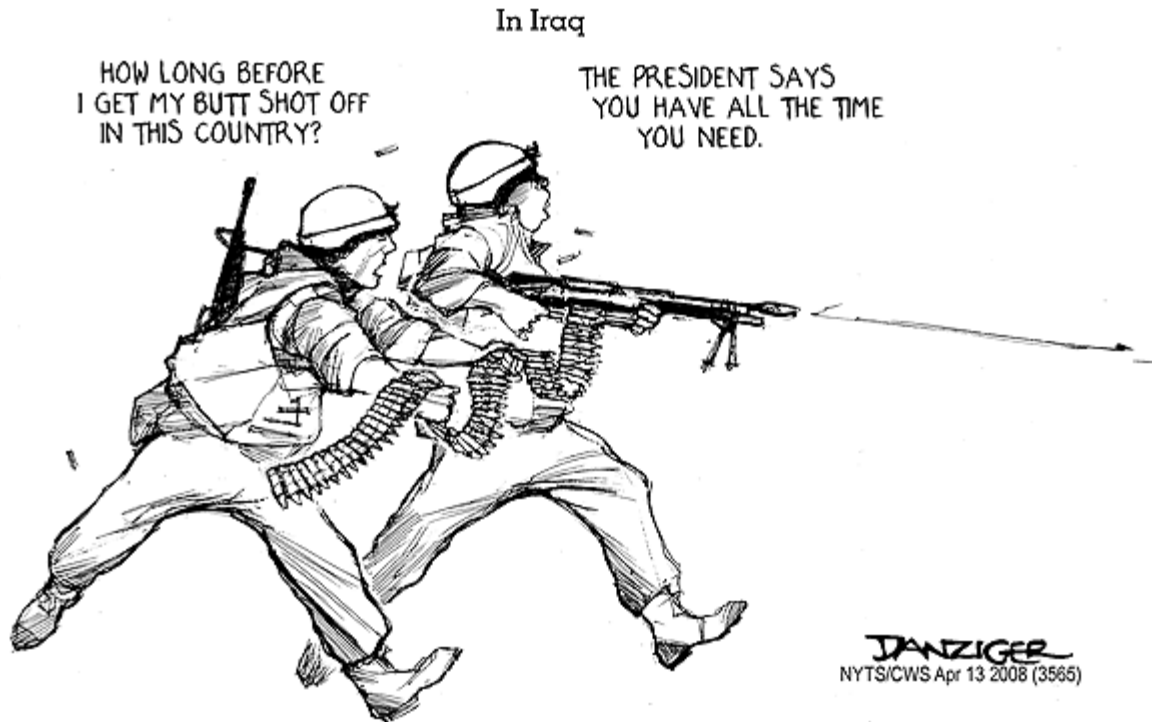


GI SPECIAL 6D17:



Insanity And Sanity

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: April 21, 2008
Subject: Insanity And Sanity by Dennis

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

Insanity And Sanity

The Roman Emperor sits upon a make-shift throne nearby a cliff to watch.
The Roman General salutes him and then makes an About Face.

**Before him in rows are Soldiers, then Chariots
then Soldiers then Chariots
on and on as far as the Emperor can see.
The General calls them to Attention
and then orders Forward March.
The Emperor is very pleased to watch the Soldiers
march over the cliff and fall to their deaths.
The Soldier's swords become M-16's
their Shields turn into Flak Jackets
the Chariots become Humvees and Tanks
the Emperor is now, President Bush
and the cliff they now, call Iraq.
General Betrayus turns to Bush and smiles
“See, how well they are trained.”
But when the General turns his back
to the Soldiers, they turn and march
straight toward him.
Bush is frantic now when a desert fatigued
Soldier shoots off the General's head.
They then pull Bush
from atop his throne, punch him,
kick, stomp while the coward cries
“Please spare me, I don't want to die.”
By the cliff, he is kicked in his mouth
his white teeth blood body falls
over the edge where the dead Soldiers are.**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed, Two Wounded In Salah Ad Din

April 21, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20080421-11

TIKRIT, Iraq – Two Multi-National Division – North Soldiers were killed when an improvised explosive device detonated during operations in the Salah ad Din Province April 21.

Two Soldiers were also wounded in the attack, as well as two Sons of Iraq members and a civilian interpreter. The wounded were transported to a Coalition force medical facility for treatment.

Missouri Sgt. Killed In Bayji



U.S. Army Sgt. Adam Kohlhaas, 26, of Perryville, Mo., 101st Airborne Division, died April 21, 2008, from wounds suffered from an improvised explosive device in Bayji, Iraq. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Wisconsin Soldier Killed In Bayji



U.S. Army Spc. Steven J. Christofferson, 20, of Cudahy, Wis., 101st Airborne Division, died April 21, 2008, from wounds suffered from an improvised explosive device in Bayji, Iraq. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Two U.S. Marines Killed Near Ramadi, Three More Wounded

April 22, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20080422-06

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – Two Multi-National Force – West Marines were killed when a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated at an entry control point in the vicinity of Ramadi, Iraq, at approximately 7:30 a.m. April 22.

The SVBIED attack wounded three other Marines. Two Iraqi Police and 24 local Iraqis were also wounded in the attack.

The wounded were taken to local medical facilities.

U.S. Convoy Ambushed In Basra: Marine Killed, Another Wounded



U.S. soldiers at the site of a bomb attack that targeted their convoy on a bridge in Basra, April 21, 2008. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

April. 21, 2008 The Associated Press & CNN & April 22, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory

BAGHDAD - The U.S. military says a roadside bomb hit one of its convoys in the southern city of Basra, causing casualties.

