

GI SPECIAL 6F15:



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: And Its one, two, three, four, What are we fighting for?]

**“He Was Worried They
Didn’t Want Us There At
All”**

**“He Felt Like They Were Wasting
Their Time There”**

**“I Don’t Think We’re Making Any
Progress”**

[Navy Medic Killed In Afghanistan]



Marc Retmier

June 21, 2008 By JOHN ASBURY, The Press-Enterprise

When two men in white formal military uniforms came to the home of Joy Retmier this week, they didn't have to say a word. The mother of Marc Retmier broke down in tears.

"When they came to the house, I knew instantly," Joy Retmier said, surrounded by photos, flowers and a single candle burning near the kitchen table. "I told him to be careful, 'Please be careful.' I told him, 'Don't offer to go on dangerous missions. I want you to come home safe. I want you to come home alive.' "

The 19-year-old Navy medic had left Hemet at age 17, seeking the adrenaline rush of the front lines.

Marc Retmier was treating civilians in Afghanistan's northern Paktika province Wednesday when Taliban insurgents launched a rocket ambush on his team, killing him and another sailor and injuring seven others.

He is the Hemet area's 12th fallen son since the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks. According to what Retmier's family was told, he is California's 500th war casualty from the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. The San Jacinto Valley is among the areas that have suffered the highest concentrations of military casualties in the conflicts.

Marc Retmier spent his life like most of his friends, riding skateboards and doing high-flying motocross stunts in the hills of Beaumont and Lake Elsinore. He had played with army toys as a child.

A star safety on the West Valley High School football team, he also had lettered in swimming as a freshman. He attended Hemet High and graduated from Alessandro High School in Hemet.

He was the eldest of three brothers, ahead of Matthew, 17, and Mason, 11.

“He was one of the most popular kids in town,” said Dale Powers, the grandfather whom Marc Retmier called “Papa.” “He’s going to be missed by a lot of people.” Retmier’s MySpace profile is filled with tributes left by friends. Retmier’s personal message read, “This is gonna be one crazy summer,” and he posted photos of his tour in Afghanistan.

After graduating from high school, Retmier enlisted in the Navy. He attended training at Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune, N.C. and worked in the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., before volunteering for a tour, either in Iraq or Afghanistan. His dream was to become a doctor eventually, his mother said.

When a Marine deployment to Iraq was canceled, Retmier volunteered for one to Afghanistan to provide medical services for Marines there.

During his final mission, Retmier’s unit was working in an Afghan village when it was fired upon by 10 Chinese-made rockets. Retmier and Petty Officer 1st Class Ross L. Tolles III, 37, of Michigan, died at the scene.

“He’s so dynamic, I didn’t think he could die, even in the danger zone,” said his grandfather, falling to his knees and sobbing. “When I got the call, I hoped he might be injured and might come home alive. But it wasn’t to be ... it wasn’t to be.”

The Retmiers think Hemet has had so many war casualties because young people there often drift to the military.

Steven Retmier, Marc’s father, said the lack of job opportunities and activities makes the region an easy target for military recruiters.

“There’s nothing else for these kids to do,” he said. “There’s no future here for them.”

Marc Retmier told his grandfather “he needed combat experience” and was planning to apply for another tour so he could be stationed closer to home when he returned. His mother tried to talk him out of going overseas, but Retmier spent extra hours training with Navy SEALs. At night in Afghanistan, he was completing community college courses online.

Retmier exchanged e-mails and phone calls with his family and said he loved what he was doing, but they sensed the war was beginning to wear on him.

When his convoy delivered candy and coloring books to Afghan children, they often would throw rocks at the Humvees as they drove away.

“He felt like they were wasting their time there,” his mother said. “He was worried they didn’t want us there at all.”

His family has mixed feelings about the war. While they feel U.S. troops need to be fighting their mission, they say it’s frustrating to see so many lives lost.

“I don’t think we’re making any progress,” Joy Retmier said.

“These insurgents don’t care about human life,” added Steven Retmier. “But when it’s this personal, it’s impossible to be objective.”

On Friday, the family was overwhelmed with support from friends and relatives, who shared stories of watching Marc grow up in Hemet.

Retmier's body is scheduled to arrive at March Air Reserve Base next week. After a funeral in Corona del Mar, he will be buried beside his uncle, who died of natural causes at age 19 while serving in the Navy in 1975. "He's a hero," Dale Powers said. "He lived like a born warrior. I'm sure some people are born to be warriors."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S.-Allied Iraqi Politician Kills 2 U.S. Troops, Wounds 4 In Madain: "As News Of Ajil's Killings Spread, Some Residents Hailed Him As A Hero"

"A Taxi Driver At The Scene Pointed To The Bloodstains And Said, 'The Pigs Deserved This'"



Blood stains the ground near a camouflage pad that was part of a U.S. soldier's uniform outside the city council building in Madain, Iraq. Photo: Mohammed al Dulaimy / MCT

June 23, 2008 By Mohammed al Dulaimy and Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers & AP [Excerpts]

MADAIN, Iraq — A U.S.-allied Iraqi council member sprayed American troops with gunfire Monday, killing two soldiers and wounding three and an interpreter, Iraqi authorities and witnesses said. The attack occurred minutes after they emerged from a weekly joint meeting on reconstruction in this volatile town southeast of Baghdad.

