

GI SPECIAL 6H19:

S.O.S. Save Our Soldiers



Iraq Veterans Against the War rally in Cuernavaca Park in Denver on August 24, 2008.
(Carlos Illescas, The Denver Post)

08/24/2008 By Carlos Illescas, The Denver Post

About 100 participants with the Iraq Veterans Against the War group arrived at Union Station around 1:45 p.m. today, targeting the Democratic National Convention and chanting anti-war messages and carrying signs saying "Stop the War."

Michael Spinnato, a former Marine, said he realized that the war was wrong after returning from combat and attending college at the University of Massachusetts.

"There is no explanation why we are still there," he said.

"Bush and Cheney lied about weapons of mass destruction."

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:

Iraq Veterans Demand Immediate Withdrawal: “Two Parties Got Us In The War And Two Parties Continue To Fund It”



Garett Reppenhagen of Iraq Veterans Against the War. Photo by Barry Gutierrez

August 27, 2008 AP & Rocky Mountain News

DENVER COLISEUM - Garrett Reppenhagen, the former chairman of the Iraq Veterans Against the War, said he does not believe the protesters will incite any violence today.

Reppenhagen, who served as a sniper in the First Infantry Division in Kosovo and Iraq, will be one of the speakers at today's concert.

"Any violence will be initiated by the police," he said.

The 33-year-old said he plans to march today to protest the Democratic National Convention.

"Two parties got us in the war and two parties continue to fund it," Reppenhagen said. "We want more vigilance and oversight."

Iraq Veterans Against the War carries an agenda of three priorities: to bring troops home from Iraq, to restore the Iraqi community, and to guarantee full and adequate healthcare for veterans.

War service in Afghanistan led Matthis Chiroux, 24, of New York City, to the conclusion that the Iraq war should end immediately.

Members of his organization, Iraq Veterans Against the War, walked around in military fatigues on Tuesday "detaining" volunteers to give observers an idea of what it's like to serve in Iraq.

They were hosting Wednesday's concert and planned a march after the show to the main convention site.



MORE:

So, Which Side Are *You* On?

The Bloody Two-Headed Troop- Butchering Imperial Rat, McBama, Or The Growing Movement From Below?



Police in riot gear surround citizens demonstrating against the Democratic Party on 15th Street near Civic Center Park in downtown Denver on August 25. "This is what a police state looks like. You're worried about Beijing? This is repression," one activist shouted. (Jason Halley, Special to The Denver Post) [Thanks to Mark Shapiro, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier

Aug. 27, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20080827-02

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier died at a Coalition forces medical facility in Baghdad today as a result of wounds sustained following an IED attack Aug. 26.

The Soldier was wounded after the vehicle he was traveling in was struck by an improvised explosive device in northeastern Baghdad Aug. 26.

Another U.S. Soldier Killed In Baghdad

8.25.08 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080825-02

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier died of wounds Aug. 25 at a Coalition Forces Combat Army Support Hospital.

The Soldier was shot by a small-arms attack during a dismounted patrol in northern Baghdad. The Soldier was quickly transported to the medical facility but later succumbed to the wounds.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



A U.S. soldier from the Second Stryker Cavalry Regiment at the Diyala media center in Diyala province August 6, 2008. REUTERS/Andrea Comas

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Slain Marine Just Wanted To Stay Alive

Aug 22, 2008 By Jim Walsh, The Arizona Republic

A 19-year-old Mesa Marine had a simple but essential goal for this year: to stay alive.

But Lance Cpl. Juan Lopez-Castaneda, described by a priest as “a warrior” and “a free spirit,” died Aug. 14 with two other Marines while supporting combat operations in Helmand province in Afghanistan.

Lopez-Castaneda, who was born in Mexico but grew up in Mesa, was the 12th Mesa resident to die in Operation Enduring Freedom and the 123rd Arizonan killed in Iraq and Afghanistan since the war began, according to a listing compiled by azcentral.com.

“He was a very honest guy, strong in his decisions and very proud serving in the Marines,” the Rev. Kilian McCaffrey of Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Mesa said of Lopez-Castaneda. “He died doing what he believed in: fighting for freedom. He will be rewarded.”

Lopez-Castaneda’s simple wish was listed on his MySpace profile. One relative, identified only as Sandra, reacted with shock and sadness in a message she posted.

“Hopefully, it’s just a mistake. If not, Juan Pedro RIP. We all love you. You are one of my favorite cousins,” she wrote. “I will pray that God takes you with him.”

Lopez-Castaneda wrote on his site that he was born in Zacatecas, Mexico, but McCaffrey said family members told him the Marine was a U.S. citizen. Lopez-Castaneda received his first Holy Communion and was confirmed at Queen of Peace Church, the priest said.

He said the fallen Marine would be remembered at a rosary service at 8:30 Wednesday night at Queen of Heaven Cemetery, 1500 E. Baseline Road, Mesa. A funeral Mass is scheduled for 10 a.m. Thursday at Queen of Peace Church, 141 N. Macdonald.