A Multi-National Force – West Marine was killed by an improvised explosive device in Basra, Iraq, April 21. Additionally, one Marine was injured in the attack.

AP Television News footage from Basra on Monday showed smoke rising from a vehicle burning on a highway overpass. U.S. troops and Humvees blocked access to the scene.

The government crackdown in Basra resumed over the weekend, backed by U.S. airstrikes and British artillery.

Sag Harbor Marine Killed In Iraq



Jordan Haerter, a 19-year-old Sag Harbor Marine, has died in Iraq. Haerter, a 2006 graduate of Pierson High School, was killed at a checkpoint near the western city of Ramadi. (Handout / April 24, 2008)

April 24, 2008 BY SOPHIA CHANG, Newsday

A Marine from Sag Harbor has been killed in a suicide car bomb attack on his squad in Iraq, his family said Thursday.

The body of Lance Cpl. Jordan Haerter, 19, was flown back to the United States to his family Wednesday night, said his aunt Donna Bottle.

"It's very tough," she said.

Haerter is the 30th Long Island member of the military to be killed in Iraq.

Benning Soldier Dies In Iraq

Apr. 11, 2008 BY MICK WALSH, Ledger-Enquirer

As a member of the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Staff Sgt. Jeffery L. Hartley spent two tours of duty in Iraq and another in Afghanistan.

The Hempstead, Texas, native joined the 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, in the fall of 2004 and accompanied the unit to Iraq in 2005.

Along the way, the 25-year-old radio operator -- a 25-Charley in Army lingo -- earned a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart and six Army Commendation Medals. In March, he made his second deployment with the 1-10, one of six battalions in the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat team.

On Tuesday, just a few weeks before his scheduled return to Fort Benning, Hartley was killed when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb near the town of Kharguliah.

He was the second brigade soldier to die in eight days after a five-month period in which just one other soldier was killed.

In all, 26 members of the brigade have perished during this deployment, the majority from injuries suffered in roadside bomb explosions.

Hartley, who came on active duty in June 2001, is the first member of the 1-10 to be killed during its three deployments to Iraq. The Houston Chronicle reported Thursday that Hartley is the son of longtime Hempstead Police Officer David Hartley. "He truly loved being in the military," Det. Jason Martinez said.

The elder Hartley has been a member of the department for 16 years. "He's very upset," Martinez said.

Hartley's brother, David, also served in Iraq and recently separated from the military.

Hempstead, the Waller County seat, is about 50 miles northwest of Houston.

Boise Soldier Dies In Iraq



Sgt. Michael T. Lilly, 23, of Boise. (Courtesy: Lilly Family)

Apr 10, 2008 KLEW-TV2626

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Department of Defense announced Wednesday the death of two soldiers who were supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

DOD said the two men, Sgt. Michael T. Lilly, 23, of Boise, Idaho and Spc. Jason C. Kazarick, 30, of Oakmont, Penn., died April 7 in Sadr City, Iraq, when enemy forces attacked using a rocket propelled grenade.

They were assigned to the 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Vilseck, Germany.

Officials said Sgt. Michael Lilly was raised in Boise, and graduated from Borah High School. After high school, he joined the Army out of patriotism, motivated to enlist as a result of the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Sgt. Lilly leaves behind his wife who is from the Boise area, his mother and father who reside in the Boise area, two brothers and a sister, a great grandmother, a grandmother, uncle, stepfather, in addition to numerous other relatives and friends.

His mother released the following statement:

"We are very proud of Michael, and we will miss him forever. We all loved him very much. Michael knew he had an important job to do, and he did it. He knew what he was doing was important, and there was never any question in his mind that serving in the Army was what he needed to do. His whole life, he wanted to serve our country. He was a good son, a loving husband, a good friend and a patriotic person...that's why he joined the Army."

Lilly's father also released a statement:

"Michael loved Idaho, loved the United States and loved the Army. He was on his second enlistment and he told me he was going to re-enlist a third time. He felt so strongly about his career in the Army that he was willing to put that above everything else. With Michael, it was Army and Country first."

Mason City Soldier Injured In Iraq

April 24, 2008 Associated Press

MASON CITY, Iowa - An Iowa soldier has been injured in a roadside bombing in Iraq.

The family of 23-year-old Army Pfc. Donald Barr, of Mason City, says he suffered a broken jaw, ruptured ear drum and bumps and bruises when his vehicle hit the bomb on Monday near Samarra. He was thrown from the vehicle.

Barr's wife, Jennifer Barr, who works for The Globe Gazette, says he is hospitalized in Germany awaiting a flight to the United States.

Jennifer Barr says no one else was seriously injured by the explosion

Barr is a member of the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Barr has been in Iraq since September. He recently was home on leave after the birth of his second son and returned to Iraq on March 30.

U.S. Drone Down Near Musayyib

April 21 (Reuters)

A U.S. drone aircraft crashed near Musayyib, south of Baghdad, and was recovered, the U.S. military said.

Rockets For Rice: [Give Generously]

Apr 21 By Noah Barkin (Reuters)

Rockets blasted the fortified Green Zone compound in Baghdad on Sunday as U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice held talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and voiced support for his militia crackdown and efforts to isolate Sadr.

Attack On Green Zone Hits Polish Embassy

April 24 (Reuters)

A rocket hit Poland's embassy inside the Green Zone diplomatic and government compound in Baghdad, lightly injuring one security guard, Poland's foreign minister said.