Raed Mahmoud Ajil, a former high school principal in his mid-40s, was known as a respected city council member and devoted educator who'd recently returned to Iraq after completing his master's degree in India, stunned colleagues said. U.S. troops shot and killed him at the scene.

Ajil comes from a distinguished Sunni Muslim family. His brother is security chief for the Iraqi Ministry of Justice and a cousin is a high-ranking judge, relatives said.

Ajil's family said that he'd suffered from bouts of depression and sporadic epileptic seizures, which he masked in his role as a public servant. Relatives knew him to be friendly to U.S. troops and said he had no qualms about working alongside them, even though many in this mixed Sunni-Shiite Muslim town view American forces as occupiers.

"(The Americans) used to love him. They gave him a contract for a project he was working on. He spoke English fluently with them and they used to like him so much," said Sherif Abdullah Aziz, 47, a cousin. "There is no explanation that we know of for what happened."

Fadil Ahmed Abed, a Sunni council member who was formerly the chairman, said members of the council met with the Americans at about 10 a.m. after a ceremony to open a new city park. Abed said Ajil had sat silent during the meeting except when his signature was required for a school maintenance project. The meeting ran until about 1 p.m. As the Americans were walking out of the heavily guarded council headquarters, the shootings began.

"I was in the building. We heard gunshots followed by heavy shooting from the Americans. We tried to go out, but the troops stopped us," Abed said. "After that, the Americans came to us and said that council member Raed attacked U.S. soldiers."

"The reason behind this is absolutely unknown," Abed added. "The meeting was very routine. There were suggestions about reconstruction and about schools."

Abed didn't witness the shootings, but he said that authorities had told him that Ajil had walked out of the building with the Americans, rushed over to his truck and returned with an assault rifle.

At 5 p.m., the scene of the attack was still littered with bullet casings, puddles of blood and a camouflage protective pad that's part of a U.S. soldier's uniform.

A married father of three, Ajil was elected to the council in 2003 as an independent, relatives and colleagues said. In 2004, when sectarian violence in the town halted reconstruction, the city council was dissolved and many members fled or were killed.

Ajil left Iraq to complete his master's degree in India, returning frequently to check on his family and city, colleagues and relatives said. He'd returned for good only in the past week and had resumed his civic work.

Ajil's colleagues said that his life was focused on education; he'd graduated from Baghdad University and served as a high school principal for four years. He was the chairman of the council's education committee. Relatives said he'd struggled with depression since his youth and had stabbed a relative in a sudden fit of rage in 2000. "When he talks to you, he's very polite, an educated man, respectful," said Aziz, his cousin. "But back at home, he would go and close the door to his room and stay there for two days."

For decades, archaeologists have descended on Madain, also known as Salman Pak, about 15 miles south of Baghdad, an ancient town along the Tigris River that was home to the early cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

Anti-U.S. sentiment remains widespread, with many locals viewing the American presence as an intrusion.

As news of Ajil's killings spread, some residents hailed him as a hero.

Several uttered his name and added, "God rest his soul," and a taxi driver at the scene pointed to the bloodstains and said, "the pigs deserved this."

ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier holds a shovel as he works at outpost Carver, in Salman Pak, about 45 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad. REUTERS/Mahmoud Raouf Mahmoud

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Texas Marine Killed In Afghanistan



U.S. Marine Sgt. Matthew E. Mendoza was killed June 19, 2008 in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Mendoza Family via the San Antonio Express News)

“Death To America” [Winning Hearts And Minds Dept.]

23 June 2008 BBC

Officials in eastern Afghanistan said a civilian man and his young son had been killed in fighting overnight between US-led troops and militants in the Khogyani district of Nangarhar Province.

A local official said it was not clear who killed them. The coalition said it could not confirm any civilian deaths.

But a group of 200-300 locals demonstrated, blaming US forces. They shouted “death to America” and called for foreigners to leave the area as well as for compensation to be paid after the deaths of the civilians.

TROOP NEWS

“Veterans Directed Their Frustration At Policymakers In Washington, Especially At Democrats, Whom They Said Have Failed To Live Up To Their Promises To End The War”

“If Your Country Was Occupied And Someone In Your Family Was Shot, How Would You Feel Afterward?”



June 2, 2008 By Aditya Ganapathiraju, The Daily of the University of Washington
[Excerpts]

They bear the constant and invisible reminders of war. But on Saturday, Iraq veterans had the opportunity to share what they have experienced at the Northwest Winter Soldier, hosted by Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).

Speakers described the widespread dehumanization that occurred during their service. For instance, Iraqis are referred to by epithets like “raghead,” said the vets.

Navy corpsman Chanan Suarezdiaz was wounded by an rocket propelled grenade attack while he was attached to a Marine infantry unit. He recalled two Marines in another unit bragging about shooting a civilian in the stomach and later described the shooting of a 14-year-old Iraqi girl.

He asked the audience, if your country was occupied and someone in your family was shot, how would you feel afterward?

Twenty-three-year-old Sergio Kochergin, who served two tours with the 7th Marines as a scout and sniper, said that the dehumanization and racism was institutionalized even before they were in the country.

He described how the rules of engagement deteriorated quickly, and eventually got “kicked out the window,” as his unit’s casualties mounted.

