

GI SPECIAL 6D13:

ENOUGH



4.12.08 Baghdad Sadr City: U.S. soldiers in the company command post. Photo: Joao Silva for The New York Times

**DC DemoRats In Action:
Nothing But A Pack Of Liars &
Troop-Murderers Up To Their
Necks In Blood:
They Decide To Give Bush The
Money To Keep The War Going**

And Pretend They Just Can't Help It [Fuck The Dead, Winning The Presidency Is Their Priority]

April 9, 2008 By Noam N. Levey, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON -- The antiwar rhetoric from congressional Democrats remained as sharp as ever Tuesday as Army Gen. David H. Petraeus came to Capitol Hill to testify about progress in Iraq.

But underscoring the partisan deadlock over the war, even some staunch critics acknowledged that the drive for legislation to withdraw U.S. troops was in effect over.

"It is clear that we do not have the votes," said Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.), who was among the first Senate Democrats to push for a binding troop withdrawal timeline.

The House is scheduled to consider Bush's next war funding request in May.

But with many lawmakers looking to focus on legislation to provide additional aid to Americans hard-hit by the faltering economy, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) has thus far refused to endorse a new legislative fight over money for military operations in Iraq.

And last week, Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada and 12 other senior Democrats did not even mention a mandatory troop withdrawal in a two-page letter they sent to Bush calling for a new strategy in Iraq.

Few believe they will be able to influence the current president, however.

"The commander in chief has incredible authority," said Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, one of the freshman Democrats swept into Congress in 2006 amid promises to challenge the war.

"It's going to take the election for the policy to change," Tester said.

MORE:

[GI SPECIAL 5I18: 9.18.07]:

Democrats Have Enough Votes Now To End The War Now

[But Have No Intention Of Doing 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.

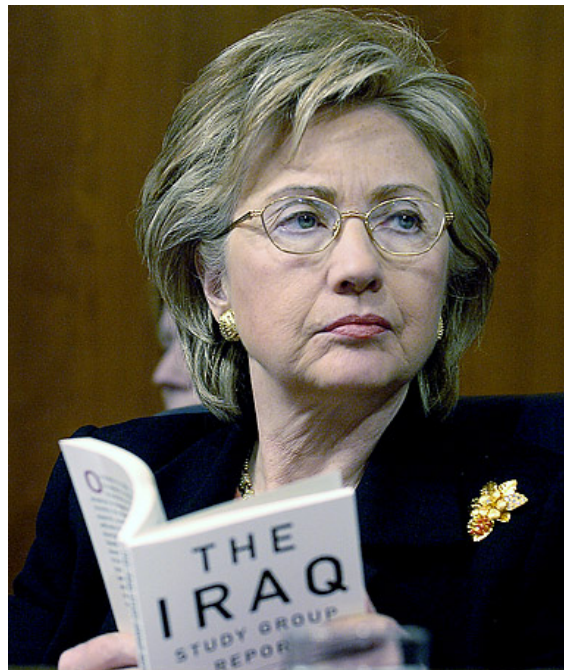
In other words, the Democrats have more than enough votes to end the Iraq War--if they choose to do so.

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."

MORE:

WANTED FOR THE PREMEDITATED SLAUGHTER OF U.S. TROOPS AND CITIZENS OF IRAQ: CLINTON, OBAMA, PELOSI & REID: MURDER, INCORPORATED



[powerlineblog.com]



washingtonpost.com



www.themadpigeon.com



varifrank.com/images/Preacher_Reid.jpg



**U.S. Troops Vietnam:
Their rebellion stopped an imperial war when the politicians
refused to do so.**

ACTION REPORTS

REPORT ON OUTREACH TO TROOPS AT RAILROAD STATIONS: “They Were Receptive And Interested In Our Handouts (GI Rights Pamphlet, Traveling Soldier & GI Special) Along With A DVD Of ‘Sir! No Sir!’”

From: Alan Stolzer, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: April 13, 2008
Subject: Action Reports

On Sunday, April 6 (the day after the Military Project's Organizing Conference) Mike Hastie (Vietnam Vet/Combat Medic) and I made rounds at the two commuter railway stations in [XXXXX].

We found two National Guardsmen patrolling [XXXXX] and approached them. They were receptive and interested in our handouts (GI Rights Pamphlet, Traveling Soldier & GI Special) along with a DVD of "Sir! No Sir!" One was thankful for our approach and the other said a draft was necessary to keep troops deploying so frequently.

Mike H. had their absolute attention with his service background and viewpoint on the current wars.

At [XXXXX] Station a young Guardswoman asked how the previous day's Conference went. I said fine and was pleased to see she remembered the date as I had passed out Conference notices for several weekends prior to this date (I was told one was posted in the break room).

I asked her why she didn't make it and she told us she was working. I then asked if she would have come if she had been free and she said yes.

Her companion didn't mention the Conference but took the handout material readily as most troops do.

On Sunday, April 13 Sally Davidson, Military Project, and I first went to [XXXXX] Station where we handed out the same material to 6 Guard members.

