation eyes-deep, while the guys down the road are taking a break and spending all that nice new American money (which, by the way, is worth less and less these days,) on the only thing to buy in Iraq: hot new guns and explosives.**

**They are scared of the militia which is sitting at the kitchen table eyeing them nastily while Papa Petraeus insists they are friendly.**

**"Now, kids, it's not nice to be unfriendly to our neighborly Sunni militia. Why can't you share your allowance with them?" he chides us.**

**But what the guys in the 2-shop are also thinking is, "where is AQ in all of this?"**

**They've been told for years to diligently track down and neutralize all these Al-Qaeda terrorists, but suddenly attacks stop as soon as the militias are sated by our re-directed VA funds.**

**The good 96B analyst knows that zealot AQ are not so easily stopped; and he wonders absently where they could have gone, or if they were even there to begin with.**

**It looks like Petraeus has gotten caught up in his own bedtime story.**

**"The evil miscreants have been beat to a bloody pulp by the heroic Americans, children. All we needed was an extra 30,000 troops and 200 billion dollars."**

**Suddenly some 96B PFC breaks in: "Sir, what happened to the bad guys? Did they leave?"**

**"No," Petraeus replies, "They're on our side now."**

**"I don't like this story!" another soldier chimes in. "It doesn't make sense."**

**“Well, too bad. You can’t leave because I’m stop-losing you, and I will be going to the big party soon with all the other retired generals. You children go to sleep now.”**

**Petraeus turns out the lights, and shuts the proverbial door, leaving the story unfinished.**

**What do you think happens next?**

**MORE:**

**From GI Special 5K15: 11.19.07**

## **U.S. KIA In Iraq: Reality: #1 It’s Not A Big Fucking Mystery; It’s Cause And Effect**

**Comment: T**

The 39<sup>th</sup> recent frantic attempt by a panicked, hysterical war opponent commentator to explain the huge drop in U.S. KIA last month has just been plastered on some anti-war web sites. It said the Pentagon is lying about the KIA numbers.

Another last week said U.S. troops aren’t getting killed because they’re being kept on base in Iraq to get ready to invade Iran. Blah blah blah.

It’s not a big fucking mystery.

It’s cause and effect.

**Cause:**

**“The reality, officials said, is that starting around April the military will simply run out of troops to keep the current effort under way. By then, officials said, Bush would either have to withdraw roughly one brigade a month, or extend the tours of troops now in Iraq and shorten their time back home before redeployment.”** David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, New York Times June 24, 2007”

**Effect:**

Not being idiots, the resistance command orders attacks cut way back, while continuing enough attacks to leave no doubt they’re there and keep their forces sharp.

They know the U.S. Army has to start cutting force levels in the Spring. Hard as it is for some to grip, given all the stupid racist stereotypes [on the anti-war side too] resistance leadership can and do read the New York Times, and not being raving fanatics of some kind or other, can plan strategy:

Push hard, attack when the balance of forces is better, not worse. That's so pathetically obvious a commander who doesn't understand it belongs in the Pentagon.

This has been an iron rule of intelligent insurgent warfare against an occupying army for about 2000 years now. As so well described by Asprey in *The Guerrilla In History*.

**MORE:**

From GI Special 5K15: 11.19.07

**U.S. KIA In Iraq: Reality: #2  
“I Bet The Soldiers Are Catching On To  
This More And More Everyday”  
[Comment By J.D. Englehart;  
Iraq Veterans Against The War & Military  
Project]**

What's important to look at is how this “growing signs of success” line is used by both republicans AND democrats (aka: the one-party American capitalist regime) to justify asking for more money for the war, or forfeiting more money for the war, in a clever guise to keep funding the war and not ending the war.

From: J.D. Englehart  
To: Military Project  
Sent: November 17, 2007 2:10 AM  
**Subject: Re: U.S. KIA in Iraq**

I agree.

The media, even of the most liberal, is talking these quiet moments up as “the light at the end of the tunnel” and “sure signs of victory.”

It's obvious the insurgency is regrouping.

They are not winning through shock and awe, but rather through slowly picking away at the imperialist enemy. Another 2000 year old guerrilla strategy.

