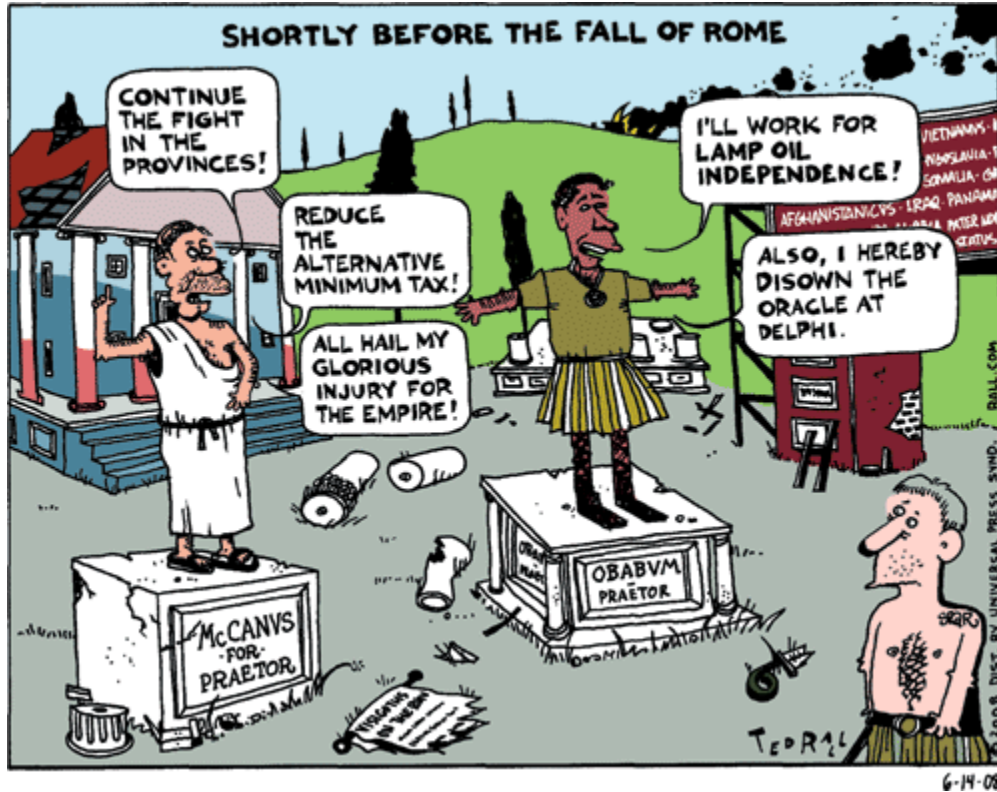
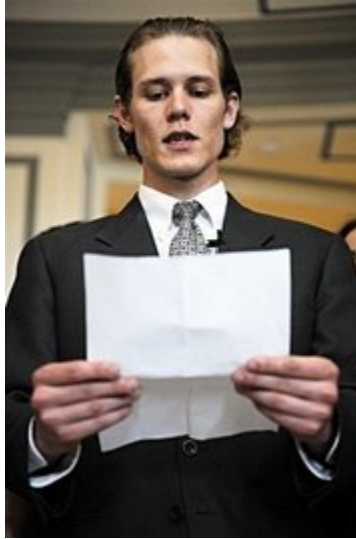


GI SPECIAL 6F11:



Honorably Discharged Soldier “Refusing To Reactivate To Participate In The Iraq Occupation”

“I Stand Here Today In Defense Of
Those Who Have Been Stripped Of
Their Voices In This Occupation, The
Warriors Of This Nation...”



Iraq Veterans Against the War member Matthis Chiroux announces his refusal to report to active duty. AFP/File Photo:

Jun 15 AFP News

A month after US army reservist Matthis Chiroux publicly refused to deploy to Iraq, the former sergeant on Sunday set himself up for possible prosecution by failing to report for active duty with his unit in South Carolina.

“Tonight at midnight, I may face further action from the army for refusing to reactivate to participate in the Iraq occupation,” Chiroux told reporters in Washington.

“I stand here today in defense of those who have been stripped of their voices in this occupation, the warriors of this nation...”, Chiroux read from a statement as his father Rob, who had travelled to Washington from Alabama to support his son on Father's Day, stood beside him.

Last month, Chiroux rejected an order calling him back to active duty in Iraq, saying he considers the war “illegal and unconstitutional.”

Chiroux served five years in the army, with tours in Afghanistan, Japan, Germany and the Philippines.

He was honorably discharged last year and was placed in the Individual Ready Reserves (IRR), a pool of former soldiers who can be “reactivated” in a national emergency or war.

Prior to the Iraq war, IRR members were rarely recalled to active duty, according to the Military Times, an independent newspaper for members of the US armed forces and their families.

“Many believed they never would be called -- but when the army found itself stretched by unexpected combat demands in Iraq in the summer of 2004 it began issuing mobilization orders,” Military Times wrote in an article published a year ago on Sunday.

According to the paper, hundreds of IRR members “refused to report or simply ignored their mailed mobilization orders.”

Matthis' father Rob, a rocket scientist who lives in the army town of Huntsville, Alabama, said mobilizing IRR members was a form of back-door draft.

“If our country is in such a dire emergency that we need to conscript manpower, congress has to vote to reinstate the draft,” the elder Chiroux told AFP. “But they won’t do that because if congress said we need to bring back the general draft, the war in Iraq would be resolved very quickly,” he said.

“Moms and dads, who represent millions and millions of voters, would say: wait a minute -- you want to draft my kid? Iraq's got to stop.”