One young Guardswoman, remembering me from a previous outreach, said the DVD was "messed up but interesting." After I asked her what she meant she told me the stories in "Sir! No Sir!" were compelling concerning the experiences some of the testifiers in the movie went through.

We said it was similar to today and she and her companion agreed.

We continued on to [XXXXX] station where we spoke to a sergeant who said "it's better to fight them over there than here." We continued the conversation pointing out the Iraqis hadn't attacked us and he seemed satisfied with that. He took the handout and thanked us.

Sally, being the mother of an airman, connected well with the sergeant and another troop we spoke to a few minutes later.

I knew this Air Force sergeant (he already served in the Army and Marine Corps and hates Bush). He too felt it was better to "fight them over there than here." Sally pointed out then we needed the troops here in that case in order to protect us.

A personal point: this outreach has been going on for the better part of the last year. There has been only one unfriendly incident that I can remember.

The great majority of troops are only too glad to be thanked for their service and speak to those who are genuinely interested in their welfare.

They're not strangers/aliens and shouldn't be thought of that way.

It's easy, just go up and talk to them.

If you knew you were being deployed some day you'd want to talk about it too.

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

20 U.S. Troops Killed This Week

Apr 13 Noah Barkin and Wisam Mohammed, (Reuters)

Twenty U.S. soldiers have died across Iraq since last Sunday, the deadliest week for U.S. troops this year and one of the bloodiest since September 2007.

Elsik High Alumnus Dies In Iraq



March 29, 2008 By Courtney Zavala, KPRC

HOUSTON -- A 20-year-old Elsik High School graduate has been killed in Iraq, KPRC Local 2 reported Saturday.

Army Spc. Joshua Molina was killed Thursday. The Department of Justice said Molina died in Baghdad, Iraq, of wounds suffered when his vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device.

The news numbed his family.

"Two sergeants came and we just broke down. We couldn't believe it," brother Manuel Molina said.

He said he spoke to his brother earlier in the week and remembered their last conversation clearly.

"I told him I loved him and he would be in my prayers like always. I wasn't expecting this days later after that call he was going to be dead," said Molina.

The family does not have many details surrounding Molina's death. They do know he fought to stay alive.

"He was still alive trying to stay alive. Sadly, he couldn't and I have a feeling that God needed another angel. He's up there looking at me, my whole family. Everything is going to be OK," the younger brother said.

The Molinas are a tight knit family. They were fortunate to have Josh home back in January. Now, they must hold on to those memories to get through their most difficult hours.

"I think this is what he wants for his whole family to be together one, one family and remember the good times," Molina said.

Molina was the fourth Elsik High School graduate to be killed while serving in the war in Iraq.

He was remembered as the man who liked to have fun and as someone who was always smiling. His family said he wanted to be in the military since he was a child.

"Since he was a little kid he liked to play war and guns and we would just play around. He loved the military, especially the U.S. Army," said Molina.

Fallen Houston Soldier's Family Feels Pride, And Pain



U.S. Army Cpl. Steven I. Candelo died March 26 in Baghdad. Family Photo

April 2, 2008 By PEGGY O'HARE, Houston Chronicle

Cpl. Steven Candelo grew up with dreams of becoming a soldier.

His sisters recall his desire to wear a uniform from the time he was a toddler. His closest childhood friend remembered playing war games with Candelo when they were boys and pretending the firecrackers they tossed on the Fourth of July were bombs.

Now Candelo, 20, has become the ultimate hero in uniform — giving his life for his country while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Elsik High School graduate — who was engaged to be married, owned his own home and was the first in his family to sign up for college — died March 26 in Baghdad when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his vehicle.

His family takes comfort knowing Candelo died doing what he loved.

"There's pain inside of me," said Candelo's mother, Julia Martinez. "But I'm proud of him. He was my only boy. ... He was a real good son."

"I always told him, 'Take care, because if you lose your life, it will be like I'm losing mine.' He said, 'Don't worry, Mom. Everything's going to be OK,'" Martinez said tearfully.

For Candelo, the U.S. Army wasn't just a stepping stone — he planned for it to be his lifelong career. And the war being fought in Iraq only strengthened his resolve.

His family can't recall him showing any fear of combat.

"He wasn't scared of anything, actually," said his sister, 17-year-old Ivanna Candelo. "He thought he was doing his job to protect the (Iraqi) people," said his other sister, 15-year-old Erica Candelo.

Neighbors in the family's southwest Harris County neighborhood off Addicks Clodine Road have shown their support, adorning their yards with yellow ribbons.

Steven Candelo was still in high school when he joined the U.S. Army three years ago. Assigned to the 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, he was first stationed in Vilseck, Germany.

After making his final visit home to Houston for a two-week period between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, Candelo departed for Iraq in December.

He had planned for a future in Houston, purchasing the home next door to his mother's about six months ago.

"We talked every week, every two weeks," Martinez said. Though she was fearful for her son's well-being in Iraq, she said, "I tried to support him because he loved it."

They last spoke two days before his death.