When asked what his feelings were of the event, Master Sgt. Corey Sanders, senior military science instructor at the UW’s ROTC, said he defended these former military members’ right to demonstrate against the war.

He said he would continue to do so as long they told the truth and did not resort to violence or violate the law.

“Mistreating civilians serves no purpose, as it only makes an already tough job even harder,” Sanders, a soldier of 22 years and veteran of both the Iraq war and Desert Storm, wrote in an e-mail. Soldiers dislike war and have an obligation to report atrocities, he wrote.

“Yeah, I saw a lot of good things over there,” said Jim Lundstrom, a sergeant with the 3rd Infantry Division. “But overall, it was destruction ... and disruption of the Iraqi people and their country. We have to come together and speak out (about) why we believe this occupation is wrong, immoral, and unjust.”

The veterans directed their frustration at policymakers in Washington, especially at Democrats, whom they said have failed to live up to their promises to end the war.

They didn’t express much hope for the current candidates either, because their positions on Iraq do not include a full withdrawal, which is one of IVAW’s main principles.

Additionally, the group is pressing for reparations to the people of Iraq and full veterans benefits for returning GIs. Many of the soldiers at the rally lamented about the uphill battle in receiving proper care for their injuries when they returned home from the war.

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

More Than 10,000 British Troops Unfit For Frontline; “Conflict In Iraq And Afghanistan Takes Its Toll On The Army”

Jun 23 LONDON (AFP)

More than 10,000 British soldiers are unfit for frontline duty as the pressure of supplying troops for years of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan takes its toll on the army, the Sunday Telegraph reported.

The newspaper said the Ministry of Defence admits that 8,500 soldiers from the 59,000-strong “Field Army” -- units such as tank, artillery and infantry regiments --- are classified as unfit to serve at the front.

When other soldiers classified as unfit from the overall 101,800-strong army are taken into account, the total figure is likely to exceed 10,000, said the newspaper, which is traditionally close to the armed forces.

The figure of one in 10 soldiers classified as unfit for operations is the highest since the start of the Iraq war in 2003

Conservative MP and former army officer Patrick Mercer told the Sunday Telegraph that the soldiers were exhausted.

“The problem is that incessant operations are wearing down the troops’ resilience,” he said.

“They are not being given the time between operational deployments to catch their breath, let alone to recover from the effects of exhaustion, illness and wounds.

“There are not enough combat troops in the army for the job they are being asked to do.”

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Interview With The Resistance

#1:

Al-Rashideen Army;

“We Consider That The War Had Never Come To An End As Invaders Claimed”

“The Invaders Have Not Withdrawn Yet; We Are Part Of The Iraqi People Resisting The Occupation And We Are Dealing With The Language He Understands”

[Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, who sent this in.]

Q.) Have you been paying attention to the U.S. elections? What do you think of them?

Strong lobbies who financed the election campaigning will have the advantage in directing the policy for their benefit. Under this situation, do you think it is worthy to pay any attention to that who wins the White House?

It is well known that policy in the U.S. is like a moving train, never to let go out of the railway. Presidents have no power to change direction, he is rather just the driver of the train.”

May 2008: NEFA Foundation Exclusive: Interview with the Al-Rashideen Army.

[In May 2008, the prominent Iraqi insurgent organization known as the “Al-Rashideen Army” agreed to an exclusive English-language interview with NEFA Senior Investigator Evan Kohlmann.

For more information on the Al-Rashideen Army, the Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI), the Reform and Jihad Front (RJF), and other Sunni insurgent groups cited in this interview,

see nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/iraqreport0807.pdf) "State of the Sunni Insurgency in Iraq: August 2007"

Q.) What is the Al-Rashideen Army? It is a political movement, a military movement, or both? Who was responsible for founding the Al-Rashideen Army? When was it founded?

A.) "The Al-Rashideen Army is a military group resisting the occupation forces. It was founded a few days after occupation of Baghdad. Its initial start was just small groups consisting of brave Iraqis of all sects and disciplines, including previous Iraqi Army. All these people pledged to fight the occupation forces.

They all raised the flag of jihad for the sake of Almighty God to liberate their country."

Q.) How many fighters does the Al-Rashideen Army consist of? What impact generally have fighters from the Al-Rashideen Army had on the insurgency? Why should those who are unfamiliar with the Al-Rashideen Army recognize its critical importance within the Iraqi insurgency?

A.) "In general, armies are not evaluated by how much they count; they are rather evaluated by their effect on enemy.

It is very well known that the fast infantry German forces which is very well known all over the world counts only 120 troops.

The most important inspiring drive is the faith of the army as well as the absolute believes in the rightness of their case and the legitimacy of their objectives. Believing in God and depending on him because victory is from Allah and Allah alone.

However, there are means and methods to increase the ability of the fighters like the training, best use of ammunition, increasing job numbers for every fighter and ability to have the initiative and fitness.

Al-Rashideen Army function all over Iraqi land.

Every square foot of Iraqi land is the real place for Al-Rashideen Army. And for sure there must be presence for them everywhere and any where all over Iraq.

That is for high flexibility they enjoy as well as immediate response they trained for.

Each and every individual of Al-Rashideen Army stick firmly to combat rule and do respect all principles of jihad.