The Department of Defense released few details about the deaths of Lopez-Castaneda; Cpl. Anthony Mihalo, 23, of Naperville, Ill.; and Lance Cpl. Jacob J. Toves, 27, of Grover Beach, Calif. Lt. Curtis Williamson, a Marine spokesman, said a “battle-damage assessment” is under way and Marine policy restricts information about deaths to protect other service members.

He said Lopez-Castaneda was a rifleman who joined the Marine Corps on June 4, 2007. He was on his first deployment and received the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

Lopez-Castaneda was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1 Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Sew The Wind, Reap The Whirlwind

[GET THE MESSAGE?]



People condemn a U.S. air strike on Friday in Azizabad district of Shindand, in Afghanistan that killed 90 villagers, mostly women and children August 23, 2008. (Mohammad Shoiab/Reuters)

August 24, 2008 By Chris Hedges, TruthDig.com & August 27, 2008 Canwest News Service

KABUL, Afghanistan -- A United Nations team has found “convincing evidence” that 90 civilians, including 60 children, were killed in U.S.-led air strikes last week.

Ghulam Azrat, the director of the middle school in Azizabad, said he collected 60 bodies after the bombing. “We put the bodies in the main mosque,” he told the Associated Press by phone, sometimes pausing to collect himself as he wept.

“Most of these dead bodies were children and women. It took all morning to collect them.”

Azrat said villagers on Saturday threw stones at Afghan soldiers who arrived and tried to give out food and clothes. He said the soldiers fired into the crowd and wounded eight people, including one child.

“The people were very angry,” he said.

“They told the soldiers, ‘We don’t need your food, we don’t need your clothes. We want our children. We want our relatives. Can you give (them) to us? You cannot, so go away.’”

Danish Soldier Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

08-25 AFP

A Danish soldier serving with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led forces in Afghanistan was killed Monday when his tank drove over an improvised explosive device, the Danish military said in a statement.

The soldier was seriously injured in the blast and was evacuated by helicopter to a field hospital at Camp Bastion in southwestern Afghanistan where he died, the statement said.

Denmark currently has some 700 troops in the country, most of whom are stationed in the southwestern Helmand province under U.K. command.

German Soldier Killed, Two Wounded In Chardara

Aug 27 (AFP) & DPA

A German soldier was killed in an attack in northern Afghanistan Wednesday that also slightly injured three other German troops, the German government said. The soldiers' armoured vehicle was hit by a remote-controlled roadside bomb about 6 kilometres south of the provincial capital, Kunduz.

An eight-vehicle convoy patrolling in the district of Chardara in Kunduz province ran into a booby trap at 9:25 local time (0455 GMT), German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung said.

Jung said three other troops were wounded and flown to Mazar-i-Sharif for treatment.

Painted Post Soldier Wounded In Afghanistan

August 25, 2008 Press Connects

Jonathan Ryall, a 27-year-old U.S. Army sergeant from Painted Post west of Elmira, was seriously wounded Friday as he attempted to disarm a bomb in southern Afghanistan.

His parents, David and Ginger Ryall, of Painted Post, said their son suffered a broken left arm and fractured sinuses, eye socket and cheekbone in the explosion. He also suffered second-degree burns to his face.

Ryall, a demolitions expert, was attempting to disarm a homemade bomb when a hidden bomb was detonated by remote control, his father said. He was in full bomb disposal gear at the time of the explosion.

Ryall was evacuated from Afghanistan and flown to a U.S. military hospital in Germany on Saturday. On Sunday, he was flown to Brooks Army Hospital in San Antonio for treatment.

His mother said Ryall was alert and responding to commands from medical personnel. He was placed on a respirator as a precaution and has been unable to talk since the incident.

Ryall is a 1999 graduate of Corning West High School, where he was active in the Masterworks theater group. He is also a graduate of Messiah College in Grantham, Pa.

War Supplies For Afghan Occupation Attacked In Pakistan: Two APCs Burned

August 25, 2008 Al Nisr Publishing LLC

Karachi: Militants set fire to two armoured personal carriers (APCs) headed to US forces in Afghanistan from Karachi, police said on Monday.

A lorry carrying the APCs was stationed at Karachi's port since August 18 due to a truckers' strike on fuel costs.

"They were armed and about two dozen of them. They first fired and then burned the two APCs," a police official said.

Militants have threatened to start target Afghan-bound military supplies that are transported via Karachi.

Other Resistance Action

Aug 22 KABUL (AFP) & 27 August 2008 Quqnoos

A ROADSIDE bomb blast has killed at least four police officers in the central province of Ghazni, an official said. The head of the Qarabagh district said the bomb, which

targeted a police vehicle, exploded on Tuesday afternoon. The Taliban said 10 police officers were killed in the explosion.

Two Afghan soldiers were killed in Badghis province Friday when their vehicles hit a bomb, an Afghan army officer said.