"He said, 'Take care of my sisters, take care of the parrot,' " Martinez said, referring to the pet her son gave her for a Christmas gift during his final visit home. He said, 'I love you.'"

Candelo's remains are expected to be returned to Houston on Thursday or Friday, his family says. At that time, they will begin planning his funeral service.

Among those waiting to welcome Candelo home is his fiancée and high school sweetheart, Erica Vasquez, 19, who has worn his engagement ring for a year.

On Tuesday, the University of Houston-Downtown student proudly showed the wedding band she had purchased for Candelo for their planned nuptials next year.

"All my crying and everything won't bring him back," said Vasquez, her voice breaking with emotion. "I know he's in a better place. Of course, I am proud of him. I will always love him until the day I die."

U.S. Air Force Attacks U.S. Soldiers In Baghdad; Two Wounded

April 13 (Reuters)

A U.S. Apache helicopter shot two missiles at militants in the capital's New Baghdad district on Saturday. The second missile hit a U.S. military vehicle, setting it on fire and wounding two soldiers and three civilians, the U.S. military said on Sunday. Nearby houses were also burning.

Critics say U.S. forces often fire on militants without taking reasonable care to find out who else is in the area.

Rockets Hit Green Zone Again

4.13.08 Associated Press Writer

A salvo of rockets or mortar rounds struck the U.S.-protected Green Zone, which houses the U.S. and British embassies and much of Iraq's government in Baghdad. U.S. officials said no casualties were reported.

The Battle For Sadr City



A Mahdi army militiaman runs to cross a street in Sadr City, Baghdad, April 9, 2008. (AP Photo)

April 13, 2008 By Sholnn Freeman, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpt]

BAGHDAD, April 12 -- Iraqi and U.S. military forces on Saturday pushed deeper into the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad, an area largely controlled by Shiite militiamen loyal to anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

A curfew imposed on Sadr City more than a week ago was lifted, and residents appeared on the streets as shops reopened, despite the large presence of U.S. and Iraqi security forces.

Leaders of Sadr's Mahdi Army militia reported that U.S. and Iraqi forces had split the area into at least two sections and were placing concrete barriers at a major intersection. American and Iraqi snipers patrolled from the rooftops of nearby buildings. The Mahdi Army leaders also said Iraqi and American security forces had massed outside a home in Sadr City where a memorial service was being held for cleric Riyadh al-Nouri, a senior Sadr aide assassinated in the holy city of Najaf on Friday.

"The siege is still on," said Abu Haider, a Mahdi Army leader in Sadr City.

Abu Haider called the cancellation of the curfew a propaganda ploy and said government forces had opened just one entrance point for traffic into Sadr City, home to an estimated 2 million people.

"You can imagine the traffic jam," he said.

FUTILE EXERCISE: ONLY MILLIONS MORE TO GO: ALL HOME NOW!



Suspects wait to be taken away by U.S. soldiers during a patrol in Baiji, some 250km (180 miles) from Baghdad, November 24, 2007. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Cpl. Joshua Alexander Molina, 20, St. Matthews Episcopal Church , Houston April 8, 2008. Molina died n Baghdad of wounds sustained from an explosive. He was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Vilseck, Germany. (AP Photo/Houston Chronicle, Eric Kayne)

Help Is On The Way! Ukrainian Pres Sending 15 Soldiers To Iraq

Apr 12, 2008 Post Chronicle

Ukraine is sending 15 soldiers to fight in Iraq under an ordinance signed by Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, the presidential press office says.

Yushchenko said by sending the Ukrainian servicemen to Iraq, his country would not only meet national interests, but help secure international peace and security, ITAR-TASS reported Friday.

Longshoremen To Close Ports On West Coast To Protest War

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

April 9, 2008, By Jack Heyman, SF Gate. Jack Heyman is a longshoreman who works on the Oakland docks.

While millions of people worldwide have marched against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and last week's New York Times/CBS News poll indicated that 81 percent believe the country is headed in the wrong direction - key concerns being the war and the economy - the war machine inexorably grinds on.

Amid this political atmosphere, dockworkers of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union have decided to stop work for eight hours in all U.S. West Coast ports on May 1, International Workers' Day, to call for an end to the war.

This decision came after an impassioned debate where the union's Vietnam veterans turned the tide of opinion in favor of the anti-war resolution.

The motion called it an imperial action for oil in which the lives of working-class youth and Iraqi civilians were being wasted and declared May Day a "no peace, no work" holiday.

Angered after supporting Democrats who received a mandate to end the war but who now continue to fund it, longshoremen decided to exercise their political power on the docks.

Last month, in response to the union's declaration, the Pacific Maritime Association, the West Coast employer association of shipowners, stevedore companies and terminal operators, declared its opposition to the union's protest.

Thus, the stage is set for a conflict in the run up to the longshore contract negotiations.

The last set of contentious negotiations (in 2002) took place during the period between the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the invasion of Iraq.