A car bomb near the entrance to the Green Zone diplomatic and government compound in central Baghdad killed one person and wounded three, police said.

“Fierce Fighting” In Sadr City

Apr 23, 2008 By BUSHRA JUHI Associated Press Writer & AFP

Fierce fighting broke out late Tuesday and continued through Wednesday morning in Husseinayah, a Mahdi Army stronghold to the north of Baghdad's embattled Sadr City district.

At least 315 people have been killed in the area since the outbreak of fighting began on March 25, according to an Interior Ministry official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to release the information.

The official said no breakdown was available for the number of militiamen, civilians and Iraqi security forces. But an Associated Press count shows at least 200 of those killed have been civilians.

American forces used ground troops and air strikes during the clashes which began in the late afternoon, a US military statement said.

How Do You Know Your War Is Lost? When Your Air Force Has To Attack The Capital Of The Country You Supposedly Defeated

Apr 21 (AFP)

US warplanes bombed the east Baghdad district of Sadr City overnight, where militias are battling security forces, residents said on Monday, as the American military reported another five people killed in the embattled township.

Residents said low flying jets dropped bombs in sectors 22 and 24 of Sadr City, stronghold of the Mahdi Army militia around midnight (2100 GMT Sunday).

About two hours later, according to witnesses, helicopters fired missiles at four targets in Sadr City, where hundreds of people have died since Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki ordered a crackdown on militias across Iraq in late March.

“Iraqi Forces Are Taking The Lead,” Rear Admiral Driscoll Told Journalists In Baghdad Last Week: Bullshit Say U.S. Troops:

“The Army Article Made It Sound Like We Were Just There Supporting The Iraqi Army, But We Did All The Work”

Apr 22 By ABIGAIL HAUSLOHNER/MAHMUDIYA, Time [Excerpts]

As he led his platoon across once perilous terrain, Lieutenant Colonel William Zemp was quick to praise Iraqi troops.

But where was the Iraqi platoon that was supposed to be leading this morning's sweep of the village?

As it turned out, they had all overslept.

There were a few Iraqi troops around, in mismatched uniforms, as well as a secondary commander, but the designated platoon was nowhere to be found.

Once the Iraqi detail arrived, they stomped down the same dirt path that U.S. troops had already patrolled, only to be called back and re-directed. “I was sleeping,” their commander shrugged as he greeted Zemp.

“Iraqi forces are taking the lead,” Rear Admiral Patrick Driscoll told journalists in Baghdad last week.

But for many American troops, the picture of Iraqi troop performance is not quite as rosy. In Hilla, the largest town in the central Iraqi province of Babil, soldiers and residents say the violence was fiercest on March 25.

And at least one American soldier said he was angry that the role of Iraqi troops was exaggerated after the battle. “A gunfight broke out and we were fighting (the Mahdi Army) for about four hours,” the soldier told TIME.

“The army article made it sound like we were just there supporting the Iraqi Army, but we did all the work. We just had four humvees out there with some Iraqi (troops).”

Another soldier at Forward Operating Base Kalsu in north Babil said he has little confidence in the battle abilities of the Iraqi forces. “Sometimes they start shooting because they heard or saw something, but then there's nothing there,” he said.

Even Iraqi commanders, hailed by the Americans and boastful of their recent fights, are doubtful of whether their troops could ultimately stand alone.

Said General Ali, the commander of Iraqi forces in Mahmudiya: “If you're talking about (U.S. forces withdrawing) tomorrow, I need more equipment. The Iraqi army needs more equipment to function on its own. It needs time and support from both the Iraqi government and coalition forces.”

One Iraqi official even has his own timetable for American troops. "I need (American forces) here until 2015," said Sheikh Amash Saray, the head of the Mahmudiyah local council.

Some U.S. troop commanders also foresee an indefinite dependence.

"When we can adjust and withdraw (from Babil province) is really conditions-based," says Colonel Thomas James, refusing to speculate on a date. Despite this, James, like many of his high-ranking colleagues, insisted that the focus should be on progress made.

"Four years after my first deployment, it's amazing to see how much progress has been made," he said.

But with the American praise of Iraqi troop performance far outshining the reality on the ground, it seems unlikely that Iraqi forces will be able to catch up with their glorified image any time soon.

At a meeting of tribal sheiks in north Babil, one sheikh, Mohammed al-Khunfusai, stood up to face the rest, who had spent hours firing off complaints about the Iraqi government and security forces.

"I think the Iraqi forces deserve medals for their efforts," he said. Across the room, another sheikh heckled amid laughter: "What is he talking about?"

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



Mar 17: US troops northeast of Baghdad. (AFP/File/David Furst)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

British Soldier Killed Near Gereshk, Another Wounded

21 Apr 08 Ministry of Defence

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a British soldier from the Queen's Royal Lancers Regiment has been killed in Afghanistan today, 21 April 2008.

The incident happened this morning at approximately 0900hrs, when a suspected mine strike hit a vehicle providing security to a resupply convoy on the return to Camp Bastion. The incident happened as they were travelling between Gereshk and Camp Bastion.

The soldier was evacuated to the medical facility at Camp Bastion, but tragically was declared dead on arrival. A second soldier was injured in the blast and is receiving treatment at Camp Bastion.

“Couple” Of U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Southern Kandahar

Apr 21, 2008 (AP)

A roadside blast hit a U.S. military vehicle in southern Afghanistan on Monday, causing minor injuries, the military said.

The roadside bomb struck a vehicle in the southern Kandahar province, said Lt. Col. Paul Fanning, a U.S. military spokesman. There were no deaths, but a “couple of soldiers” were lightly wounded, he said.