What's important to look at is how this “growing signs of success” line is used by both republicans AND democrats (aka: the one-party American capitalist regime) to justify asking for more money for the war, or forfeiting more money for the war, in a clever guise to keep funding the war and not ending the war.

I bet the soldiers are catching on to this more and more everyday.

## **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

## **ACTION REPORTS**

# **WEEKEND (1/5-1/6/08) RAIL STATION REPORT**

From: Alan Stolzer, The Military Project  
To: GI Special  
Sent: January 06, 2008  
Subject: Weekend Rail Station Report

**On Saturday, Sally D. and I went to [XXXXX] Station to outreach National Guard troops.**

The first two we met (further approachable without police in attendance at an information desk) were happy to be greeted. One soldier said he'd been to Iraq 5 times and "was in a word – glad to be home." Both were provided "Sir! No Sir!" DVDs, GI Specials, Traveling Soldiers and GI Rights pamphlets.

These items would be the packets distributed for the weekend.

Further in our tour we met 3 other, younger guardsmen. One who I approached weeks before and wouldn't speak to me then, peeled off. Another who also knew me accepted a DVD but didn't want further literature. I asked him what he thought of the lit he took earlier. He said "I agreed with some of it."

The third soldier, new to our outreach, gleefully took a packet.

Upon leaving [XXXXX] we saw a lone guardsman who I recognized having spoken to him the preceding two weeks. With family, job and other responsibilities, he's been unable to read the material he'd taken.

**He complained about deployment to Iraq in the Spring and was trying to get out of it, saying he was just transferred from another unit. We gave him a GI Rights pamphlet which can put him in touch with civilian groups that might help.**

We talked more and he told us he'd been drilling at [XXXX] Avenue then suddenly realized he'd just been shifted to "an Air Force base somewhere on Long Island – maybe [XXXXXX]." I wrote down my phone number and asked him to call about the drill time and site – if he chose to.

On Sunday I went to [XXXXXX] Station which has proven to be a tougher nut to crack than [XXXX]. Most troops remain close to a police manned info desk and rarely move off. Those that do are often reluctant to accept a packet. This time, however, one soldier sat behind the desk on the main floor.

**We spoke easily and he soon complained how injured troops were being treated once they got back here. He felt those serving had given up a lot and weren't being properly recognized once they got back here. He took a packet. I jotted down my phone as well.**

I left to check in with a young salesclerk at [XXXXXX] on 6th Ave. [XXXXXX] to whom I'd given several packets weeks ago since she had two cousins serving in Iraq and one stateside and ready to go.

She wasn't working that day but the salesclerk who informed me of that told me she had a cousin and friend in the military. She was agreeable to receive packets for each.

**It's important to check with anyone you meet: co-workers, salesclerks, security people, anyone! – as to whether they have friends or relatives serving in the armed forces.**

**Even if you can't make it to armory outreach try and carry some lit and DVDs with you in case you meet someone who hates the war or knows someone who does as much as we do.**

## **MORE ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!**

**An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.**

**If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.**

**Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.**

**They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.**

**If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.**

**If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.**

**NOTE WELL:**

**Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.**

**Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the war.**

**If accidentally included, that information will not be published.**

**The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Join The Army And Get A Head**



U.S. army soldiers from Blackfoot Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment examine a severed human head at K-wal combat outpost in the village of Shakarat, Diyala province, north of Baghdad, Jan. 6, 2008. The U.S. soldiers found the severed



head of an unidentified person, believed to be a U.S.-funded security volunteer in Shakarat, after they were tipped off by locals. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

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## **Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier, Three More Wounded**

1.6.08 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080106-04

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier was killed and three others wounded when an improvised explosive device detonated near their vehicle during combat operations in southern Baghdad on Jan. 6.

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### **TROOP NEWS**

## **“CASUALTY CHECKLIST MEMO” “Written For The Families And Friends Of The Loved Ones Who Have Died During The Wars In Iraq And Afghanistan”**

January 3, 2008  
MILITARY LAW TASK FORCE  
National Lawyers Guild  
[www.nlgmltf.org](http://www.nlgmltf.org)  
[www.militarylawtaskforce.org](http://www.militarylawtaskforce.org)

The Military Law Task Force is pleased to announce the distribution of its “CASUALTY CHECKLIST MEMO.”