Representatives of the Bush administration threatened that if there were any of the usual job actions during contract bargaining, then troops would occupy the docks because such actions would jeopardize "national security." Yet, when the PMA employers locked out the longshoremen and shut down West Coast ports for 11 days, the "security" issue vanished. President Bush then invoked the Taft-Hartley Act, forcing longshoremen back to work under conditions favorable to the employers.

The San Francisco longshore union has a proud history of opposition to the war in Iraq, being the first union to call for an end to the war and immediate withdrawal of troops.

Representatives of the union spoke at anti-war rallies in February 2003, including one in London attended by nearly 2 million people, the largest ever held in Britain. Executive Board member Clarence Thomas went to Iraq with a delegation to observe workers' rights during the occupation.

At the start of the war in Iraq, hundreds of protesters demonstrated on the Oakland docks, and longshoremen honored their picket lines.

Without warning, police in riot gear opened fire with so-called less-than-lethal weapons, shooting protesters and longshoremen alike with wooden dowels, rubber bullets, pellet bags, concussion grenades and tear gas.

A U.N. Human Rights Commission investigator characterized the Oakland police attack as "the most violent" against anti-war protesters in the United States.

And finally, last year, two black longshoremen going to work in the port of Sacramento were beaten, Maced and arrested by police under the rubric of Homeland Security regulations ordained by the "war on terror."

There's precedent for this action.

In the '50s, French dockworkers refused to load war materiel on ships headed for Indochina, and helped to bring that colonial war to an end.

At the ILWU's convention in San Francisco in 2003, A. Q. McElrath, an octogenarian University of Hawaii regent and former ILWU organizer from the pineapple canneries, challenged the delegates to act for social justice, invoking the union's slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all."

She concluded, "The cudgel is on the ground. Will you pick it up?"

It appears that longshore workers may be doing just that on May Day and calling on immigrant workers and others to join them.

May Day protest

WHEN: 10:30 a.m., May 1, followed by a rally at noon.

WHERE: Longshore Union Hall, corner of Mason and Beach (near Fisherman's Wharf).

WHAT: March to a rally at Justin Herman Plaza along the Embarcadero.

MORE:

A CALL TO ACTION ALL OUT ON MAYDAY TO STOP THE WAR!

At the start of the Iraq War in 2003, many working people were opposed to the invasion. Now the overwhelming majority want to end the war and withdraw troops.

Yet, both major political parties continue to fund the war.

Marches and demonstrations have not been able to stop the war. The Longshore Union (ILWU) will stop work for 8 hours in every port on the West Coast on May 1st.

This action shows that working people have the power to stop the war.

Don't work on May 1st — MAKE MAYDAY A "NO PEACE, NO WORK HOLIDAY"!

- *Stop the war!
- *Withdraw the troops now!
- *No scapegoating immigrant workers for the economic crisis!
- *Health care for all!
- *Funding for schools and housing!
- *Defend civil liberties and workers' rights!

MAKE MAYDAY A "NO PEACE, NO WORK HOLIDAY"!

Port Workers' May Day Organizing Committee <http://maydayilwu.googlepages.com>

MORE:

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT:

Contact ILWU President Robert McElrath With A Letter Of Support For The Longshore Caucus' Resolution To Use International Workers Day To "Stop Work To Stop The War"

Date: 29 Mar 2008
From: Clarence Thomas
Via New York City Labor Against The War

As a result of an important action taken at the recent International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) Caucus, Longshore workers will stop work during the first shift in opposition to the war in Iraq, on May 1, 2008.

They will also use this occasion to acknowledge International Workers Day to express labor solidarity concerning issues and challenges that confront workers.

This war has cost more than 4,000 American lives and 29,000 have been seriously injured. It has been estimated that 1 million Iraqis have lost their lives, untold have been injured and 4 million have been displaced in this illegal and amoral war and occupation. The war is costing \$435 million per day.

So far, \$526 billion has been expended on the war. The daily amount spent on the war could enroll 58,000 youngsters in Head Start or provide health insurance to 329,200 low-income children.

We're writing to ask you to contact ILWU President Robert McEllrath with a letter of support for the Longshore Caucus' resolution to use International Workers Day to "stop work to stop the war". Please ask other organizations to do the same.

Robert McEllrath, ILWU President
1188 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 775-0533
(415) 775-1302 FAX

Your support in spreading the word of this historic action is very important.

In Solidarity,

**Clarence Thomas
National Co-Chair
Million Worker March Movement**

MORE:

Mail Carriers Vote 2 Minutes Of Silence On May Day To Oppose The War

April 11, 2008 New York City Labor Against The War

Postal letter carriers in Greensboro voted to observe 2 minutes of silence at 9:15 a.m. on International Workers Day - Thursday, May 1, 2008 - to express their opposition to the war in Iraq.

Their workplace action is in solidarity with the ILWU longshore workers, who are shutting down all West Coast ports for 8 hours on May 1st in opposition to the war. The vote took place on April 3 at their regular membership meeting in Greensboro.