Of these principles and rules are of being cautious not to hurt any innocent person and for that matter absolutely forbidden any type of punishment on the basis of allegation and accusation.

Furthermore, Al-Rashideen Army strongly believes and supports the unity of all resistance groups and always to adapt quiet negotiation to solve any issue may develop among fighters.

Commanders and directors are always with their troops in the battlefield, without losing order.

The noble terms and conditions organizing this group of fighters make it the most respectful group.”

Q.) What are the political principles of the Al-Rashideen Army? What is the role of the fighters from the Al-Rashideen Army after the end of the occupation?

A.) “Al-Rashideen Army has a political program coincided completely with political framework of Jihad and Change Front and the political views of all other resistance groups.

The program is focusing on the liberation of Iraq and contributes to build free independent country in which the law will be preserved and none has the power or Authority to challenge the law.

All Iraqis are equal and there must be no one privileged over the other because of race, religion or sect. The treaty which was signed fourteen hundred years ago between our prophet peace upon him from one side and Jewish and other groups from the other side in Al-Medina is the treaty that will inspiring us to build the state of freedom and justice.”

Q.) Some have referred to you as part of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, while others allege that you are followers of the Salafi-Jihad movement, what is your response?

A.) “These claims and allegation are totally baseless and they are old ones. We depend on holy Quran and prophet tradition and all applications, practices and methods of governing and ruling adapted by the companion and followers of the prophet. Salafy is the connecting ring in the chain which cannot be overlooked or ignored. Salafy in fact were successful to establish and put the term and conditions as well as the best understanding of Sharia (Muslim Canon) in real world. That is not to say that we do not make use of experiences of others to support our conductance.”

Q.) What religious leaders does the Al-Rashideen Army follow? What is your opinion on Dr. Yusef al-Qaradawi, or the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq?

A.) “Our case in Iraq is clear cut; we fight to defend our country in a holy war imposed upon us. Fighting against invaders is a must to each individual adult (men or women, single or married).

Under this condition our case does not need religious leader to explain its compliances with Sharia. However, we have a committee with each group of fighters to watch acts of each and every one of them. That is for insuring better implementation of Islamic Law. This committee is also administered the religion education and to secure that every fighter always fully aware of his religious practices.

Concerning our stand toward Dr. Al-Qardawy we do respect him as well as other religious leaders and clergymen. We for sure always maintain equal respect and trust to all."

Q.) Were the fighters from the Al-Rashideen Army part of the Saddam Hussein regime or the Baath party? According to Shariah law, was Saddam a criminal or a hero?

A.) "No we do not have any relationship with Saddam government and for that matter we do not have any relation with Al-Baath Party. Concerning Saddam himself now he is dead and at the hands of Allah, the most merciful, and it would not change this fact the way we look to him."

Q.) Where were the mujahideen of the Al-Rashideen Army during the U.S. invasion of Iraq? Were they part of the fighters then? Or did they join the fight later?

A.) "We consider that the war had never come to an end as invaders claimed. It is rather continued over all these past 5 years.

The invaders have not withdrawn yet; we are part of the Iraqi people resisting the occupation and we are dealing with the language he understands."

Q.) During the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the U.S. government claimed that Al-Qaida had worked in partnership with Saddam Hussein. What is your view of these allegations and do you have any evidence to prove them?

A.) "Did the American Intelligence Agency (CIA) or other security offices confirm these allegations? The answer is NO according to Director of CIA Declaration. The fact you know before all others."

Q.) In your opinion, what are the most important events and battles in the history of the Iraqi insurgency? What was the importance of the battle for Fallujah in 2004? What were the major turning points for the Iraqi insurgency?

A.) "We, an army, have our own analysis for that period.

We think that Iraqi resistance passed through several stages.

It started the first stage in formulation and capacity building.

Then (came the) stage of fortification and putting the fighters against the invaders.

Followed by the stage of liberation fighting.

We are now very close to the fourth and last stage.

We prepare its need and conditions.

Concerning the main battle, we think that all our battles and military combat are important irrespective to its impact on the enemy. Simply because they represent the highest degree of planning and performing.

They are the same because we are facing the strongest Army on Earth.

An army equipped with all sophisticated intelligence, most powerful ammunition, and super technology.

Therefore [to] stand before such troops and cause them considerable loses means we are real brave and successful to handle excellent battle with excellent planning and organization.”

Q.) Everyone knows who (Al-Qaida in Iraq commanders) Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamza al-Muhajir are, but would you like to share with Americans the names of some mujahideen leaders who are not from the Al-Qaida organization? Is it possible for you to mention something about the most prominent mujahideen from the Al-Rashideen Army, or from your allies, over the history of the insurgency?

A.) “Through the entire history, have you ever seen that mujahdeen commanders are after a fame or name? Leaders of resistance in general are in a dynamic change and continuous formulation. No one single resistance group had a fixed leader. Leaders always change. Leader of various ranking are under continuous change. All those who have been killed we said without any hesitation are real heroic mujahideen in the sake of Allah.”

Q.) In the past, the Al-Rashideen Army has claimed joint military operations with the Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI) and the Reform and Jihad Front (RJF). Do you still have a relationship with the IAI or RJF?

A.) “We are the main component of the RJF and we are with all groups. We think existing of numerous groups is a healthy situation, as long as, we all have the same objective.