The “Casualty Checklist Memo” is written for the families and friends of the loved ones who have died during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Associated Press story on December 31, 2007, “Deadliest Year for U.S. Troops,” by Bradley Brooks, states that “The 899 deaths in 2007 surpassed the previously highest death toll in 2004, when 850 U.S. soldiers were killed.” The numbers of those who die continues to climb in two wars that our elected officials refuse to end.

This memo is to help the survivors get through the difficult times after the military makes the death known to them.

We fear that the reality of being notified of the death of a loved one and the necessary follow-up steps are too difficult for most of the media to recount; it is easier to cover other stories.

So, we present this to the families of those who have died. We hope that the media can help us to make this memo known to the families.

Marti Hiken

CONTACT PERSON: Marti Hiken, Military Law Task Force, Chair,  
415-566-3732

Here's the direct link for the memo:

[http://nlgmtf.org/press\\_releases/press\\_release\\_toc.html](http://nlgmtf.org/press_releases/press_release_toc.html)

It can also be found at the MLTF website, [www.nlgmtf.org](http://www.nlgmtf.org), under "Current News and Information," click on "Digests, Memos and Outlines."

It is the first memo listed.

Check out the new MLTF My Space site: <http://www.myspace.com/nlgmtf>

Marguerite Hiken, chair  
318 Ortega Street  
San Francisco, CA 94122  
415-566-3732  
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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **Comment Unnecessary**

**Sometime this year, an eighteen year old soldier will die in a war that started when he was thirteen.**

**Hold onto that.**

**Let it linger.**

Posted by Alex at Wednesday, January 02, 2008, Army of Dude

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# **Member Of The Hannau Soldiers Committee '75-'76 Writes "My Heart Is Glad To Know That The Troops Are Speaking Out"**

By Mail: [Excerpt]

It's not fair to compare because these are different times from when I was a member of the Hannau Soldiers Committee as a PFC in SVC BTRY, 1/40 FA 1975-76. I imagine sometimes what would have been if we had the internet and you.

My heart is glad to know that the troops are speaking out and I'm glad that the G.I. Special, the IVAW, etc. is there for them.

In Solidarity,

Marcus A

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***The Battle of Athens,  
Tennessee:  
2 August 1946  
U.S. War Veterans Use Armed  
Force To Overthrow A Corrupt  
Government:  
"Nigger, You Can't Vote Here  
Today!!"  
"Despite Being Beaten, Gillespie  
Persisted; The Enraged Deputy Shot  
Him"***

# **“The State Guard Never Went To Athens. McCord May Have Feared That Guard Units Filled With Ex-GIs Might Not Fire On Other Ex-GIs”**

[Thanks to Maryfromfla who sent this in]

Constitution.org [Excerpts]

## **I. Introduction**

**On 2 August 1946, some Americans, brutalized by their county government, used armed force to overturn it.**

These Americans wanted honest, open elections. For years they had asked for state or Federal election monitors to prevent vote fraud -- forged ballots, secret ballot counts, and intimidation by armed sheriff's deputies -- by the local political boss.

They got no help.

These Americans' absolute refusal to knuckle-under had been hardened by service in World War II.

Having fought to free other countries from murderous regimes, they rejected vicious abuse by their county government.

These Americans had a choice. Their state's Constitution - Article 1, Section 26 - recorded their right to keep and bear arms for the common defense. Few "gun control" laws had been enacted.

## **II. The Setting**

These Americans were Tennesseans of McMinn County, located between Chattanooga and Knoxville, in Eastern Tennessee. The two main towns were Athens and Etowah.

McMinn Countians had long been independent political thinkers. They also had long accepted bribe-taking by politicians and/or the Sheriff to overlook illicit whiskey-making and gambling; financed the sheriff's department from fines - usually for speeding or public drunkenness - which promoted false arrests; put up with voting fraud by both Democrats and Republicans.

Tennessee State law barred voting fraud: ballot boxes had to be shown to be empty before voting; poll-watchers had to be allowed; armed law enforcement officers were barred from polling places; ballots had to be counted where any voter could watch.