The action by Greensboro Branch 630 of the National Association of Letter Carriers is also in solidarity with San Francisco Branch 214 letter carriers and the American Postal Workers Union in the New York Metro Area and San Francisco, who earlier voted to pause for 2 minutes of silence on that day to oppose the war.

The APWU locals, whose members work around the clock, plan to observe the period of silence at specific times on all three shifts.

MORE:

New York Faculty/Staff Union Supports ILWU Anti-War Work Stoppage

April 11, 2008 New York City Labor Against The War

The following anti-war resolution was adopted unanimously at the March 27 delegate assembly of the Professional Staff Congress, AFT Local 2334 at the City University of New York.

Whereas, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union has voted to stop work and shut down all 29 West Coast ports for the full 8-hour day shift on May 1st, in protest against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, this historic decision to use the power of their contract to close the ports represents one of the most powerful forms of labor action a union can take to demand an end to the war; and

Whereas, the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY has, since the start of the war in Iraq, called for an end to the war and a reordering of national priorities so that funding is available for education, healthcare, jobs and other human needs; and

Whereas, it is especially important that CUNY students, faculty and staff have an opportunity to discuss the meaning of a powerful labor action to end the war, given the intense military recruitment our students face and the direct effect of the war budget on CUNY funding and contracts; and

Whereas, the PSC has embarked on the most intense phase of our fight for a fair contract; and

Whereas, the ILWU has expressed the hope that its decision will be a "clarion call" to the rest of labor; and

Whereas, the March meeting of the Hunter PSC chapter voted to hold an outdoor event/teach-in against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan on May 1st in solidarity with the ILWU work stoppage and with the theme of mobilizing labor's power against the war; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the PSC send to the ILWU a message of solidarity on the occasion of their historic initiative for workers' action against the war, and as part of this effort, be it further

RESOLVED that while the priority for PSC organizing during the next two months will be the drive to reach a good contract settlement, PSC chapters that vote to undertake a campus event or teach-in on May 1 in solidarity with the ILWU action will be supported in

doing so; and such actions should reach out as broadly as possible to students and the community and should contribute to building the union campaign for a good contract.

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. Phone: 917.677.8057

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action



An Iraqi army armoured vehicle destroyed by Madhi Army Baghdad's Sadr City April 12, 2008. (Kareem Raheem/Reuters)

April 12 (Reuters) & April 13 (Reuters) & AP

A roadside bomb killed one Iraqi soldier when it struck his patrol, west of Mosul, police said.

A roadside bomb struck a police patrol, killing one policeman and wounding five others in the Hay Ur district, in northern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded one soldier and one member of a U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol unit when they were travelling off-duty in their car in southern Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed one member of U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol unit and wounded another near Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

In Mosul, a bomber rammed his vehicle Saturday into a U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicle at an Iraqi Army checkpoint in western Mosul, detonating a nearby fuel truck. No American soldiers were killed or injured

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

***April 14, 1988: Very Happy
Anniversary***

**Next To Last Government To Invade
Afghanistan Withdraws In Defeat**



Happy Russian soldiers going home.

Carl Bunin Peace History April 9-15

April 14, 1988

The Soviet Union signed an agreement to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan after ten years of humiliating defeats at the hands of Afghan resistance forces.

Winter Soldier: Iraq & Afghanistan; “You End Up With What Is Called A Dead Man's Spiral. The Harder Our Troops Fight To Survive, The More They Err; The More People They Drive Into The Arms Of Those Trying To Kill Our Troops, The More Casualties We Take”

From: Scott Camil
To: GI Special
Sent: April 07, 2008
Subject: Winter Soldier: Iraq & Afghanistan

Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan was held March 13th through March 16th, 2008 at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, MD.

It was sponsored by Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), with the help and support of Veterans for Peace (VFP), Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), Military Families Speak Out (MFSO), and others.

The term "Winter Soldier" comes from Thomas Paine, during the American Revolution, when he spoke of and gave thanks to those "Winter Soldiers" who stayed past their enlistment, fought during the winter at Valley Forge and helped turn the tide and win the Revolution.

In 1971, during the American war against the people of Vietnam, American veterans, sponsored by VVAW, held the first "Winter Soldier Investigation" (WSI), "An Inquiry into American War Crimes".

The idea was that the American public had a right to know the true nature of the conduct of the war against Vietnam, that the American public was not getting that information from the American government, and that it was the duty of Patriotic American Veterans to continue to serve our country, after serving in Vietnam, by providing the public with the reality of the war as carried out by us, the troops on the ground, with our first-hand accounts.

I was one of the Vietnam Veterans who testified at the first WSI.

I went there supporting the war but believing the public had a right to the truth. During the course of 3 days, the environment allowed me grow personally and politically.

During my interviews with the filmmakers, I was asked questions in a non-threatening manner that I had never been asked and had never thought about before.

The process of thinking about the questions and giving honest answers allowed me to come to the realization that the war was wrong. I also made the decision to join with the other veterans there to help turn VVAW into a national organization known as VVAW, Inc. and to work against the war.

It was our hope that we would not only end the war but that our country would learn from the mistakes of Vietnam and never allow this to happen to another American generation.