Two Mercenaries Captured

Apr 22 (AFP)

An Indian and a Nepalese national working at security training camps in western Afghanistan have been captured, apparently by the Taliban, police and a security firm said Tuesday.

Initial investigations found the pair were abducted by Taliban militants late Monday in Herat province, the Afghan interior ministry said.

The ministry said both men were Indians, but a US-based company providing security for the Herat training camp where the pair was based identified the missing men as an Indian and a Nepalese national.

Sayed Ibrar Hashimi, the Herat security chief for the company, EOD Technology Inc, said the pair and their Afghan driver had been travelling late Monday to the district of Adraskan, which borders Iran.

The driver said he had been freed but the two foreign nationals were taken away, he said. Police are questioning the driver.

Hashimi said the men were employed by an Indian company called HED.

The police spokesman for western Afghanistan, Abdul Rauf Ahmadi, told AFP the pair had called police late Monday and said: "We're in trouble."

"After we sent our police to the area, they had gone missing. We found their vehicle abandoned," Ahmadi said.

Resistance Action

4.22.08 (RTTNews) & 4.23.08 Reuters & By AP/NOOR KHAN

Taliban insurgents killed seven Afghan policemen in an attack on a police post and a separate bomb blast, officials and witnesses said.

In eastern Kunar province, Taliban militants attacked a police border post, killing five officers and wounding seven others, said provincial police chief Abdul Jalal Jalal.

In a separate incident, a bomber attacked a police compound in the Girishk district of the southern province of Helmand, the district police chief said.

Police opened fire on the bomber setting off his explosives belt as he tried to enter the compound, but two officers were killed in the blast, said Girishk police chief Khan Mohammad Shuja.

In Kandahar province, a bomber blew himself up next to a vehicle carrying intelligence agents in the border town of Spin Boldak. Three intelligence agents were among the 14 hurt, Khalid said.

In neighboring Helmand province, a bomber struck a police convoy, killing two officers and wounding three, said district police chief Khairudin Shuhja. Shuhja was in the convoy but was not injured in the attack. As the bomber approached the car, guards opened fire, wounding the attacker, who then blew himself up, Shuhja said.

A border police patrol in northwestern Badghis province hit a mine, killing three officers riding in the vehicle, regional police chief Gen. Khalil Andarabi said.

Suspected Taliban militants attacked a border police checkpoint in southern Afghanistan and killed six policemen, police said Tuesday. Police commander Rehmatullah Khan said the incident occurred in Arghasan district of Kandahar province late Monday. Khan said the militants withdrew after the attack and some of them were also wounded but gave no further details.

“Small-Scale Fighting May Not Make For Big Headlines, But Its Ability To Disrupt Projects Like The Dam Is Potent—And Deadly”
“Insurgents Control Portions Of The Road Forcing The Americans To Airlift Machinery And Crews”
“Taliban Forces Sneak Close Enough To Frequently Shoot Rockets, Mortars, RPGs And Small Arms”

Shervington doubts that the local road—made dangerous by Taliban checkpoints and roadside bombs—can be sufficiently secured to allow a third turbine to be trucked in from Kabul within the next six months.

Apr 18, 2008 By Ron Moreau and Sami Yousafzai, Newsweek Web Exclusive [Excerpts]

In many ways the Kajaki dam is a symbol of Afghanistan's troubled history. Built by the United States back in the 1950s, it fell into disrepair for lack of spare parts under the Taliban. Now the United States is trying to rebuild the 330-foot-high earth-filled hydroelectric facility as the centerpiece of a hearts-and-minds strategy in the strategic Helmand River valley.

Analysts expect a summer surge from Taliban insurgents, who are already stepping up their assaults on the dam and other reconstruction projects in the east and south of the country.

The difficult-to-secure dam has been an especially enticing target.

Insurgents control portions of the unpaved road leading from Helmand province's capital, Lashkar Gah, to the dam, forcing the Americans to airlift machinery and crews to the dam site in stark desert and mountain territory that resembles Arizona.

A company of British paratroopers defends the facility by providing a three-mile wide security “bubble” on all sides.

Even so, Taliban forces sneak close enough to frequently shoot rockets, mortars, RPGs and small arms in the direction of the British base and the dam site.

The insurgents approach the dam by filtering through several surrounding villages that grow a combination of opium poppies, wheat and corn, while at the same time warning local men not to work at the dam under penalty of death. “This is a small area of goodness in a sea of unsavoriness,” says British Maj. Mike Shervington, who commands D Company, 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Parachute Regiment, the dam's main security force.

Shervington doubts that the local road—made dangerous by Taliban checkpoints and roadside bombs—can be sufficiently secured to allow a third turbine to be trucked in from Kabul within the next six months.

“We are anticipating a very busy summer,” he says.

The Taliban, for its part, claims that its shift from large-scale engagements to smaller hit-and-run operations is less a sign of weakness than a change in strategy to counter heavy casualties incurred last year.

Local commanders and subcommanders have been told not to meet in face-to-face strategy sessions in groups larger than two in case they are targeted by precision air strike.

According to the leader, the Taliban are also planning to increase the number of bombings, particularly vehicle bombs, as well as the planting of roadside IEDs and small-unit ambushes of Afghan and coalition supply lines.

And while they lack the firepower to go head to head with the coalition's military, their hit-and-run operations are taking a lethal toll.

The small-scale fighting in Afghanistan may not make for big headlines, but its ability to disrupt projects like the dam is potent—and deadly.