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 WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed Near Hillah

June 16, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20080616-13

BAGHDAD – A Multi National Division-Center Soldier was killed in an improvised explosive device attack southeast of Hillah, Iraq June 16.

Texas Soldier Killed In Sinjar



Pfc. Thomas F. Duncan, III, 21 of Rowlett, Texas, died June 9, 2008 in Sinjar, Iraq, of wounds suffered during combat operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Fort Lewis, Wash. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

**BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:
ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Army soldiers patrol in Mosul, Iraq March 25, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Marine From Tacoma Killed In Afghanistan



Sgt. Michael Washington USMC

June 16, 2008 KING

TACOMA, Wash. - A Tacoma family mourns a marine who was killed in Afghanistan.

Twenty-year-old Sgt. Michael Washington died over the weekend.

Washington's father says his son was with four other Marines returning from a mission Sunday when an improvised explosive device exploded near their Humvee.

Washington was with the Golf Company Second Battalion 7th Marine Regiment, based in California.

Last year, Washington received a commendation for bravery while serving a tour of duty in Iraq.

Washington was a 2005 Stadium High School graduate.

Marine From Fenton Killed By Afghan Bomb

06/15/2008 By Robert Kelly, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

FENTON -- Michael Patton, 19, who grew up in the Fenton area and graduated from Fox High School in Arnold in 2007, was among four Marines killed by a roadside bomb on Saturday in Afghanistan, his sister said Sunday.

Patton joined the Marines shortly after graduating from high school and had been stationed at Twenty-nine Palms Marine Base in California before being sent to Afghanistan in April, according to his sister, Rebecca Patton of Fenton.

She said her family was informed of his death on Saturday. She was unsure when his body would be returned home for burial.

Rebecca Patton said her brother was in a convoy when his vehicle struck the explosive device. None of the other victims was from the St. Louis area. Further details were unavailable.

Michael Patton was married about a year ago. His wife, Amy, had been his girlfriend in high school, Rebecca Patton said.

"He had talked about joining the military since he was about five years old," Rebecca Patton said. "He was willing to follow his dream, even though it cost him his life."

She said he had played on the varsity soccer team at Fox High and was popular among his classmates.

He also was known for his infectious smile, she said. "He had two huge dimples on the side of his face that came out when he smiled," she said.

Michael and Rebecca Patton are the children of James and Teresa Patton of Fenton. They also have another daughter, Margaret.

“Hundreds Of Taliban Fighters Took Over Several Villages In Southern Afghanistan On Monday”

“Militants Could Use The Cover To Mount An Attack On Kandahar Itself”

6.16.08 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - Hundreds of Taliban fighters took over several villages in southern Afghanistan on Monday just outside the region's largest city, and NATO and Afghan forces were redeploying to meet the threat, officials said.

Mohammad Farooq, the government leader in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province, said around 500 Taliban fighters moved into his district and took over several villages.

Arghandab lies just north of Kandahar city — the Taliban's former stronghold — and a tribal leader from the region warned that the militants could use the cover from Arghandab's grape and pomegranate orchards to mount an attack on Kandahar itself.

“All of Arghandab is made of orchards. The militants can easily hide and easily fight,” said Haji Ikramullah Khan. “It's quite close to Kandahar.

“During the Russian war, the Russians didn't even occupy Arghandab, because when they fought here they suffered big casualties.”

The push into Arghandab comes three days after a sophisticated Taliban attack on Kandahar's prison that freed hundreds of insurgent fighters being held there.

NATO spokesman Mark Laity said NATO and Afghan military officials were redeploying troops to the region to “meet any potential threats.”

“It's fair to say that the jailbreak has put a lot of people (militants) into circulation who weren't there before, and so obviously you're going to respond to that potential threat,” he said.

Resistance Action

09 June 2008 By VOA News & Jun 16 (AFP)

A roadside bomb struck an Afghan National Army vehicle in the Girishk district of southern Helmand province on the same day, wounding two soldiers, provincial police chief Mohammad Hussain Andiwal told AFP.

Afghan officials say five policemen have been killed in two separate attacks. Authorities say three officers were killed by a roadside bomb in Ghazni province. Two other policemen were killed during a militant attack in the western province of Ghor.

On Sunday, insurgents attacked a police convoy in Ghazni province, killing 11 police and wounding one, said the province's deputy governor, Kazim Allayar.

Also Sunday, militants ambushed the government leader of the Qalandar region in the eastern province of Khost, killing him and three bodyguards, said Gen. Mohammad Ayub, the provincial police chief.

**U.S. Military Police Tortured,
Maimed And Murdered Afghan
Prisoners;
Capt. Carolyn Wood, MI, Escapes
Punishment & Moves On To
Practice Her Techniques At Abu
Ghraib;
“I Guess You Can Call It Torture, Said
Callaway, Who Served In The 377th”
“Bagram Was A Center Of Systematic
Brutality For At Least 20 Months”**

Capt. Carolyn Wood, who led the interrogators at Bagram, was sent to Abu Ghraib in the summer of 2003 and assumed control of interrogation operations there that August. The abuse resembled what former Bagram detainees described. Wood remains an active-duty military intelligence officer.

June 16, 2008 By TOM LASSETER, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

American soldiers herded the detainees into holding pens of razor-sharp concertina wire, the kind that's used to corral livestock.

The guards kicked, kneed and punched many of the men until they collapsed in pain. U.S. troops shackled and dragged other detainees to small isolation rooms, then hung them by their wrists from chains dangling from the wire mesh ceiling.