So it was with mixed feelings that I attended Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan.

On one hand, I am very unhappy, to say the least, that my government has done to my children's generation in the sands of Iraq the very same thing that it did to my generation in the rice paddies of Vietnam. The fact that I and many other good citizens have been helpless in our attempts to control our government has also been very discouraging.

On the other hand, I know what it is like to be a combat veteran who wants to educate the public and stop the war and who does not have support of other veterans. I could not let that happen to this generation's combat veterans. So I am proud to support and stand by the members of IVAW.

I thought that I would be able to handle the testimony but I found myself streaming tears every day.

While thinking about writing this article, I am overwhelmed by the fact that there is so much to tell about the testimony and I will only be able to relate a small portion of what I heard.

At the first Winter Soldier, we came as we were.

Most of us had long hair, beards, wore T-shirts and jeans, and testified using all of the profanity that we were used to.

At Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan, everyone who testified was dressed in business-type attire and, because of the live coverage, there was very little profanity. This approach allows those who judge people by their looks and language to be more open to the information that these veterans have brought with their first-hand accounts. This was a smart idea.

Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan lasted 4 days and consisted of 13 panels.

The panels were:

Winter Soldier and the Legacy of GI Resistance

Rules of Engagement: Part 1

The Crisis in Veterans' Healthcare

Corporate Pillaging and Military Contractors

Rules of Engagement: Part 2

Aims of the Global War on Terror: the Political, Legal, and Economic context of Iraq and Afghanistan

Divide to Conquer: Gender and Sexuality in the Military

Racism and War: the Dehumanization of the Enemy: Part 1
Racism and War: the Dehumanization of the Enemy: Part 2
Civilian Testimony: The Cost of War in Iraq and Afghanistan
The Cost of the War at Home
The Breakdown of the Military
The Future of GI Resistance

I have 24 pages of notes from these 4 days and I am going to touch on some of the things that impacted me the most. There was a kind of magic at the first Winter Soldier that was repeated at the second.

When veterans come home from war, they become dispersed throughout our civilian society. Regardless of which war we fought in, we tend not to share our painful experiences with others, especially those who are close to us.

Many of us feel that civilians will not understand us, that they do not understand the real nature of warfare, or that they will be judgmental.

We don't want to burden our loved ones with our pain so we keep it inside of us, where sometimes it festers and explodes in fits of anger that we don't even always understand.

This is not healthy and some of our PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) spreads to the very loved ones we try to protect with our silence.

At Winter Soldier, we become surrounded by others just like ourselves. We know that there will be lots of understanding and support. This allows us to make ourselves vulnerable, open up and bare our souls.

This is very therapeutic for us and is as important to me as is giving the public an accurate picture of what we are doing on the ground.

My good friend Zollie Goodman testified on "The Crisis in Veterans' Healthcare" panel. Zollie and his wife Daisy have become good friends of my wife Sherry and me. They stay with us whenever they visit Gainesville.

Zollie testified about how, while he was deployed, Daisy started having complications with her pregnancy. She was unable to get medical help and lost their child.

Daisy sat with us during Zollie's testimony and was devastated. Later, I asked them why they had never told us about this. Daisy said that it was a private matter and they did not tell people about it because it was too painful. They did not intend to share this story when they went to Winter Soldier, but the atmosphere there, with everyone opening up and making themselves vulnerable, allowed them to also open up and get some of that weight off of their shoulders. This is the magic that I am talking about.

On the same panel, Joyce and Kevin Lucey testified. Their son, Corporal Jeffrey Lucey, was having psychological problems after coming home from Iraq. He tried to get help at the VA. The red tape, run-around and long delays in being able to get help ended when Joyce and Kevin came home to find their son Jeffrey dead -- he had hung himself. Kevin told us how the night before, Jeffrey asked his dad if he could sit on his lap. His father rocked Jeffrey, a combat Marine, on his lap as they held on to each other. It was

Jeffrey's last place of refuge. In his suicide letter, he apologized to his parents and asked them to please remember him as the happy kid he was before he went into the Marines.

The Luceys spoke about how when Jeffrey was in Iraq they worried and prayed for his safety. They thought once he got home he would be fine. The son who came home was different from the son who left and he had more psychological pain than he could live with. The Luceys never realized that their son's psychological damage could be fatal.

This made me think that most people who have loved ones serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are only thinking about their physical safety and aren't prepared for the psychological damage that their loved ones will come home with. This is a hidden epidemic -- its surface is just being scratched. The majority of those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan are still serving; of those who have gotten out of the service, 33% have filed with the VA for PTSD. According to a CBS study, "One age group stood out. Veterans aged 20 through 24, those who have served during the war on terror. They had the highest suicide rate among all veterans, estimated between two and four times higher than civilians the same age." The study also found "In 2005, for example, in just 45 states, there were at least 6,256 suicides among those who served in the armed forces. That's 120 each and every week, in just one year."

The testimony from the **Rules of Engagement** panels was very similar to Winter Soldier 1.