Notes From A Lost War:

Resistance Launches Surge:

“Keeping Under-Strength U.S. And NATO Forces Tied Down In The South And East” While Taking The Offensive Elsewhere: “America's NATO Allies Continue To Balk At U.S. Requests To Send Thousands More Of Their Troops”

04/19/2008 By Jonathan S. Landay, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — While America's attention remains focused on Iraq, violence is escalating in Afghanistan, worrying senior U.S. defense officials and commanders who are struggling to find some 7,000 more American and European troops to combat resurgent Taliban and al-Qaida forces.

A majority of America's NATO allies continue to balk at U.S. requests to send thousands more of their troops to Afghanistan. At the same time, the renewed violence in Iraq and the White House decision to suspend further American troop withdrawals from Iraq this summer will make it harder for the Pentagon to send more American forces to Afghanistan next year as President Bush has promised.

“I'm deeply concerned,” Adm. Michael Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this month. [**“Deeply concerned” is the JCS equivalent of “shitting my pants.”**]

Several new reports by nongovernmental groups have found that insurgent violence [**translation: attacks on Occupation forces & collaborators**] has surged in the first months of this year to a level as high as or higher than it was during the same period last year.

There were 704 insurgent attacks from January through March this year, compared with 424 during the first three months of 2007, the report says.

The report agrees with several other new studies that have found that insurgent attacks have been rising outside southern and eastern Afghanistan, where the vast majority of the 47,000 U.S. and NATO-led troops are deployed.

“Operationally, the Taliban appear to be putting more resources into attacking in provinces where allied forces are weaker and which are less accustomed to clashes,” says an April 6 analysis written by John McCreary, a former senior intelligence analyst for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for dNovus RDI, a Texas-based contracting firm.

“They are starting to show the manifestations of a strategy” of keeping under-strength U.S. and NATO forces tied down in the south and east while stoking instability [translation: going on the offensive] elsewhere, McCreary said in an interview.

U .S. Military Dictatorship Dumbfucks Hold German Citizen Prisoner For Months: He Had Foreign Money, So He’s A “Terrorist”

20.04.2008 Deutsche Welle

US authorities in Afghanistan have been holding a German terror suspect in custody for months, the German government said. The German of Afghan origin was said to have been on a US base without authorization.

“I can confirm to you that a German national is in American custody in Afghanistan,” German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told Reuters TV in Dortmund, in western Germany, on Saturday, April 19.

The German weekly magazine Der Spiegel had earlier reported that the citizen was a 41-year-old German man who, according to German security authorities, posed no terror threat.

US forces have apparently been holding the man since early January.

“He is accused of being on an American base without permission,” German Foreign Ministry spokesman Martin Jaeger said.

Der Spiegel's online portal had named the man as Gholam Ghaus Z., saying he had been in Afghanistan to visit relatives.

According to Der Spiegel, the man was arrested as he was trying to buy a razor at a supermarket on the US base. The magazine reported that currency from various countries was found on the man, leading the US military authorities to suspect a terrorist link.

Gholam Ghaus Z. is apparently being held at the Bagram base near the Afghan capital, Kabul.

Der Spiegel reported that it had information that German intelligence officers had interviewed the man, who hails from the western city of Wuppertal, and found nothing suspicious.

The magazine said that Foreign Minister Steinmeier had raised his concerns about the case with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the beginning of March.

US authorities had demanded security guarantees regarding Gholam Ghaus Z. that were equivalent to complete surveillance, but German authorities felt they could not meet these conditions, the magazine said.

A similar case involved German-born Turk Murat Kurnaz, who was picked up in Pakistan in 2001 and detained as a suspected terrorist at Guantanamo Bay for four years despite findings by US investigators that he had no link to the terrorist organization al Qaeda.

Kurnaz was turned over to German authorities and freed in 2006 after a personal plea from German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Occupation Collaborator Supreme Court Approves Mass Murder Of Resistance Prisoners

Apr 20, 2008

KABUL (Reuters) - Taliban insurgents urged the international community and right groups to stop Afghan President Hamid Karzai approving the execution of about 100 prisoners whose death sentences were approved by the supreme court.

Human Rights Watch said on Thursday Karzai should refuse to confirm the death penalties of about 100 convicted prisoners because of concerns they had not received a fair trial.

The Taliban's leadership council said 80 percent of those sentenced to death were members of the Taliban jailed by the government and should not be executed as they had been "detained on charges of fighting for freedom."