Former guards and detainees whom McClatchy interviewed said Bagram was a center of systematic brutality for at least 20 months, starting in late 2001.

“I was punched and kicked at Bagram. . . . At Bagram, when they took a man to interrogation at night, the next morning we would see him brought out on a stretcher looking almost dead,” said Aminullah, an Afghan who was held there for a little more than three months. “But at Guantanamo, there were rules, there was law.”

Nazar Chaman Gul, an Afghan who was held at Bagram for more than three months in 2003, said he was beaten about every five days.

American soldiers would walk into the pen where he slept on the floor and ram their combat boots into his back and stomach, Gul said. “Two or three of them would come in suddenly, tie my hands and beat me,” he said.

When the kicking started, Gul said, he'd cry out, “I am not a terrorist,” then beg God for mercy. Mercy was slow in coming. He was shipped to Guantanamo around the late summer of 2003 and imprisoned there for more than three years.

According to Afghan officials and a review of his case, Gul wasn't a member of al Qaida or of the extremist Taliban regime that ran Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.

At the time he was detained, he was working as a fuel depot guard for the U.S.-backed Afghan government.

When U.S. soldiers raided the house he was visiting, acting on a tip from a tribal rival who was seeking revenge against another man, they apparently confused Gul with a militant with a similar name — who was also imprisoned at Guantanamo, according to an Afghan intelligence official and Gul's American lawyer.

The eight-month McClatchy investigation found a pattern of abuse that continued for years. The abuse of detainees at Bagram has been reported by U.S. media organizations, in particular The New York Times, which broke several developments in the story.

Former detainees at Bagram and Kandahar said they were beaten regularly. Of the 41 former Bagram detainees whom McClatchy interviewed, 28 said that guards or interrogators had assaulted them.

But the extent of the mistreatment, and that it eclipsed the alleged abuse at Guantanamo, hasn't previously been revealed.

In an effort to assemble as complete a picture as possible of U.S. detention practices, McClatchy reporters interviewed 66 former detainees, double-checked key elements of their accounts, spoke with U.S. soldiers who'd served as detention camp guards and reviewed thousands of pages of records from Army courts-martial and human rights reports.

The most violent of the major U.S. detention centers, the McClatchy investigation found, was Bagram, an old Soviet airstrip about 30 miles outside Kabul.

The worst period at Bagram was the seven months from the summer of 2002 to spring of 2003, when interrogators there used techniques that when repeated later at Abu Ghraib led to wholesale abuses.

New detainees were shoved to the floor of a cavernous warehouse, a former Soviet aircraft machine shop that stayed dim all day, and kept in pens where they weren't allowed to speak or look at guards.

The Afghan government initially based a group of intelligence officers at Bagram, but they were pushed out.

Mohammed Arif Sarwari, the head of Afghanistan's national security directorate from late 2001 to 2003, said he got a letter from U.S. commanders in mid-2002 telling him to get his men out of Bagram. Sarwari thought that was a bad sign: The Americans, he thought, were creating an island with no one to watch over them.

“I said I didn't want to be involved with what they were doing at Bagram — who they were arresting or what they were doing with them,” he said in an interview in Kabul.

The rate of reported abuse was higher among men who were held at the U.S. camp at Kandahar Airfield. Thirty-two out of 42 men held there whom McClatchy interviewed claimed that they were knocked to the ground or slapped about.

But former detainees said the violence at Bagram was much harsher.

The brutality at Bagram peaked in December 2002, when U.S. soldiers beat two Afghan detainees, Habibullah and Dilawar, to death as they hung by their wrists.

Dilawar died on Dec. 10, seven days after Habibullah died.

He'd been hit in his leg so many times that the tissue was “falling apart” and had “basically been pulpified,” said then-Lt. Col. Elizabeth Rouse, the Air Force medical examiner who performed the autopsy on him.

Had Dilawar lived, Rouse said in sworn testimony, “I believe the injury to the legs are so extensive that it would have required amputation.”

The only American officer who's been reprimanded for the deaths of Habibullah and Dilawar is Army Capt. Christopher Beiring, who commanded the 377th Military Police Company from the summer of 2002 to the spring of 2003.

Beiring told investigators that he'd received no formal training in leading a military police company, “just the correspondence courses and on-the-job training.”

Then-Lt. Col. Thomas S. Berg, the Army lawyer who investigated Beiring in the deaths of Habibullah and Dilawar, argued that: “The government failed to present any evidence of what are 'approved tactics, techniques and procedures in detainee operations.' “

On Berg's recommendation, the charges against Beiring were dropped, and he was given a letter of reprimand.

The commander of the military intelligence section that worked alongside Beiring's military police company at Bagram, Capt. Carolyn Wood, declined to comment. [For more about this twisted freak, see the ending of the article.]

U.S. soldiers' testimony in military investigations after the deaths of Habibullah and Dilawar suggested that detainee abuse at Bagram occurred from the summer of 2002 to spring of 2003, a period of about seven months.

Former detainees interviewed by McClatchy and by some human rights groups, however, claimed that the violence was rampant from late 2001 until the summer of 2003 or later, at least 20 months.

Although they were at Bagram at different times and speak different languages, the 28 former detainees who told McClatchy that they'd been abused there told strikingly similar stories:

Bashir Ahmad, a Pakistani who fought with the Taliban, said that in the late spring or summer of 2003, U.S. troops would chain him to the ceiling by his hands or feet. "Then they would punch me or hit me with a wood rod," he said.

Brahim Yadel, a French citizen, said he was punched and slapped during interrogations at Bagram in December 2001.