One objective is enough to gather us all. Therefore we in the battle support effort of each other to inflict the highest losses against the enemy.”

Q.) Many Americans do not wish to stay in Iraq, but at the same time, are worried about the consequences of an outbreak of civil war between Sunnis and Shiites, and the return of the influence of Al-Qaida if there were to be an abrupt withdrawal of our troops. What is your opinion on this, and on the future of the sectarian militias and Al-Qaida in Iraq? What would you say to those Americans?

A.) “Were Iraqis before the American invasion fighting each other for sectarian differences or, for that matter, was Iraq a yard of fighting amongst its component?

This is absolutely American cheap speculations (which) keep telling it to legitimize their staying in Iraq; also they want to fool the American people to vote for longer stay of their troops in Iraq.

I want to ask simple question to prove my point here — for a period of six months after occupation, there was not even on police man in the street, cities, or neighborhoods to observe the order and law.

However, there was not even one single incident of sectarian conflict had been reported.

Is not that clear evidence of the great coherence of the Iraqis and (that) the sectarian conflict has just arisen under the occupation?

I believe if that had happened in any other country, it (would have) resulted in a real chaos.

Therefore, Americans need not to be worry of what will happen to Iraqis after their withdrawal from Iraq. Law will prevail and master the life after the invasion.

For sure, those came with the invaders will not be able to stay in Iraq. They have to leave with their masters.”

Q.) What is your position regarding the Awakening Councils? Does the Al-Rashideen Army participate in any way with these Councils?

A.) “The Awakening Councils are American made, designed and produc[ed] in RAND institutions and others. They are simple groups of local paid people fulfilling the orders of America.

Q.) During his most recent speech, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi introduced a truce agreement offered to other insurgent groups which were harmed by the Al-Qaida organization. What is the result of this offer? Did the Al-Rashideen Army receive such an invitation?

A.) “We have never heard of it, and we do not credit any audio recordings, our intelligence rather does not recognize audio recordings, to take action or make decisions.”

Q.) Also, recently, during a question and answer session, Al-Qaida’s Deputy Commander indicated that the establishment of Al-Qaida’s Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) was a step towards the re-establishment of a greater Islamic empire — and therefore — Al-Qaida superceded all other jihad movements in Iraq, and accordingly, it is the duty of other mujahideen groups to acknowledge their superiority (and not the reverse). Regarding suicide bombing attacks on markets and mosques, Zawahiri said this was merely American and Saudi media propaganda. Was al-Zawahiri correct or incorrect?

A.) “There is a problem in Tibet for China — is it possible for me to prescribe the solutions for their problem? We are a people in this region for 6000 year before Christ, end[ing] with Islam, and we are fully capable of ruling and managing our own affairs. We do not need others to tell us what to do.”

Q.) Which voices from the Iraqi insurgency should Americans pay attention to?

A.) “I do not believe that Americans are willing to listen to Iraqi resistance groups.

If they are serious about it, then they need to know that Iraqi resistance is one and asks them to leave our country.”

Q.) Have you been paying attention to the U.S. elections? What do you think of them?

A.) “We know that the U.S. is a greatly institutionalized country with firm management and high level of bureaucracy, accordingly a U.S. president doesn’t have much freedom for personal decision.

Policy and decision-making is hard to do.

Strong lobbies who financed the election campaigning will have the advantage in directing the policy for their benefit.

Under this situation, do you think it is worthy to pay any attention to that who wins the White House?

It is well known that policy in the U.S. is like a moving train, never to let go out of the railway. Presidents have no power to change direction, he is rather just the driver of the train.”

MORE:

Interview With The Resistance #2: Al-Fatih Al-Islami Brigades; “Our Military Wing Has Worked Day And Night To Defeat The Occupation Forces” “The Americans Must Listen To The Voices Refusing The Occupation”

[Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, who sent this in.]

May 2008: NEFA Foundation Exclusive: Interview with Ahmad Said al-Hamed, Spokesman for the Political Wing of “ Hamas al-Iraq ” (a.k.a. the Al-Fatih al-Islami Brigades, the Islamic Resistance Movement) [Excerpts]

In May 2008, the prominent Iraqi insurgent organization known as “ Hamas al-Iraq ” (a.k.a. the “ Al-Fatih al-Islami Brigades ”) agreed to an exclusive Arabic-language interview with NEFA Senior Investigator Evan Kohlmann.

For more information on Hamas al-Iraq, the 1920 Revolution Brigades, and other Sunni insurgent groups cited in this interview, see “State of the Sunni Insurgency in Iraq: August 2007” nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/iraqreport0807.pdf

Q.) What is Hamas al-Iraq? It is a political movement, a military movement, or both? Who was responsible for founding Hamas al-Iraq?

A.) "The establishment of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas al-Iraq) came after the American occupation took over our country.

It first formed, launched itself, and announced its name in June 2003, which means two months after the occupation — though its personnel began resisting during the first days of the occupation.

However, it was not known by this name or location; then, it was known as 'the National Islamic Resistance Movement', and in 2005 (specifically on July 25, 2005), it took the name of 'The Islamic Resistance Movement.'