Jeff Smith of Orlando testified that the turning point for him came when a farmer was shot and killed while irrigating his crops at night. The reason he was irrigating his crops at night is that that was when the electricity came on and provided the water. What upset Jeff the most was that his superiors knew that was why the farmer was out there, but that didn't matter -- he was violating the rules by being out there at night and so it was okay to shoot him.

I was surprised to learn that people carrying shovels were legitimate targets because they use shovels to bury explosive devices.

You don't want to go out on your roof with your cell phone to get better reception because people using cell phones on a roof top are legitimate targets since cell phones are used to set off explosive devices. Some soldiers carry shovels and extra rifles with them (called drop weapons) so they can drop them on dead bodies to justify the killing.

I guess you might call this an improvement from Vietnam since we did not have to plant weapons to justify our killing.

It does not matter what you think or believe about a war or what your intentions are before you get there. Once you are there and the reality of war hits you, you change. As soon as you see friends getting killed and wounded, the Mission Changes. The new Mission becomes Survival; you want you and your buddies to make it home safe and sound.

The nature of a war of occupation is such that things only get worse.

When you cannot tell the difference between the people who support you and the people who want to harm you, you make mistakes. Everyone is a potential enemy. You tend to err on the side of safety for you and your buddies.

A Marine named Jason Washburn told how a woman was coming toward them carrying a large bag. He raised his hand to motion her to stop; she did not. Acting out of fear of an explosive, they killed her. The bag turned out to be groceries; she was bringing food to them.

Not only does this scar our troops but you better believe that the family and friends of that woman are no longer supporting our troops.

You end up with what is called a dead man's spiral. The harder our troops fight to survive, the more they err; the more people they drive into the arms of those trying to kill our troops, the more casualties we take.

This is the opposite of "Winning Hearts and Minds".

A number of the people who testified made public apologies to the Iraqis for what they had done.

The fact of the matter is that we invaded Iraq and destroyed their way of life to impose upon them a way of life that our government in its condescending arrogance considered better for them. We did this in violation of international law and in my mind in violation of ethical and moral conduct. What our government now hopes to accomplish for the people of Iraq is a country that is stable, where the different factions are not trying to kill each other, where there is no tolerance for Al-Qaeda or Hezbollah, where the people have running water, electricity, food in the stores, medicine in the hospitals, physical safety on the streets. We would want them to be secular rather than fundamentalist.

This is what our government would consider victory and this is exactly what the people of Iraq had under Saddam Hussein.

I know of no way that we can, with force of arms, take this society that we smashed and crippled and give the people back the stability that they had.

The Racism and War: The Dehumanization of the Enemy panels

show us another side of war. In order for our troops to be willing to kill others, they must be trained to believe that the lives of our people are more valuable than the lives of the inhabitants of the country we happen to be occupying. They must believe that the other side has it coming. Liam Madden, a Marine, said, "Making the enemy into something less than human is fundamental to prosecuting a war."

The Cost of the War at Home

Adrienne Kinney, a former NSA (National Security Agency) employee, spoke about how they broke the rules, spied on Americans and were told not to mention it in their reports. They spied on journalists, the Red Cross and NGOs (non-governmental organizations). She spoke of how all of these things are now legal and the destruction of the Constitution is the most damaging cost of this war.

Carlos Arredondo, whose son Alex was killed in Iraq, spoke with anger about how the military is allowed to come on high school campuses and "seduce" the children. When the Marines came to his home to notify him about his son's death, Carlos ordered them to leave. When they refused,

he took a can of gasoline and burned their vehicle. He got caught in the fire, received 3rd degree burns and was taken to the hospital. His bill was \$42,000 and the hospital put a lien on his house to get their payment.

Divide to Conquer: Gender and Sexuality in the Military

Jeff Key, a Marine, spoke about the idea that showing your emotions and crying is somehow "feminine" or "gay".

Margaret Stevens said that for many female recruits, their first sexual encounter is with their recruiter.

In the West Los Angeles VA Healthcare Center, 41% of woman veterans have reported being sexually assaulted while serving in the military. According to the Department of Defense, in 2006 there were 2947 sexual assaults in the military and in 2007 only 8% of the accused rapists were referred for Courts-Martial. Anyone think that the military is a good career choice for your daughter?

Corporate Pillaging and Military Contractors

Kelly Dougherty, who served as an MP, spoke about how her unit would use deadly force to protect KBR (Kellogg, Brown & Root) vehicles and when the vehicles would break down, they would abandon them and destroy them on a daily basis. Since all of the no-bid contracts are cost plus contracts, the contractors get back all of the money for their cost including replacement of abandoned vehicles and, on top of that, they get a percentage of all their costs.

So the more they waste, the more they make.

The privatization of the war has made the use of mercenary forces from companies like Blackwater very profitable for the private sector and, since they get paid an enormously larger salary than the troops, this drives up our cost as taxpayers. These mercenaries also operate outside the rules of war and are not held accountable for their actions. In fact, they have immunity. It was the killing of 4 Blackwater contractors in Fallujah that resulted in the turning of Fallujah into a free fire zone resulting in the death of thousands of Iraqi's and many Marines.