Moazzem Begg, a British citizen, said he was assaulted regularly at Bagram for most of 2002, until he was transferred to Guantanamo in January 2003.

Akhtar Mohammed, an Afghan, said that at Bagram during the spring of 2003, "when they moved me to the interrogation room they covered my eyes, and took me up steep stairs. I always fell on the ground. And when I fell down, they punched and kicked me."

Abdul Haleem, a Pakistani, said that U.S. soldiers threw him to the ground at Bagram in 2003 and kicked him in the head, "like they were playing soccer."

Adel al Zamel, a Kuwaiti, said guards frequently waved sticks at him and threatened to rape him at Bagram during the spring of 2002. During an interview in Kuwait City, Zamel shook his head and said he remembered hearing detainees being beaten and "the cries from the interrogation room" at Bagram.

He wasn't the only person to report sexual humiliation.

Sgt. Selena Salcedo, a U.S. military intelligence officer, said that sometime between August 2002 and February 2003 she saw another interrogator, Pfc. Damien Corsetti, pull down the pants of a detainee and leave his genitals exposed.

In a 2005 sworn statement in the court-martial of Corsetti, she said she'd left the room and that when she'd returned the detainee was bent over a table and Corsetti was waving a plastic bottle near his buttocks. She said she didn't know whether the detainee had been raped.

Corsetti was acquitted of any wrongdoing. He didn't respond to a request for comment submitted through his attorney. Salcedo pleaded guilty to kicking a detainee — Dilawar — and grabbing his ears during a December 2002 interrogation.

Soldiers who served at Bagram starting in the summer of 2002 confirmed that detainees there were struck routinely.

"Whether they got in trouble or not, everybody struck a detainee at some point," said Brian Cammack, a former specialist with the 377th Military Police Company, an Army

Reserve unit from Cincinnati. He was sentenced to three months in military confinement and a dishonorable discharge for hitting Habibullah.

Spc. Jeremy Callaway, who admitted to striking about 12 detainees at Bagram, told military investigators in sworn testimony that he was uncomfortable following orders to “mentally and physically break the detainees.” He didn't go into detail.

“I guess you can call it torture,” said Callaway, who served in the 377th from August 2002 to January 2003.

[Maj. Jeff] Bovarnick, the former chief legal officer for operational law in Afghanistan and Bagram legal adviser, said in a sworn statement that of some 500 detainees he knew of who'd passed through Bagram, only about 10 were high-value targets, the military's term for senior terrorist operatives.

That hardly mattered.

Khaled al Asmr, a tall, gaunt Jordanian, was hauled off a U.S. military cargo plane at Bagram in early 2002. Flown in from Pakistan in heavy shackles and with a hood on his head, he was accused of being an al Qaida operative with possible connections to the Sept. 11 attacks.

Standing in an interrogation room, Asmr said, he'd already been punched in the face several times by American guards. Two Americans walked into the room, wearing civilian clothes. They pulled out pistols and held them to either side of his head as a third American man entered and walked up to Asmr, according to his account.

The third man leaned toward Asmr's face and whispered, his breath warm, “I am here to save you from these people, but you must tell me you are al Qaida.”

Asmr, who told his story to a McClatchy reporter in Jordan, was declared no longer an enemy combatant after a 2004 U.S. military tribunal at Guantanamo.

He said he'd known some al Qaida leaders, but that was more than 15 years earlier, during the U.S.-backed Afghan uprising against the Soviets.

Nazar Gul was of even less intelligence value.

None of the Afghan security or intelligence officials whom McClatchy interviewed said they'd heard of Gul, making it unlikely that he was the dangerous insurgent the U.S. said he was.

Gul's American attorney, Ruben L. Iniguez, went to Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2006 to check the details of his story of working as a guard for the Afghan government, and later said in sworn court filings — which included videotaped testimony by witnesses — and in an interview with McClatchy that every fact checked out.

The mistreatment of detainees at Bagram, some legal experts said, may have been a violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention on prisoners of war, which forbids violence against or humiliating treatment of detainees.

The U.S. War Crimes Act of 1996 imposes penalties up to death for such mistreatment.

At Bagram, however, the rules didn't apply.

In February 2002, President Bush issued an order denying suspected Taliban and al Qaida detainees prisoner-of-war status. He also denied them basic Geneva protections known as Common Article Three, which sets a minimum standard for humane treatment.

In sweeping aside Common Article Three, the Bush administration created an environment in which abuse such as that at Bagram was more likely, said Garraway, a former professor at the U.S. Naval War College.

"I think it's completely predictable, because you no longer have standards," he said.

Compounding the problem, military police guards and interrogators lacked proper training and received little instruction from commanders about how to do their jobs, according to sworn testimony taken during military investigations and interviews by McClatchy.

The guards who worked there from the summer of 2002 to the spring of 2003 were all reservists from the 377th Military Police Company, based in Cincinnati, and many of the military intelligence interrogators serving at the same time were from the Utah Army National Guard.

Good order and discipline had evaporated.

1st Sgt. Betty Jones said during a 2004 interview with investigators that a fellow military police sergeant and his men on several occasions were "drunk to the point that they could not go to duty." Salcedo, the military intelligence soldier, said in her statement at Corsetti's court-martial that she and others drank alcohol during their time at Bagram, and at one point smoked hashish on the roof of a building.

Cammack told McClatchy that one of his sergeants drove a John Deere Gator, a four-wheel all-terrain vehicle, to a nearby town and traded with locals for bottles of vodka.