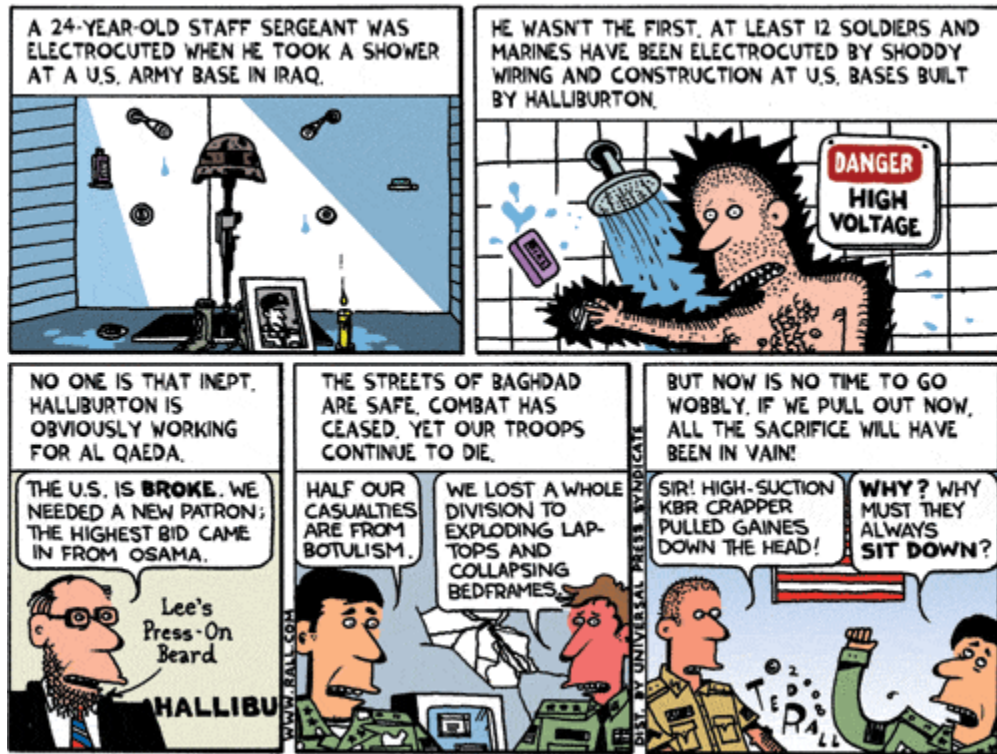
"We ... demand the UN, the European Union, Red Cross and human rights organizations to take quick steps for stopping this barbaric act and stop the killing of innocent prisoners," said a statement posted at the weekend on the militants' Web site.

The statement said some of the 14 convicts executed last year by Kabul were also Taliban prisoners.

Human Rights Watch said legal experts and human rights organizations in Afghanistan have long expressed concern that international due process and fair trial standards were generally not met in capital cases.

Afghanistan's judiciary, like much of the government, is criticized for endemic corruption and red tape.

TROOP NEWS



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

“Nationally, More Than 1,000 Have Joined Iraq Veterans Against The

War, Which Is Calling For An Immediate Troop Pullout”



After serving in Iraq, Army veteran Chris Hauff tries to put his war experiences behind him and keep a tight focus on his job, his wife and his daughter. ERIC KAYNE: CHRONICLE

April 18, 2008 By CLAUDIA FELDMAN, Houston Chronicle [Excerpts]

Hart Vigas walks the streets of Austin in a tunic and carries a sign that reads, “Jesus Against War.” It’s one of many ways, he says, that he must atone for his actions as an American soldier in Iraq.

Army Sgt. Ronn Cantu says lingering memories of killing a civilian in Iraq led him to start a chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War at his home — Fort Hood.

And in Houston, Chris Hauff, an Iraq War vet who returned from combat two years ago, wrestles with the feeling that his best friend died in a misguided war.

“The idea that American soldiers are there to spread democracy and liberate the people is all smoke and mirrors,” Hauff says.

After five years and more than 4,000 American deaths, hundreds of anti-war Iraq veterans and even some active-duty soldiers are speaking out in protest.

Nationally, more than 1,000 have joined Iraq Veterans Against the War, which is calling for an immediate troop pullout.

Cantu, the Fort Hood soldier, was one of several celebrity Texans at the conference. He says his pro-war sentiments changed 180 degrees the day he killed a civilian in Iraq. His convoy had been hit by an improvised explosive device, and he wanted revenge.

Next thing he knew, a car was coming toward them, and despite the warnings, it didn’t stop.

Cantu opened fire. He didn't know until too late the car was filled with multiple members of an Iraqi family.

"I was literally on the verge of quitting (the military) right then and there," said Cantu, a third-generation military man.

Instead, he's spoken out against the war, through the protest chapter he founded and a 60 Minutes interview in 2007.

He occasionally comes to the attention of his superiors, too.

"All I've done is use my First Amendment rights," Cantu said. "I appreciate the Constitution. You can't really love it until you've actually been protected by it."

Cantu is scheduled to return to Iraq for his third tour of duty in early 2009.

"I've cheated death so many times," he said, suddenly somber. "I hope I can do it again."

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

Beware Of Useless Drugging For PTSD:

"Exposure Therapy — Reliving A Traumatic Experience By Writing Or Talking About It — Is The Only Therapy Proved Effective By Independent Research"

"Research Has Not Shown Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitors, Such As Prozac, Zoloft

Or Celexa, To Be Effective In Treating PTSD”

April 14, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

Post-traumatic stress disorder experts say service members aren't seeking care, aren't getting enough time to recover between deployments and aren't receiving medications or therapies that are known to be effective.

“Problems related to getting troops adequate mental health treatment cannot be resolved unless two issues — stigma and access — are addressed,” Todd Bowers, director of government affairs for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, told the House Veterans' Affairs subcommittee on health on April 1.

Almost 59,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with PTSD by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Army post-deployment health assessments have found that 20 percent of active-duty and 40 percent of reserve-component troops had symptoms of PTSD, and some experts say the real numbers could be much higher.

But because PTSD hasn't been addressed until fairly recently — the first scientific paper about the disorder in veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf War didn't come out until five years after that war ended — VA and Pentagon officials say much needs to be done to determine good screening techniques and therapies.

“This is the first war where DoD and VA recognized the psychological impact going in,” said Army Col. Charles Hoge, chief of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Walter Reed Institute of Research.

He told the American Legion on March 31 that he must “look through a completely different lens” from that used by therapists treating civilians with PTSD.

Combat vets are not sleeping, experience startle reactions and are hyper-alert.