At that point, it created a military wing, and that was known as the 1920 Revolution Brigades. Later, the general command of the Movement decided to split into two parts because of some internal administrative disagreements. Several of the fighting units decided to break off, while still operating under the name of the former military wing, by which we mean the 1920 Revolution Brigades. The others remained under the banner of the movement... (and) reorganized its forces under three main wings, as follows:"

- "The military wing represented by (the Al-Fatih al-Islami Brigades). They serve as the military forces of the movement and were initially comprised of 64 brigades spread across the areas of resistance operations."

- "The political wing, which itself is comprised of domestic and foreign relations committees, and the media department."

- "The civic wing that organizes civic actions on behalf of the movement across diverse segments of the Iraqi population, and this wing also contains the Shariah Department, which is in charge of addressing questions of Shariah faced by the movement."

"This happened in March 2007 and, as a result, the movement distinguished itself by adopting this new acronym (HAMAS). So the name became: The Islamic Resistance Movement / Hamas al- Iraq, as it is a full-responsibility movement, taking care of all aspects of daily life and easing the impact of the occupation on the Iraqi citizenry."

Q.) What impact generally have fighters from Hamas al-Iraq had on the insurgency? Why should those who are unfamiliar with Hamas al-Iraq recognize its critical importance within the Iraqi insurgency?

A.) "Hamas al-Iraq has spread--anyone who monitors the situation in Iraq will be well familiar — in Baghdad, Anbar, and Fallujah; passing through Ramadi, the center of the province, and reaching out to Al-Qaim, Salahuddin, Diyala, Kirkuk, and Nineveh. This has made the movement a firm reality in every formal aspect, and it has established its influence in all matters regarding the situation in Iraq."

Q.) What are the political principles of Hamas? What is the role of the army of Hamas after the end of the occupation?

A.) "We are a movement established as a reaction to the foreign occupation of Iraq.

Our first goal is to liberate Iraq, and then to participate in the re-building of Iraq in accordance with the principles of justice, equality, and citizenship.

The fast spread of the moderate ideology of our movement has caused it to be enthusiastically accepted among the population. That's why it has become an important force, and not easy to simply bypass, when it comes to military and political action."

Q.) Some have referred to you as part of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, while others allege that you are followers of the Salafi-Jihad movement, what is your response?

A.) "Our movement is independent in its decisions and actions and that is what our personnel have sworn to uphold. However, it is no secret that some of our personnel adhere to the Brotherhood ideology, which means that within the movement there are also differing opinions as well.

However, everyone has agreed upon the moderate ideology of the movement which fits the fabric of Iraqi society across all its ethnicities and sects. Perhaps, this is one of the central merits of our movement."

Q.) What religious leaders does Hamas al-Iraq follow? What is your opinion on Dr. Yusef al- Qaradawi, or the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq?

Were the fighters from Hamas al-Iraq part of the Saddam Hussein regime or the Baath party? According to Shariah law, was Saddam a criminal or a hero?

Where were the mujahideen of Hamas al-Iraq during the U.S. invasion of Iraq?

A.) "Hamas al-Iraq, as we said before, is independent in its management and decisions and has its own (religious) sources within the movement. It has a Shariah Committee in charge of general directions and monitoring, and to oversee that our actions are in accordance with pure Shariah.

We regard all the other Islamic movements with respect, and deal with them as they represent a respectful point of view: the Association of Muslim Scholars, the Council of Iraqi Clerics, and other Islamic movements resisting the foreign occupation.

We have a good relationship with them, but we have our own vision that might match or diverge from theirs.

Regarding our relationship with Saddam or the Baath regime, it does not exist, because our movement was established after the occupation began. Also, because the movement is Islamic in its orientation and actions, it is in conflict with the core of their ideology — even though some of the members of our movement were (part of) the former regime.

Regarding where were the mujahideen of Hamas at the beginning of the occupation, as we have said before, the movement is comprised of the fabric of the entire Iraqi people — we have the businessmen, the students, and the ex-soldiers.

Since the start of the occupation, all of them have sworn to defend their homeland and liberate the country.”

Q.) During the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the U.S. government claimed that Al-Qaida had worked in partnership with Saddam Hussein. What is your view of these allegations and do you have any evidence to prove them?

A.) “The answers came from inside the institutions of America rejecting the truth of this information, as there is no proof of any relationship between Saddam and Al-Qaida.”

Q.) In your opinion, what are the most important events and battles in the history of the Iraqi insurgency? What was the importance of the battle for Fallujah in 2004? What were the major turning points for the Iraqi insurgency?

A.) “Every day of resistance against the occupiers is important and plays a role in our liberation. Still, the first and second Fallujah battles in 2004 had their significance and the resistance benefited from them greatly, which made it a continuing strength and a continuing project.”

Q.) Everyone knows who (Al-Qaida in Iraq commanders) Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamza al-Muhajir are, but would you like to share with Americans the names of some mujahideen leaders who are not from the Al-Qaida organization?

A.) “If you meant knowing those two persons by their names only, the answer is yes as everybody else knows. However, whatever is the truth behind them or about them, we do not know. If you have any information about them, then we hope you will be able to share it with us.”

Q.) Has Hamas al-Iraq worked with other Iraqi insurgent groups besides the Reform and Jihad Front (RJF)? Has Hamas al-Iraq found particular inspiration in the operations or statements of any other insurgent groups?