"Really, nobody was in charge . . . the leadership did nothing to help us. If we had any questions, it was pretty much 'figure it out on your own,'" Cammack said. "When you asked about protocol they said it's a work in progress."

No U.S. military officer above the rank of captain has been called to account for what happened at Bagram.

The head of U.S. forces in Afghanistan when prisoners were being abused at Bagram, then-Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill, declined an interview request. McNeill was later made the commander of all NATO forces in Afghanistan, a post he held until recently.

Capt. Carolyn Wood, who led the interrogators at Bagram, was sent to Abu Ghraib in the summer of 2003 and assumed control of interrogation operations there that August.

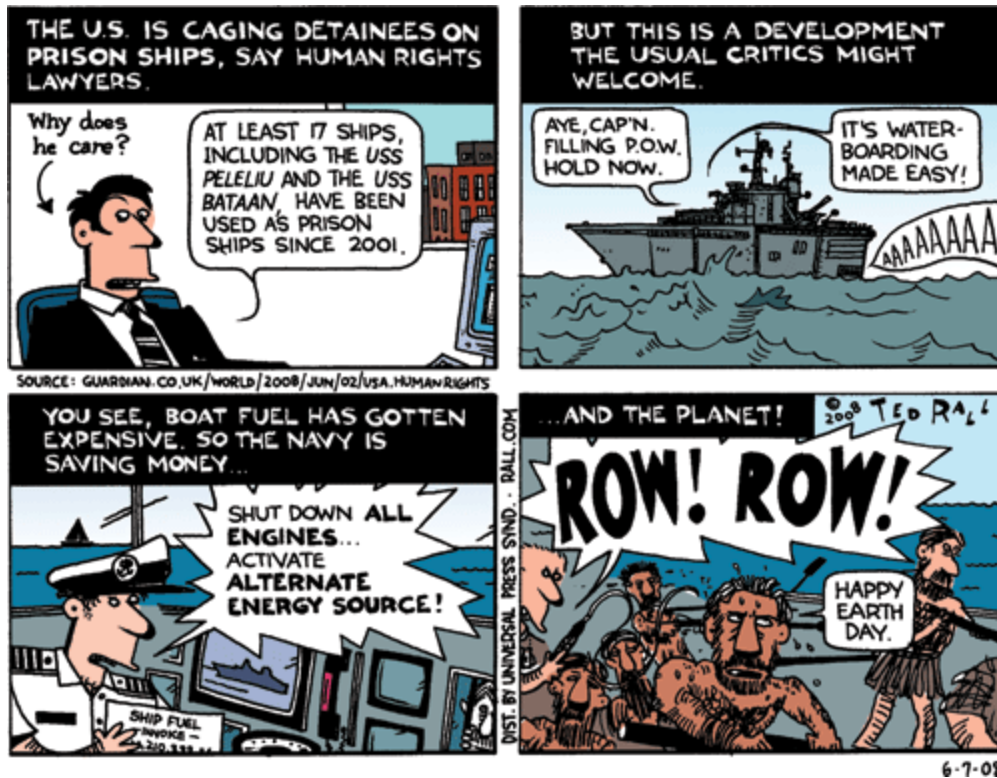
A military investigation that followed the Abu Ghraib scandal — known as the “Fay-Jones Report” for the two generals who authored it — found that from July 2003 to February of 2004, 27 military intelligence personnel there allegedly encouraged or condoned the abuse of detainees, violated established interrogation procedures or participated in abuse themselves.

The abuse resembled what former Bagram detainees described.

A key factor in serious cases of abuse at Abu Ghraib, the report found, was the construction of isolation areas, a move requested by Wood, who said that “based on her experience” such facilities made it easier to extract information from detainees.

Wood remains an active-duty military intelligence officer.

TROOP NEWS



IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

June 15 (KUNA) & Reuters & June 16 AFP & Reuters

A roadside bomb killed three U.S.-funded militia members near the restive city of Baquba on Monday, a security official said. The three men were killed when their vehicle was struck by the bomb in a village south of Baquba, the capital of Diyala province. Another militiamen was wounded in the attack.

Insurgents opened fire on two policemen while they were in a market of the city of Mosul, killing them instantly.

A bomber tried to blow up a police station in Tall Kayf, near Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. Police opened fire on his vehicle before it reached the police station and it exploded, killing a policeman and wounding three other policemen.

A roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in Iskandariya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, wounding two policemen, police said.

Insurgents simultaneously detonated four bombs targeting houses and vehicles belonging to members of the Iraqi security forces in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, U.S. forces said. An Iraqi policeman was killed.

A roadside bomb exploded at a checkpoint, killing three members of the U.S.-backed neighbourhood police and wounding another at Buhriz, 60 km (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded four Iraqi soldiers, when it blew up near their patrol in northern Baghdad's Adhamiya district, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“People Who Believe Barack
Obama Will End The**

Occupation Of Iraq Are Likely In For A Rude Awakening” “Despite Talking About Withdrawal From Iraq, His Plan Would Keep Troops In The Country For Years To Come”

It is a question not of waiting for elected officials to give us reforms, but of fighting for them, against all the forces in our society that want to preserve the power and privilege of the few against the needs and interests of the many.

Our job today is to build the opposition, whoever is in power in 2009, and to build an independent antiwar movement that can fight for its own demands--including, crucially, immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Iraq.

June 4, 2008 Anthony Arnove interviewed in Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

SW: BARACK OBAMA presents himself as a candidate who will end the U.S. war on Iraq. Knowing the details of what he proposes, is it accurate to say that he'll end the war?