### **III. The Circumstances**

The Great Depression had ravaged McMinn County. Drought broke many farmers; workforces shrank. The wealthy Cantrell family, of Etowah, backed Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1932 election, hoping New Deal programs would revive the local economy and help Democrats to replace Republicans in the county government.

So it proved.

Paul Cantrell was elected Sheriff in the 1936, 1938, and 1940 elections, but by slim margins. The Sheriff was the key County official. Cantrell was elected to the State Senate in 1942 and 1944; his chief deputy, Pat Mansfield, was elected sheriff.

In 1946, Paul Cantrell again sought the Sheriff's office.

### **IV. World War II Ends; Paul Cantrell's Troubles Begin**

**At end-1945, some 3,000 battle-hardened veterans returned to McMinn County.**

**Sheriff Mansfield's deputies had brutalized many in McMinn County; the GIs held Cantrell politically responsible for Mansfield's doings.**

Early in 1946, some newly-returned ex-GIs decided:

to challenge Cantrell politically;  
to offer an all ex-GI, non-partisan ticket;  
to promise a fraud-free election.

In ads and speeches the GI candidates promised:

an honest ballot count;  
reform of county government.

At a rally, a GI speaker said, "The principals that we fought for in this past war do not exist in McMinn County. We fought for democracy because we believe in democracy but not the form we live under in this county." (Daily Post-Athenian, 17 June 1946, p. 1).

At end-July 1946, 159 McMinn County GIs petitioned the FBI to send election monitors.

There was no response. The Department of Justice had not responded to McMinn Countians' complaints of election fraud in 1940, 1942, and 1944.

### **V. From Ballots to Bullets**

The election was held on 1 August.

**To intimidate voters, Mansfield brought in some 200 armed "deputies".**

**GI poll-watchers were beaten almost at once.**

**At about 3 p.m., Tom Gillespie, an African-American voter, was told by a Sheriff's deputy, "Nigger, you can't vote here today!!".**

**Despite being beaten, Gillespie persisted; the enraged deputy shot him.**

The gunshot drew a crowd. Rumors spread that Gillespie had been "shot in the back"; he later recovered. (C. Stephen Byrum, *The Battle of Athens*; Paidia Productions, Chattanooga TN, 1987; pp. 155-57).

Other deputies detained ex-GI poll-watchers in a polling place, as that made the ballot count "public".

A crowd gathered. Sheriff Mansfield told his deputies to disperse the crowd.

**When the two ex-GIs smashed a big window and escaped, the crowd surged forward.**

**"The deputies, with guns drawn, formed a tight half-circle around the front of the polling place. One deputy, "his gun raised high ...shouted: 'You sons-of-bitches cross this street and I'll kill you!'" (Byrum, p. 165).**

Mansfield took the ballot boxes to the jail for counting.

**The deputies seemed to fear immediate attack, by the "people who had just liberated Europe and the South Pacific from two of the most powerful war machines in human history." (Byrum, pp. 168-69).**

**Short of firearms and ammunition, the GIs scoured the county to find them.**

By borrowing keys to the National Guard and State Guard Armories, they got three M-1 rifles, five .45 semi-automatic pistols, and 24 British Enfield rifles. The armories were nearly empty after the war's end.

By eight p.m., a group of GIs and "local boys" headed for the jail to get the ballot boxes. They occupied high ground facing the jail but left the back door unguarded to give the jail's defenders an easy way out.

## **VI. The Battle of Athens**

**Three GIs - alerting passersby to danger - were fired on from the jail.**

**Two GIs were wounded.**

**Other GIs returned fire.**

Those inside the jail mainly used pistols; they also had a “tommy gun” (a .45 caliber Thompson sub-machine gun).

Firing subsided after 30 minutes: ammunition ran low and night had fallen. Thick brick walls shielded those inside the jail. Absent radios, the GIs’ rifle fire was un-coordinated. “From the hillside, fire rose and fell in disorganized cascades. More than anything else, people were simply ‘shooting at the jail’.” (Byrum, p. 189).

Several who ventured into “no man’s land”, the street in front of the jail, were wounded.

One man inside the jail was badly hurt; he recovered. Most sheriffs’ deputies wanted to hunker down and await rescue.

Governor McCord mobilized the State Guard, perhaps to scare the GIs into withdrawing.