A.) “Since the establishment of the movement, we have tried to work in cooperation with all the other armed organizations, and that was through the creation of a liaison office in 2006 with the Mujahideen Army, the Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI), and the Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance (JAAMI). In 2007, this cooperation resulted in the creation of the Political Council for the Iraqi Resistance (PCIR) with a group of armed organizations. They are: the Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI), the Mujahideen Army, the Al-Fatihin Army, the Shariah Committee of the Ansar al-Sunnah Army, and the Iraqi Islamic Resistance Front (JAAMI).

In addition, we have cooperation in the field with all the other armed organizations in the region except Al-Qaida, and everyone has fought against them because we see this group as promoting a particular agenda that does not fit with the realities of Iraqi society.

As for our relationship with the other political fronts, the Reform and Jihad Front (RJF) is part of the Political Council [for the Iraqi Resistance] and we work with them in full cooperation. With regards to the Front for Jihad and Change (FJC), we have a good relationship with them—even though we differ in some subjects, we agree on some other subjects.”

Q.) Many Americans do not wish to stay in Iraq, but at the same time, are worried about the consequences of an outbreak of civil war between Sunnis and Shiites, and the return of the influence of Al-Qaida if there were to be an abrupt withdrawal of our troops. What is your opinion on this, and on the future of the sectarian militias and Al-Qaida in Iraq?

What would you say to those Americans?

A.) “The civil war is a creation of the occupier, and one of his tools. Iraqis have lived together for centuries as beloved brothers. There were no sectarian or nationalist disagreements, and when the occupation leaves, the fabric of the nation fabric will repair itself and come back together as one, Allah willing.”

Q.) Sources in the U.S. media have claimed that some commanders linked with Hamas al-Iraq— such as “Abu Abed”—are working with the Awakening Councils and other groups allied with the U.S.

Also, there are reports that Hamas al-Iraq is only fighting against Al-Qaida, rather than with the U.S. military. What is the truth of these claims? When did the conflict begin between the insurgents and Al-Qaida?

A.) “We do not have among us a commander called Abu Abed, and we heard of him as you have.

We have no relationship with the Awakening Councils, even though we understand that these councils emerged as a normal reaction to the encroachment and misjudgments of the Al-Qaida organization and the sectarian militias, as well as the merging of various sects of the Iraqi people by the regime.

With regards to the subject of fighting against the occupiers, our military wing has worked day and night to defeat the occupation forces, and you can go back to other media outlets to see that the activity of the fighters is continuing on in the various provinces that we are active in.

Even though we have fought against the Al-Qaida organization because they killed a number of our mujahideen, this will not distract us from our primary goal, and that is the liberation of Iraq by all necessary means.”

Q.) During his most recent speech, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi introduced a truce agreement offered to other insurgent groups which were harmed by the Al-Qaida organization. What is the result of this offer?

A.) “For our positions on the battlefield, we do not rely upon on speeches and statements which have been proven unworthy and ineffective in the past. We want the situation to change for this group, however the facts prove otherwise.”

Q.) Also, recently, during a question and answer session, Al-Qaida's Deputy Commander indicated that the establishment of Al-Qaida's Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) was a step towards the re-establishment of a greater Islamic empire — and therefore — Al-Qaida superceded all other jihad movements in Iraq, and accordingly, it is the duty of other mujahideen groups to acknowledge their superiority (and not the reverse).

Regarding suicide bombing attacks on markets and mosques, Zawahiri said this was merely American and Saudi media propaganda. Was al-Zawahiri correct or incorrect?

A.) "Ruling according to the Shariah law is an objective outcome which comes about when people adhere to the true meanings of Islamic Shariah — which does not accord with ruling through the killing of innocent civilians or the killing of other resistance mujahideen.

Those who desire to rule in accordance with Islam must first understand true Islam, and prevent their hands and the hands of those working under them from spilling innocent blood and taking what does not belong to them.

We do not deny that the region is wide open and Iraq has become a place to settle vengeance and to mix issues up with each other."

Q.) Which voices from the Iraqi insurgency should Americans pay attention to?

A.) "The Americans must listen to the voices refusing the occupation.

Even if some have sold out their homeland to the occupiers, there is still a renegade segment of the people who continue to refuse to comply through their actions of resistance, such as in the insurgent organizations or as part of the political resistance.

The occupier must know that this segment is the larger of the two, and the most capable of changing the current realities.

Any resolution must be accepted by these people, because for five years, they have been the ones confronting the American project and they are the ones who are most capable of undermining American strength in the region.

This is why the solution starts with the announcement of the withdrawal of their forces and negotiations with the resistance and the Iraqi people to arrange for this withdrawal."

Q.) Have you been paying attention to the U.S. elections? What do you think of them?

A.) "The elections--even we are following them--are still, primarily, an internal American issue and their impact on foreign policy is minimal.

We do not see any difference between the one who sits in the White House and even the average American citizen himself. However, we hope that America will elect a leader who will better its people and who will initiate reconciliation among the nations of the world--most of all, with the people of Iraq and the Islamic nation."

Resistance Action

6.20.08 AP & Reuters & 22 June 2008 Viewlondon & (Reuters) & 6.23 AP

Late Sunday, 10 members of a U.S.-funded awakening council group were killed and 24 were wounded during a mortar attack in Udaim, about 70 miles north of Baghdad, according to army Maj. Mohammed Thawra.