“All of these things that we label as symptoms are things they need in combat,” Hoge said. “No sooner are they transitioned back home than they're right back in rotation.”

At the House hearing, Hoge said an Army assessment last summer showed that the numbers of soldiers with PTSD is going up with each deployment.

“There's a direct connection between mental health and multiple deployments,” he said, adding that troops also need more time between deployments.

David Matcher, of the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, said a recent study found that research has not shown serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, such as Prozac, Zoloft or Celexa, to be effective in treating PTSD.

Exposure therapy — reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it — is the only therapy proved effective by independent research, he said.

Other treatments exist, but they have been tested mainly by the same people who developed them.

That's an important point because the Defense Department and VA use several such methods, including group and drug therapy, to treat combat veterans.

Staff writer William H. McMichael contributed to this report.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

April 20 (Reuters) & 4.21 By ROBERT H. REID and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, Associated Press Writers & Reuters & CNN & April 22 (Reuters) & April 23 (Reuters)

A cameraman filming a flower nursery for a TV morning program was wounded when men in two cars opened fire in eastern Baghdad, a colleague said. Police said six people — including the cameraman Hameed Hashim and his driver — were wounded in the attack in the area of Zayouna.

The crew work for Beladi TV, which is owned by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa Party.

The bodies of two contractors working with U.S.-funded neighbourhood security units were found in the town of Rashad, 30 km (20 miles) south of Kirkuk, police said.

Guerrillas opened fire at a car, killing an off-duty policeman and the driver in a town near Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Militants blew up the main power station in Sinjar overnight causing a power cut off in the town and surrounding areas, police said. Police said they had found the bodies of a local council member and his brother after they were abducted from their house.

A roadside bomb struck a police car in the northern part of the northern city of Mosul, wounding two policemen, police said.

A policeman was killed and four wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their patrol in Kirkuk, police said.

Three policemen were killed when a roadside bomb exploded near their patrol on Sunday in the New Baghdad district, police said.

A roadside bomb struck a police car in the northern part of the northern city of Mosul, wounding two policemen, police said.

Guerrillas killed a police captain near his house on Sunday in the town of Sulaiman Pek, 160 km (100 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A woman wearing a suicide-vest attacked the headquarters of a U.S.-allied neighbourhood security unit in eastern Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, killing four and wounding five, police said.

Three U.S.-allied local council members, including a woman, were seriously wounded in different incidents when bombs were attached to their cars in different areas of Baghdad, police said.

Three bombs targeting prime ministry workers wounded at least four people Monday morning in Baghdad.

A car bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol detonated in the al-Mansour district of western Baghdad, killing one and wounding two, police said.

A car bomb killed a soldier, and wounded 20 people when it exploded near a provincial government building in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Iraqi police found two bodies near oil pipelines close to Tikrit, 175 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad. They said the dead were guards of the pipeline facility, police said.

A policeman was killed in clashes between guerrillas and police in western Mosul, police said.

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

“The City's Rewards Are Huge For Sadr And His Competitors: Lucrative Revenues From The Pilgrims Who Flock Here”

April 20, 2008 By Ned Parker, Raheem Salman and Saad Fakhrideen, Los Angeles Times Staff Writers [Excerpts]

NAJAF, IRAQ -- Clerics and politicians speak in hushed tones about the names drawn up for assassination. Guards stand outside their compounds clutching assault rifles, and

handguns rest on desks. No one can be trusted. All sides fear that dark times are coming to Najaf, the spiritual capital of Iraq's Shiite Muslims.

The city's rewards are huge for Sadr and his competitors: lucrative revenues from the pilgrims who flock here, and the chance to spread one's influence among the faithful.

Every year, millions of pilgrims come to Najaf to pray at the Imam Ali Mosque, the tomb of the prophet Muhammad's son-in-law.

In the meantime, life goes on in Najaf's ancient bazaar. Merchants cut black and brown fabric for clerics' robes. Families buy deep red pomegranate juice and ice cream for daughters in party dresses. But bazaar owners believe the calm might be fleeting. A bookseller, whose merchandise includes writings by Sistani and Sadr's father, frowned.

"The quiet will not continue. There will be disorder," he said confidentially between visits from customers who flipped through his books, with their pictures of the dour-faced clerics. He was sure the turbulence would pass: "After this unrest, there will be permanent stability."

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

**"What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

Winter Soldier II Investigation



**Winter Soldier II Investigation
Silver Spring, Maryland
March 13-16, 2008**

If the survivor is allowed to testify and tell her story, uninterrupted, she eventually enters a zone of consciousness where the norms of her society no longer have the authority to censor. When this happens, the power of truth is born.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
April 21, 2008**

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 REPORT

“This Strife Is Imported – As Is Our Democracy”

“Is The Government Out To Get The Outlaws? Or Is Badr Out To Get The Mahdi Army?”

April 23, 2008 by Sahar IIS [Baghdad], washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/

Sadrists killing and being killed. All of them Iraqis.

Security forces whose presence invokes fear and distrust. Who can you believe? And what about the civilians caught in the crossfire?

Is the government out to get the outlaws? Or is Badr out to get the Mahdi Army? Who can we believe?

The government says that no weapons are permissible outside the official law enforcing agencies – Wonderful! So good to hear! But who are the people recruited in the security forces? Who does the vetting? What is the criteria?

And where did the members of Badr Brigade go??

The whole government is based upon sectarian quota – what would the criteria be?

And so the killing goes on – all of them Iraqis. All neighbours and brothers in law, living side by side peacefully not so long ago.