Arnove: PEOPLE WHO believe Barack Obama will end the occupation of Iraq are likely in for a rude awakening. Despite talking about withdrawal from Iraq, his plan would keep troops in the country for years to come, likely well beyond his potential first term.

Obama says that he will “have all of our combat brigades out of Iraq within 16 months.” But “combat brigades” only make up about half the troops in Iraq.

In addition to the mercenaries and private contractors, that would leave tens of thousands of troops involved in so-called counterinsurgency operations.

That's the same rationale the Bush administration uses for keeping troops in Iraq. Other troops would stay for “training” operations. This, too, is the Bush argument: we'll stand down as the Iraqis stand up.

But there's no way the Iraqi police or security forces will ever have any legitimacy as long as they are seen as collaborating with an unwanted foreign occupation.

That's why “Iraqization” of the conflict is leading in the same direction that “Vietnamization” led during the U.S. war against Vietnam: prolonging the disaster.

Other troops will remain for “force protection.”

That's a complete oxymoron. If the U.S. wasn't in Iraq as an occupying power, if it didn't have military bases, if it wasn't building in Baghdad the largest embassy of any government in the world, there would be no need for such troops.

Obama also talks about the need to “refocus our attention on the broader Middle East” and “finishing the fight in Afghanistan.” So we are likely to see some troops now in Iraq shifted toward the occupation of Afghanistan, and also toward possible new interventions in the region.

That is, we are likely to see an adjustment in the tactics of the war, perhaps even the strategy, but not an end to the war.

WHAT DO you say to people who want the war to end, but think that Obama's plan is acceptable?

I THINK that many people who hold this belief think that Obama, once elected, will move to the left--that he's not talking about a complete withdrawal because he can't do that and get elected (even though public opinion polls point in the other direction).

I think many of Obama's supporters would be surprised to learn that he's not for a complete withdrawal, and that he hasn't ruled out using more mercenaries in Iraq.

Either way, I think there's a degree of wishful thinking here.

It's understandable. After eight years of Bush and eight years of Clinton, people are rightly desperate for some alternative--and hopeful that Obama will bring about a significant turn in U.S. foreign policy.

But in the absence of a large, independent antiwar movement putting pressure on Obama and the Democrats, I think we're likely to see the opposite: that Obama will govern to the right of the positions of his supporters.

That to me is the key question: Will there be that pressure on Obama if he's elected?

Or will people in the antiwar movement succumb to the pressure to “give him time” and not to “rock the boat.”

The experience after the 2006 mid-term elections is not encouraging.

Democrats took over the House and Senate, yet continued to fund and prolong the occupation of Iraq.

Many groups in the antiwar movement, rather than build large demonstrations to challenge the Democrats, have started to campaign for them for 2008.

This is leading to an infinitely receding horizon of when the troops will ever leave.

OBAMA ARGUES that Iraq has been a distraction from the war the U.S. should be fighting. He supports a surge of U.S. troops to Afghanistan similar to what the Bush

administration stands for. Should we look at the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan differently?

THE IDEA that Afghanistan is the “good” occupation or the “right fight” is completely misguided, in my view.

In Afghanistan, Washington claimed to be targeting terrorists who had attacked the United States, but instead, it targeted the civilian population of the country. The idea behind the U.S. invasion in 2001 was to make the people of Afghanistan suffer, hoping that would help bring down the Taliban regime, make an example of Afghanistan and pave the way for attacking Iraq.

Of course, there was also an element of seeking revenge--no matter that the people being killed by U.S. attacks had nothing to do with planning or carrying out the attacks of 9/11.

All of this has nothing to do with fighting terrorism, making the world safer or protecting people in the United States from attack.

In fact, we have destabilized the region, made it more violent, killed thousands of civilians, escalated tensions between Afghanistan and its neighbors, and made the United States more isolated and hated, and therefore more likely to be the target of attacks.

DO YOU think Obama differs on the aims of U.S. foreign policy, or on the tactics and strategies needed to achieve those aims?

I THINK he differs on the tactics and strategies, not the aims or principles.

After eight years of inept and counterproductive foreign policy decision-making, which has led even top generals and Republican advisers to defect from the Bush camp, we're bound to see a readjustment in U.S. policy, regardless of who becomes president.

Aggressive unilateralism is likely to be replaced with a slightly more collaborative approach to foreign policy decisions, with the understanding that, at the end of the day, Washington will always reserve the right to go it alone.

What that means is not a renunciation of the Bush doctrine of preventive war, but an adjustment in how it is applied.

But the goal remains the same for Obama: preserve and extend what's called “American leadership” in the world.

What that means is preserve and extend American empire.

And in turn, that means using military force and the blunt instruments of economic control in Washington's hands.

Sure, we may see more so-called soft power. A little better packaging and advertising of our policies. Less needless alienation of “allies.”

But not a reversal of decades of bipartisan support for the U.S. imperial project, with all the disastrous consequences that have flowed from that.

As two British conservatives, Timothy Lynch and Robert Singh, wrote in the Wall Street Journal, "Regardless of who wins in November, the current foreign policy will live on in the next White House. None of the main candidates has disavowed the war on terror. Each has called Mr. Bush tactically deficient. But the debate over the war on terror is over how, where and when. The candidates have all argued that they would do a better job of fighting it."

THE DEMOCRATS are generally considered less likely to get the U.S. into wars, and less brutal in carrying them out, than Republicans. Is that a fair reading of the Democrats' record in office?

VIETNAM WAS started by Democrats and ended by a Republican.

The First and Second World War began under Democrats.