The uncontrolled conduct of these contractors has actually undermined our efforts and the safety of our troops.

It seems to me that we need a constitutional amendment that says that any time American troops are in a war, all corporations that supply the troops and the war effort must do so at cost; in other words, no war profiteering permitted!

If our children are asked to prove their patriotism by being willing to give up their lives and safety for their country, why shouldn't the corporations be willing to prove their patriotism by giving up their profit for their country in time of war?

Aims of the Global War on Terror: the Political, Legal, and Economic context of Iraq and Afghanistan

This panel was about the obvious -- that this is really a war for oil and that this war is illegal.

Amy Goodman hit the nail on the head. She spoke about how the consolidation of the media has narrowed the spectrum of opinion that used to allow us to see different sides of an issue. She spoke of how private corporations use the public airways for profit and power, not for the public good.

I remember in high school when they used to teach the proud history of our revolutionary heritage, we were taught that the press was actually the 4th branch of the government and the press's duty was to be the public eye on the other three branches. The consolidation of the media has taken away our public eye and replaced it with corporate government propaganda.

It was the exposure of the massacre at My Lai, March 16th, 1968 (with photos in Life Magazine) that led to the first Winter Soldier. The last day of the Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan testimony took place on the 40th anniversary of this tragic historic event.

The first Winter Soldier had 3 days of panels; they were all recorded on film. The film was made into a 93-minute documentary called "Winter Soldier". All of the rest of the film was destroyed in a fire, lost forever; all we have left today is that 93 minutes.

The press ignored our Winter Soldier so until recently, when it was re-released on DVD, most people had never even heard of it. This time, Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan was streamed live and blogged all over the world via the Internet and even though the "main stream corporate press" of the United States ignored it, internationally, Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan was the number one news story on the first day of testimony.

There is no way that this history can be covered up.

The Civilian Testimony:

The Cost of War in Iraq and Afghanistan panel was another heartbreaking panel.

As a parent, it made me angry to hear mothers speak about how "terrifying" it was for their children having armed soldiers breaking down their doors in the middle of the night pointing guns and screaming at them while the men of the family were bound, hooded and taken away.

Every time they spoke of how "terrorizing" it was for their children, it stung my soul. I wonder how many Americans would be okay with this happening in our homes to our children.

It struck me that if the Iraqi families are feeling terrorized, doesn't that make us the Terrorists?

The Future of GI Resistance

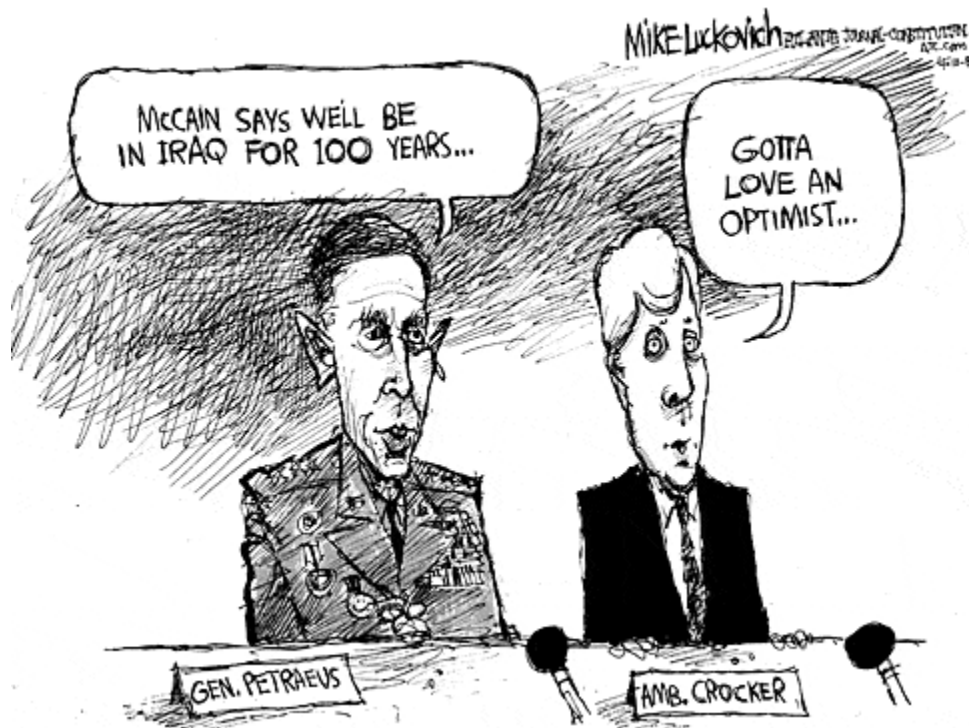
Camilo Mejia said it all, "We are still soldiers. We are just not their soldiers anymore. We are the new Winter Soldiers."

For more information on Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan go to: www.ivaw.org
<http://www.afn.org/~vetpeace/>

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. Phone: 917.677.8057

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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