First it was Sunni vs. Shiite, although the conflict was about supremacy, power and oil revenues and never about religious issues at any stage.

Now, it's Shiite fighting Shiite. And a flow of a deep dark fear of the “other” that never existed before spreads.

My friends – my neighbours – our families and colleagues are mostly either Sunni or Shiite. This rift is rending the very fabric of our society – and it hurts to see the expression on the faces of people you've known for ages start to change, and harder still to feel that the trust is being very slowly – but very surely, withdrawn.

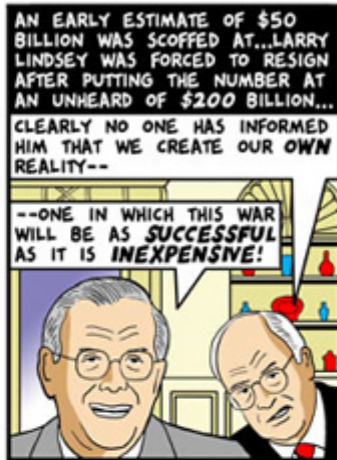
This strife is imported – as is our democracy. And I doubt that it will ever really heal.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!</p>
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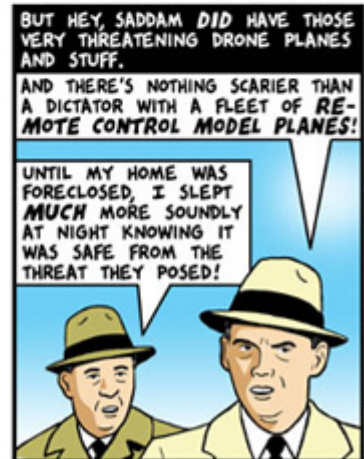
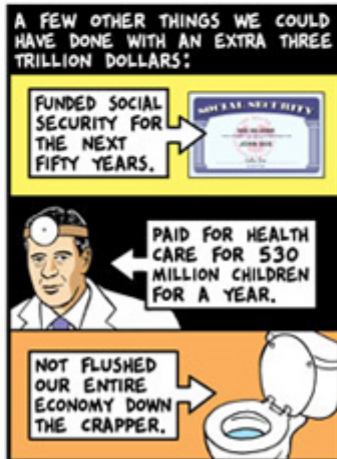
DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



*GIVE OR TAKE--ESTIMATES VARY.



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

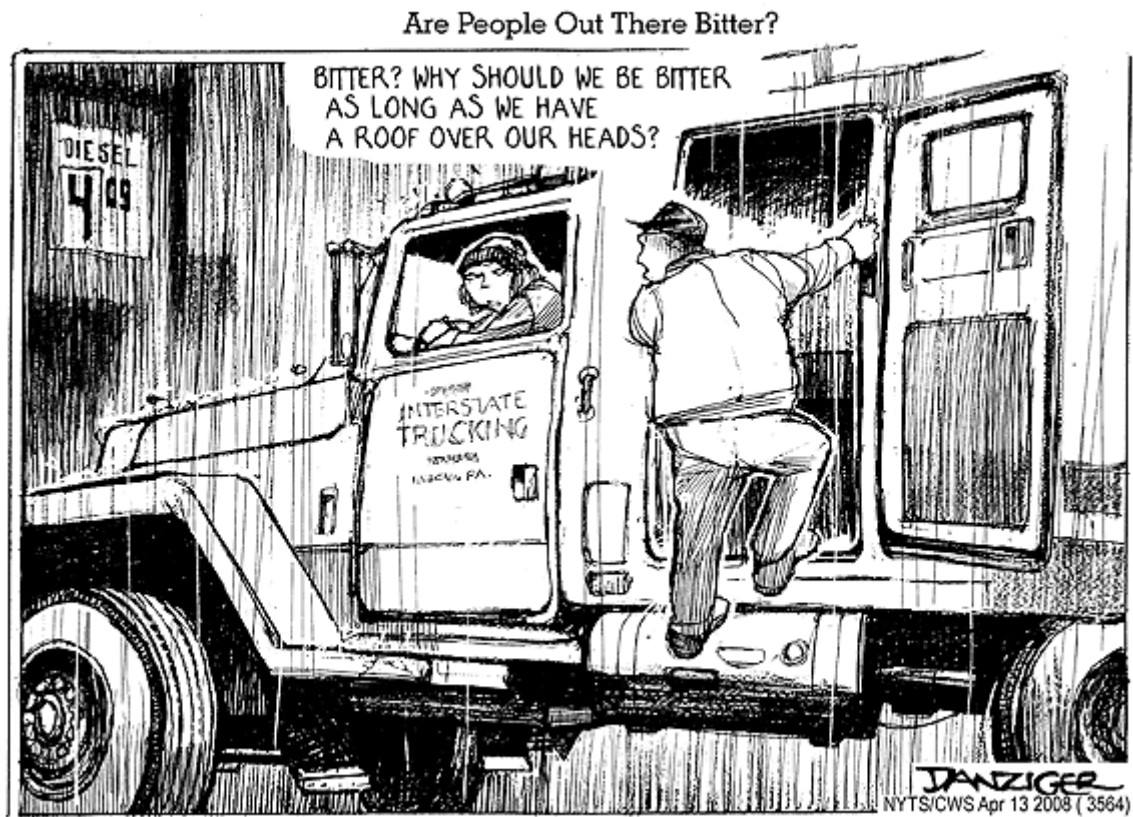
Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

CLASS WAR REPORTS



GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2007/index.html>; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>; http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;
<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=qis&rep=qis>

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