A roadside bomb exploded Monday near a U.S.-funded awakening council patrol in Buhriz, a suburb of Baqouba, killing two of the fighters,

A car bomber attacked a police checkpoint, wounding five policemen in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

At least 11 Iraqi policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their patrol in Mosul. Local police say a bomber walked up to police standing outside a government building before detonating an explosive device. At least 8 police have been killed.

Insurgents killed one policeman and wounded another in a drive-by shooting at checkpoint on Saturday in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

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.**

**"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins**

The Thousand Yard Betrayal



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: June 22, 2008
Subject: Winter Soldier II Investigation

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

The Thousand Yard Betrayal

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71

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

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



An Iraqi family is forced at gunpoint to get out of their own home by armed foreign occupiers from the U.S. Army in Mosul, June 12, 2008. REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 130,000 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!**

Five Years Later, Still No Oil For Blood: [Meanwhile, Back In The Real World....]

[Hysterical yammering and yapping and heavy breathing by pompous pundits notwithstanding, facts are stubborn things. T]

June 19, 2008 Business Week

A top Iraqi Oil Ministry official, Natiq al-Bayati, head of contracts and licensing, has been meeting executives from foreign oil majors in the Jordanian capital of Amman in recent weeks.

He hopes to hammer out so-called technical support agreements that could improve Iraqi oil output over time.

Differences over payments need to be ironed out.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government still hasn't created a legal framework for exploiting the huge oil reserves that would attract and protect the investments of international oil concerns.

Definitions O Iraqi New Burn Terms

June 23, 2008 by Laith, Inside Iraq; washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/

Security plan:

A term means putting more and more useless blastwalls and checkpoints that do nothing but getting Iraqis crazy and creating traffic jams.

National reconciliation:

An imaginative term means to restore the demographic situation of Baghdad as it was before the invasion which is more difficult than building a highway to link Baghdad with Washington.

Federation:

A term means creating small IRAQS inside IRAQ.

Rebuilding and construction:

A term means to build more and more pavements in order to paint them ten times with ugly and cheap white and yellow colors then change them after few months by the same contractor because he wants to buy a new house for his wife or his son.

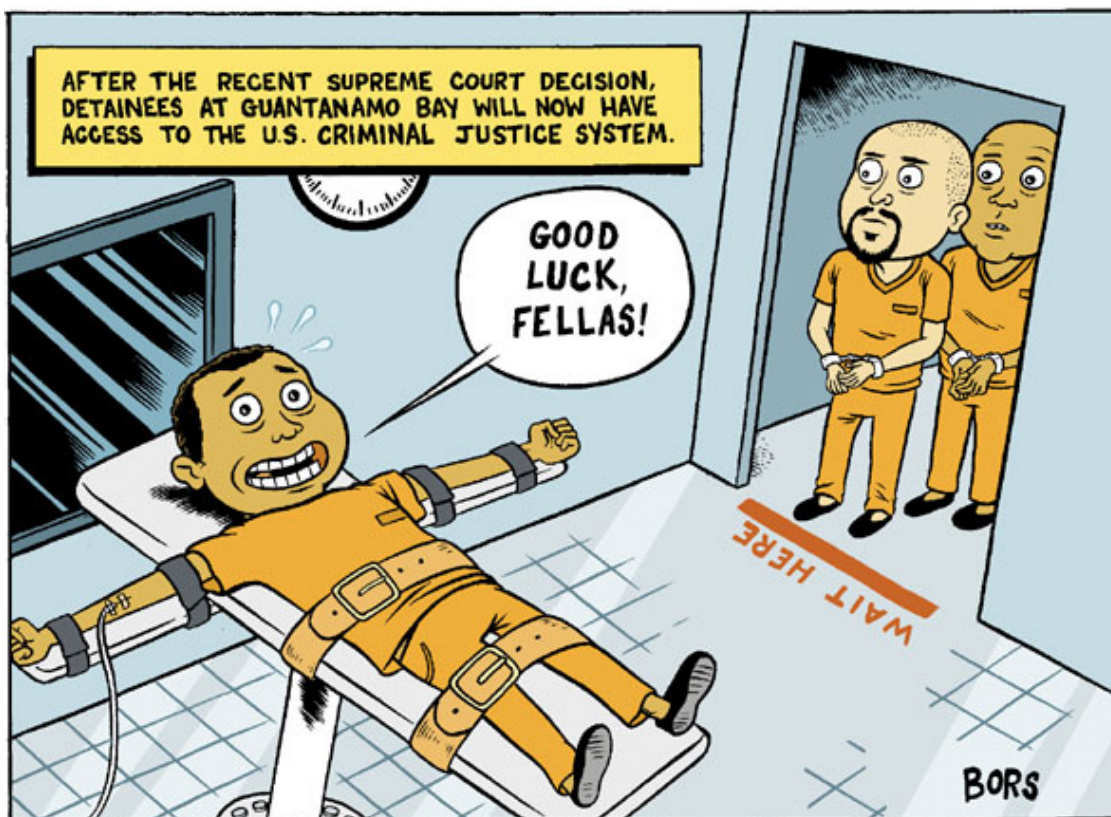
Political sharing system:

A term means dominating Iraq natural resources by the political blocs and entities and ignoring poor Iraqis who raised these blocs to their current positions.

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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/)



GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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