**The State Guard never went to Athens. McCord may have feared that Guard units filled with ex-GIs might not fire on other ex-GIs.**

**At about 2 a.m. on 2 August, the GIs forced the issue. Men from Meigs county threw dynamite sticks and damaged the jail’s porch. The panicked deputies surrendered.**

GIs quickly secured the building. Paul Cantrell faded into the night, almost having been shot by a GI who knew him, but whose .45 pistol had jammed.

Mansfield’s deputies were kept overnight in jail for their own safety. Calm soon returned: the GIs posted guards. The rifles borrowed from the armory were cleaned and returned before sun-up.

## **VII. The Aftermath: Restoring Democracy in McMinn County**

In five precincts free of vote fraud, the GI candidate for Sheriff, Knox Henry, won 1,168 votes to Cantrell’s 789. Other GI candidates won by similar margins.

The GIs did not hate Cantrell. They only wanted honest government. On 2 August, a town meeting set up a three-man governing committee.

**The regular police having fled, six men were chosen to police Athens; a dozen GIs were sent to police Etowah.**

**In addition, “Individual citizens were called upon to form patrols or guard groups, often led by a GI. ...To their credit, however, there is not a single mention of an abuse of power on their behalf.” (Byrum, p. 220).**

Once the GI candidates’ victory had been certified, they cleaned-up county government:

the jail was fixed;  
newly-elected officials accepted a \$5,000 pay limit;  
Mansfield supporters who resigned, were replaced.

The general election on 5 November passed quietly. McMinn Countians, having restored the Rule of Law, returned to their daily lives.

Pat Mansfield moved back to Georgia. Paul Cantrell set up an auto dealership in Etowah. "Almost everyone who knew Cantrell in the years after the 'Battle' agree that he was not bitter about what had happened." (Byrum, pp. 232-33; see also New York Times, 9 August 1946, p. 8).

## **VIII. The Outsiders' Response**

The Battle of Athens made national headlines. Most outsiders' reports had the errors usual in coverage of large-scale, night-time events.

A New York Times editorialist on 3 August savaged the GIs, who: "...quite obviously - though we hope erroneously - felt that there was no city, county, or State agency to whom they could turn for justice.

... "There is a warning for all of us in the occurrence...and above all a warning for the veterans of McMinn County, who also violated a fundamental principle of democracy when they arrogated to themselves the right of law enforcement for which they had no election mandate. Corruption, when and where it exists, demands reform, and even in the most corrupt and boss-ridden communities there are peaceful means by which reform can be achieved. But there is no substitute, in a democracy, for orderly process." (NYT, 3 Aug 1946, p. 14.)

**The editorialist did not see:**

**McMinn Countians' many appeals for outside help;  
some ruthless people only respect force;  
that it was wrong to equate use of force by evil-doers (Cantrell and Mansfield) with  
the righteous (the GIs).**

**The New York Times: never saw that Cantrell and Mansfield's wholesale election  
fraud, enforced at gun-point, trampled the Rule of Law; feared citizens' restoring  
the Rule of Law by armed force.**

## **IX. The Lessons of Athens**

Those who took up arms in Athens, Tennessee:

wanted honest elections, a cornerstone of our Constitutional order;  
had repeatedly tried to get Federal or State election monitors;  
used armed force so as to minimize harm to the law-breakers;  
showed little malice to the defeated law-breakers;  
restored lawful government.



**The Battle of Athens clearly shows:**

how Americans can and should lawfully use armed force;  
why the Rule of Law requires unrestricted access to firearms;  
**how civilians with military-type firearms can beat the forces of “law and order”.**

Dictators believe that public order is more important than the Rule of Law. However, Americans reject this idea.