John F. Kennedy, who is idealized today, was a Democrat who presided over the massive expansion of U.S. covert and overt aggression in Latin America--and beyond--supporting coups, funding death squads and backing dictatorships in pursuit of a vicious Cold War anticommunism.

The policy we now see being vigorously pursued in Iraq and the Middle East is the Carter Doctrine, named after Democrat Jimmy Carter.

In 1980, Carter explained, "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

"The last great liberal hope to win the White House--Bill Clinton--committed more troops to more parts of the globe than any president since World War II," Lynch and Singh wrote in the Journal.

"Since the end of the Cold War, America has undertaken at least nine military interventions overseas, under three presidents of both parties in two distinct historical eras (pre- and post-9/11).

So the key question is not whether or not we have a Democrat in office.

It's whether we have any opposition, any struggle in the streets, any movements for change that work outside the narrow channels of electoral politics.

It is a question not of waiting for elected officials to give us reforms, but of fighting for them, against all the forces in our society that want to preserve the power and privilege of the few against the needs and interests of the many.

Our job today is to build the opposition, whoever is in power in 2009, and to build an independent antiwar movement that can fight for its own demands--including, crucially, immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Iraq.

MORE:

Obama Promises To Keep On Killing U.S. Troops & Iraqis: Will Deploy A “Follow-On Force” In Iraq To “Fight Terrorists, Protect U.S. Facilities, And Train Iraqi Forces”
“Obama Has Not Provided An Estimate Of How Large That Force Might Be”

May 16, 2008 By Paul Richter, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON - After launching their candidacies with opposite positions on the Iraq war, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama seem to be edging toward a middle ground between them.

On Iraq, the senator from Illinois has made it a point in public comments to guard his prerogatives as president.

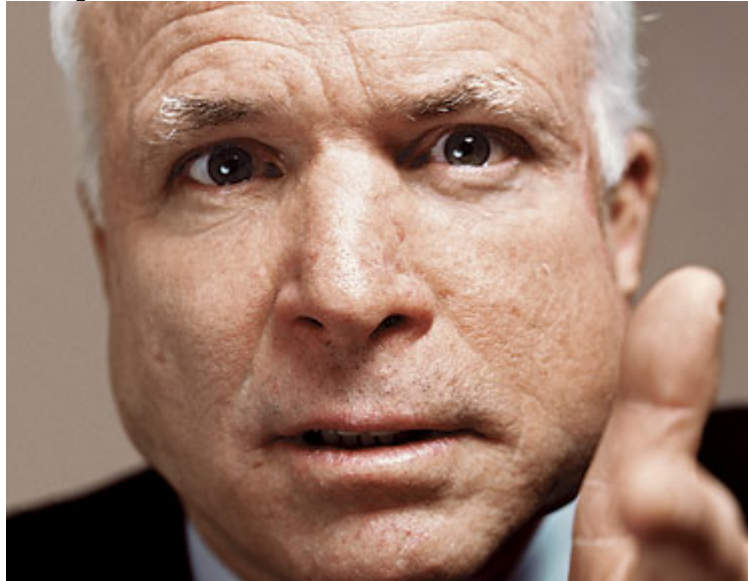
Obama says he wants to keep a “follow-on force” in Iraq that would fight terrorists, protect U.S. forces and facilities, and train Iraqi forces. Obama has not provided an estimate of how large that force might be.

MORE:

**Wow! Democracy!
You Get To Choose Which
Imperial Rat Will Order You To Die
In Iraq!
NOT ANOTHER DEATH?**

**NOT ANOTHER DAY?
NOT ACCORDING TO THESE
EXECUTIONERS**

Up To His Neck In Blood:



Getreligion.org

Up To His Neck In Blood:



washingtonpost.com

MORE:

Democrat Congressional Slime Back Down On Iraq War Conditions; Happy To Give Bush All The Money He Wants To Kill More U.S. Troops And Iraqis

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project, who sent this in. He writes:
THE DEMOCRATS MAKE CHAMBERLAIN LOOK LIKE LENIN.]

Jun 16 By Richard Cowan, Reuters

WASHINGTON: Democrats in the Congress, who came to power last year on a call to end the combat in Iraq, will soon give President George W. Bush the last war-funding bill of his presidency without any of the conditions they sought for withdrawing U.S. troops, congressional aides said on Monday.

Lawmakers are arranging to send Bush \$165 billion in new money for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, enough to last for about a year and well beyond when Bush leaves office on January 20.

"It'll be the lump sum of money, veterans (funding) and that's it," said one House aide familiar with the negotiations on the legislation.

The aide was referring to the funding for the unpopular Iraq war, now in its sixth year, and a measure being attached to expand education benefits for combat veterans.

A House of Representatives vote on the war-funding bill was expected this week.

MORE:

“Like All Serious Presidential Candidates, Past And Present, Obama Is A Hawk And An Expansionist”

12 June 2008 John Pilger, New Statesman [UK] [Excerpts]

In 1941, the editor Edward Dowling wrote: “The two greatest obstacles to democracy in the United States are, first, the widespread delusion among the poor that we have a democracy, and second, the chronic terror among the rich, lest we get it.”

What has changed?

The nomination of Barack Obama, which, according to one breathless commentator, “marks a truly exciting and historic moment in US history”, is a product of the new delusion.

Actually, it just seems new.

Truly exciting and historic moments have been fabricated around US presidential campaigns for as long as I can recall, generating what can only be described as bullshit on a grand scale.

Race, gender, appearance, body language, ritual spouses and offspring, even bursts of tragic grandeur, are all subsumed by marketing and “image-making”, now magnified by “virtual” technology.

Thanks to an undemocratic electoral college system (or, in Bush's case, tampered voting machines) only those who both control and obey the system can win.

This has been the case since the truly historic and exciting victory of Harry Truman, the liberal Democrat said to be a humble man of the people, who went on to show how tough he was by obliterating two cities with the atomic bomb.

Understanding Obama as a likely president of the United States is not possible without understanding the demands of an essentially unchanged system of power: in effect a great media game.

For example, since I compared Obama with Robert Kennedy in these pages, he has made two important statements, the implications of which have not been allowed to intrude on the celebrations.

The first was at the conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Zionist lobby, which, as Ian Williams has pointed out, “will get you accused of anti-Semitism if you quote its own website about its power”.

Obama had already offered his genuflection, but on 4 June went further. He promised to support an “undivided Jerusalem” as Israel's capital.

Not a single government on earth supports the Israeli annexation of all of Jerusalem, including the Bush regime, which recognizes the UN resolution designating Jerusalem an international city.

His second statement, largely ignored, was made in Miami on 23 May. Speaking to the expatriate Cuban community - which over the years has faithfully produced terrorists,

assassins and drug runners for US administrations - Obama promised to continue a 47-year crippling embargo on Cuba that has been declared illegal by the UN year after year.

Again, Obama went further than Bush.

He said the United States had "lost Latin America".

He described the democratically elected governments in Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua as a "vacuum" to be filled.

He raised the nonsense of Iranian influence in Latin America, and he endorsed Colombia's "right to strike terrorists who seek safe-havens across its borders".

Translated, this means the "right" of a regime, whose president and leading politicians are linked to death squads, to invade its neighbours on behalf of Washington.

He also endorsed the so-called Merida Initiative, which Amnesty International and others have condemned as the US bringing the "Colombian solution" to Mexico.

He did not stop there.

"We must press further south as well," he said.

Not even Bush has said that.

It is time the wishful-thinkers grew up politically and debated the world of great power as it is, not as they hope it will be.

Like all serious presidential candidates, past and present, Obama is a hawk and an expansionist.

He comes from an unbroken Democratic tradition, as the war-making of presidents Truman, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter and Clinton demonstrates.

Obama's difference may be that he feels an even greater need to show how tough he is.

However much the colour of his skin draws out both racists and supporters, it is otherwise irrelevant to the great power game.

The "truly exciting and historic moment in US history" will only occur when the game itself is challenged.

MORE:

Troops Will Long Remember Who Warned That Obama Will Keep The

Wars Going, And Stressed The Importance Of Helping Build And Strengthen Armed Forces Resistance Now

**Troops Will Also Long Remember
Who Pandered To The Huge,
Understandable Hope That Electing
Obama Would Stop The Wars, And
Who, By Arguing For His Election,
Participated In The Betrayal**

Comment: T

The time, money and effort spent kissing Obama's ass would be more constructively used to do the work that has some hope of stopping the wars in the real world: supporting resistance in the armed forces.

However, many desperately avoid that reality, hoping for something better, which is understandable. Reality is not pretty, and it's hardly surprising that not everyone can face it now.

Events will be the most powerful teacher.

People, including troops, will long remember who warned that Obama would keep the wars going, and stressed the importance of helping build and strengthen armed forces resistance now.

People, including troops, will also long remember who pandered to the huge, understandable hope inside and outside the armed forces that electing Obama would stop the wars, and who, by arguing for his election, participated in the betrayal, rather than telling the truth, however unwelcome and unpopular it may be now.

The overwhelming majority of Americans have decided this war must end. So have the overwhelming majority of the members of the Armed forces.

If the Imperial traitors in DC won't do it, then, as in Vietnam, the armed forces will rebel wholesale, end the war themselves, and, if necessary, arms in hand, have a word with the politicians in DC.

Americans will certainly "support our troops" then. Bring that on. These Democrat traitors leave us no other option. They're willing to kill U.S. troops and Iraqis to maintain their power and privilege.

They need to be forcefully instructed in what democracy means: the majority rules.

One way or another.

The sooner the better.

**YOU TOO CAN HELP BETRAY
THE TROOPS, AND HELP THE
GOVERNMENT KILL MORE OF
THEM IN IRAQ AND
AFGHANISTAN:
It's Easy:
Campaign For Obama
Or McCain**

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

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



An Iraq citizen is interrogated by foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. soldiers in a neighbourhood in Mosul June 13, 2008. REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz

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

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

[What a bunch of silly people.]

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

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

“The Alleged Enemies Are Allowing Iraqis To Visit” “The Alleged Friends Are Not”

June 16, 2008 by Dulaimy, Inside Iraq; washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/

Through the last few years ordinary people hear 24/7 about the U.S. and the allies' intention to help. Many saw some sort of help, the majority didn't see that help in terms of human relief, food and other needs.

The people hear that the enemies are the governments of Iran, Syria and few other countries and the friends are the U.S., GB and a number of countries.

Let's discuss these claims in few sentences.

Iran and Syria are granting access to Iraqis to the two countries... the alleged enemies are allowing Iraqis to visit.

The alleged friends are not.

The alleged enemies have sent medications and weapons.

The alleged friends sent more weapons and lesser medications.

I will not go for long in this comparison that I have heard so many times from people.

But I hope one day I will be reporting in a street near a pharmacy and I hope that day I will see a woman in need for a good medication will say finally the U.S. are sending medications.

**NEED SOME TRUTH?
CHECK OUT THE NEW 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/)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.