**An individual criminal can harm a handful of people. Governments alone can brutalize thousands, or millions.**

**Since 1915, officials of seven governments “gone bad” have committed genocide, murdering at least 56 million persons, including millions of children.**

**“Gun control” clears the way for genocide by giving governments “gone bad” far greater freedom to commit mass murder.**

**Law-abiding McMinn Countians won the Battle of Athens because they were not hamstrung by “gun control”.**

**McMinn Countians showed us when citizens can and should use armed force to support the Rule of Law.**

**We are all in their debt.**

**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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.**

**OCCUPATION REPORT**

***Good News For The Iraqi  
Resistance!!***

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



A US soldier points his weapon at Iraqi citizens lying on the ground after they were stopped at a checkpoint in Baghdad, 28 December 2007. No reason was given. (AFP/File/Ali Yussef)

**[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!**

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

# **“Why This Great Interest In Replacing And Making Pavements Rather Than Building Schools, Hospitals” “Each Minister And Official Has Three Big Houses In Addition To Mansions And The Headquarters Of Their Parties”**

November 24, 2007 <http://washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/> [Baghdad]

Today I passed through Karrada neighborhood which is one of the places where the people go day and night looking for shopping and peace. I really was happy to see it as I expect full with people, but one thing was wrong that erased the beautiful picture I had from this neighborhood.

I found workers digging the pavements of the main streets of Karrada though it is the best and most beautiful ones in Baghdad.

I soon heard the answer from a passenger who was near by as if he had heard my question to be answered. He said “in my neighborhood they replaced the pavements twice till this month and they dug the last one two weeks ago without a replacing hearing from people and workers that contractor is not convinced with the amount of money he has got demanding to get some more.”

At that moment I remembered that many contacts we have read and heard that the Iraqi side has signed many contracts to reconstruct the country having nothing from them on the ground wasting the billions of dollars to be in the pockets of the few greedy people who are running after their benefits only.

In 2003 , we heard the word of sub-contractor for the first time as the main contractor should be an American person or company, passing it to a sub-contractor from Jordan or Kuwait till it reaches another Iraqi contractor whose job is not a contractor, but the American side gave him or her a chance to have lots of money without any kind of efforts, most of the time they are ministers, officials and sometimes interpreters .

The last step will reach the contractor who will be on the ground with a little money which will effect the quality and quantity of the work.

Thus, the Iraqi officials now, especially those who work in the municipality, they got benefit from the American lesson putting it on the ground.

First, the official in a high rank will be the first contractor, relatives will be the second or sub-contractor, friends will be the third, till it reaches contractors who are really not looking for the Iraq's benefit, but for themselves.

Just want to ask where is the role of the government represented by the minister of finance who should know all these things and the Iraqi people put the budget in his hands.

making the street full with dust and chaos. Drivers have only one lane to take while the rest of the street from both sides have been dug and left. The street itself is unpaved as the workers didn't pave it in a previous period when they dug to change the water pipes!

I asked myself the question the people ask in the whole country: why this great interest in replacing and making pavements rather than building schools, hospitals, new buildings for the ministries, new houses or apartments for those who still have no place to live while each minister and official has three big houses in addition to mansions and the headquarters of their parties.

I also forgot that most of those officials have flats and houses in other countries to spend most of the time with their families and relatives there rather than Iraq, the place where they get money from.

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



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**“The Irony Of The Change-Mantra  
That Is Dominating The Speeches Of**

# The Chattering Classes Is That The Change Won't Be Coming From Above, From The Candidates Of Either Party”

January 4, 2008, By Pham Binh, prisonerofstarvation.blogspot.com/

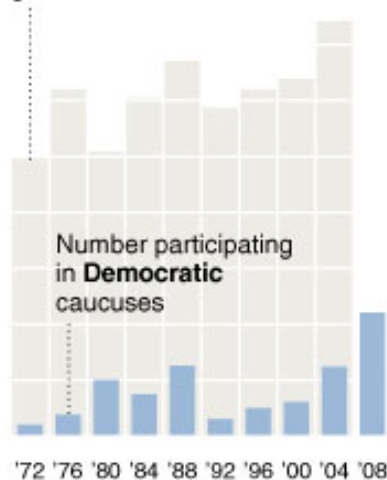
The winds of change are blowing in America. They blew Hillary Clinton from inevitability to third place in the Iowa caucuses yesterday.

In a tight three-way race, Barack Obama beat Clinton by almost ten points. Another way to look at it is that two-thirds of the participants voted against Clinton. The force of the defeat lead Clinton to try to co-opt the pro-change sentiment and use those winds to her advantage if her focus-group tested, pundit-approved double-talk filled concession speech is anything to judge by.

The big news out of Iowa is not only that Clinton, the favorite of the Establishment, suffered a significant defeat but that the Democratic turnout was enormous. Turnout was double what it was in 2004 when, like today, the field was cluttered with anti-war-sounding pro-war candidates. Yesterday's turnout dwarfed that of the Republicans, something that hasn't happened in the last 30 years.

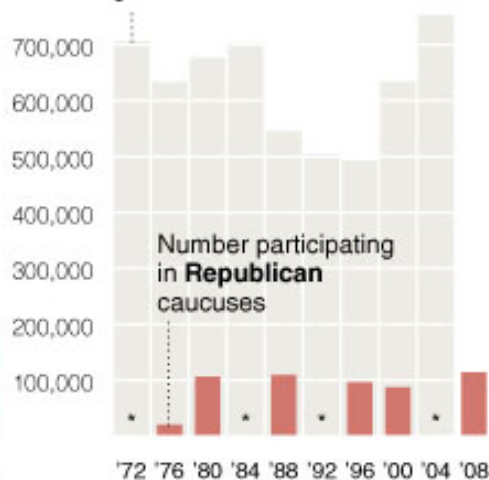
## The Turnout

Number voting for **Democratic** presidential candidate in the general election



Sources: Rhodes Cook; Iowa Democratic Party

Number voting for **Republican** presidential candidate in the general election



\*No caucus vote.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

As you can see, each party's caucus has usually involved roughly the same number of people (except when the nominations were not contested). Over 200,000 turned out for

the Dems, many of them first-time caucus goers and independents, who provided a huge boost to Obama and Edwards.

The winds of change have even altered the fight to be the biggest loser, i.e. the Republican nominee.

The G.O.P.'s religious devotion to robbing the working class on behalf of the rich, its unbridled corruption, shameless cronyism, and insistence on staying the course in Iraq over the last seven years have created cracks in the once-monolithic party. Bush is leaving office without an heir apparent and as a result, the coalition that makes up the G.O.P. - religious and social conservatives, foreign policy hawks, big business, small business owners, and right-wing workers - has fractured and divided themselves among their seven candidates.

This is the situation that allowed Mike Huckabee to become a front-runner despite his shoe-string budget. This politically gifted corrupt Baptist pastor gained support because his sense of humor and humility separated him from the cranky old white men born with silver spoons in their mouths he shared the stage with.

He has skillfully exploited his humble beginnings for political advantage and is the closest thing the Republicans have to a populist.

Whether or not he will be able to maintain the momentum from Iowa to win the nomination remains to be seen, but his skill in the political arena is probably only matched by Bill Clinton, the greatest Establishment politician in a generation.

Any King who can get the peasants to kiss his feet as he steps on their faces is a dangerous man.

The irony of the change-mantra that is dominating the speeches of the chattering classes is that the change won't be coming from above, from the candidates of either party.

The desire for change among millions of Americans will continue to cause the G.O.P. tremendous grief because they've controlled all three branches of government for so long and the Democrats will be the primary beneficiaries in the short-run.

2008 will be a change election, as the 1992 seemed to be after a decade of Reaganism (plus Carter's term since began many of the policies Reagan continued) and as the 1932 election was when voters dumped Republican Herbert Hoover for twiddling his thumbs during the Great Depression.

What kind of change 2008 will bring is the million dollar question.

Will it be like 1992 when liberals kept their mouths shut as Clinton gutted welfare, passed NAFTA, broke promise after promise, and ushered in an era of Reaganism without Reagan? Or will it be like 1932 which was the prelude to a decade of intense class struggle that ended with the unionization of one-third of the American working class?

The clash between what the voters expect and what the Democrats deliver will be sharp.

The leading Dems have already refused to get out of Iraq by the end of their first terms in January 2013, five years from now(!), yet the 200,000 who flocked to the Iowa caucuses desperately want out of Iraq ASAP.

Their universal health care plans, if they ever make it through Congress, will be universally despised for leaving millions with either meager or no health insurance at all.

How that clash will end is impossible to predict.

Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci pointed out that it's impossible to predict the exact shape, nature, and timing of struggle because it's the result of forces colliding with one another in a dynamic process, but the collision is inevitable.

It's been a long time coming, but a change is gonna come, as Sam Cooke said in an era long ago:

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