Gunmen killed a judge of local court and his son outside their house Saturday in Kandahar city, provincial capital of south province Kandahar, a provincial police chief said. They "reached the judge's house and knocked at the door at about 1 p.m. local time," Matiullah Khan told Xinhua, adding the judge and his son were killed when they answered the door out of the house.

**“For Soldiers Gripped By The
Senselessness Of Their
Mission, Afghanistan Presents
A Situation At Least As
Harrowing As Iraq”**

**“Privates Disobeyed Their
Sergeants, And Squad Leaders
Refused To Step Outside The Wire
To Show The New Boys The
Terrain”**

**“No One Wanted To Be Shot In The
Last Days Of His Tour”**

**“Obama Is Already Promising To Send At
Least Two Additional Combat Brigades To
Afghanistan”**

August 22, 2008 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Since the beginning of July, 70 coalition troops have been killed in Afghanistan, compared to just 31 U.S. troops killed in Iraq during the same period.

Already this year, 192 NATO troops have been killed in Afghanistan, compared to 232 killed in all of last year, which itself was the deadliest for NATO troops since the war began in 2001.

This makes the stakes for the U.S. in Afghanistan higher than ever--and simultaneously places new demands on the U.S. antiwar movement.

SINCE 2003, the antiwar movement has anchored itself in opposition to the U.S. war on Iraq, which was generally understood as a “war of choice” undertaken by the Bush administration.

But the movement has been at best muted in its criticism--and at worst actually supportive--of the U.S. war on Afghanistan as a “legitimate” targeting of al-Qaeda’s Osama bin Laden following the September 11, 2001, attacks.

But in fact, the U.S. didn’t invade Afghanistan to “bring the perpetrators of 9/11 to justice” or to “liberate Afghan women from the Taliban.”

In truth, the U.S. had long sought an accommodation with the Taliban.

As one U.S. diplomat put it in 1997, “The Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis. There will be Aramco [the oil consortium], pipelines, an emir, no parliament and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that.”

From the time that it took office, the Bush administration had been negotiating with the Taliban to enlist it as a regime friendly to U.S. interests and able to provide a bulwark against Russian and Chinese influence.

At one point in negotiations, U.S. representatives tired of the slow pace and threatened Taliban officials, saying “either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs,” according to a book by Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquie.

When the 9/11 attacks happened, it became the perfect rationale for imperial aggression that the U.S. had already contemplated.

The material and geopolitical interests that underpinned the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan are the subject of increasingly blunt discussions within the foreign policy establishment.

An August 21 New York Times editorial makes the case even more plainly:

“More American ground troops will have to be sent to Afghanistan. The Pentagon’s over-reliance on air strikes-- which have led to high levels of civilian casualties--has dangerously antagonized the Afghan population. This may require an accelerated timetable for shifting American forces from Iraq, where the security situation has grown somewhat less desperate.

“NATO also needs to step up its military effort. With Russia threatening to redraw the post-Soviet map of Europe, this is not time for NATO to forfeit its military credibility by losing a war. Europe does not have a lot of available ground troops either. But it needs to send its best ones to Afghanistan and let them fight.

“Afghanistan’s war is not a sideshow...Washington, NATO and the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan must stop fighting it like a holding action and develop a strategy to win. Otherwise, we will all lose.”

Presidential candidate Barack Obama is already promising to implement precisely this plan, calling himself a “strong supporter of the war in Afghanistan” and pledging to withdraw forces from Iraq in order to send at least two additional combat brigades to Afghanistan.

THOSE FORCES in the antiwar movement that don’t include opposition to the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan are at risk of being made irrelevant by the dedication of increasing amounts of U.S. military firepower and personnel to the “good war.”

The movement needs to create a political consciousness about the occupation of Afghanistan so that it will be possible to mobilize the social forces--communities, neighborhoods, students, workers and U.S. troops--necessary to force the U.S. to withdraw.

The case is straightforward. U.S. disregard for civilian life, human rights, democracy and the lives of Afghan women has been shocking. Marina, a member of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, can’t use her last name for fear of assassination, but she recently told journalist John Pilger:

“We, the women of Afghanistan, only became a cause in the West following September 11, 2001, when the Taliban suddenly became the official enemy of America. Yes, they persecuted women, but they were not unique, and we have resented the silence in the West over the atrocious nature of the Western-backed warlords, who are no different. They rape and kidnap and terrorize, yet they hold seats in [U.S.-backed Hamid] Karzai’s government.”

What the U.S. really wants, says Tariq Ali, is “to construct an army able to suppress its own population but incapable of defending the nation from outside powers; a civil administration with no control over planning or social infrastructure, which is in the hands of Western NGOs; and a government whose foreign policy marches in step with Washington’s.”

It’s an encouraging sign that the leadership of United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) sent an August 14 e-mail to its members organizations to encourage discussion about the issue of Afghanistan, given its growing importance for U.S. war aims. In it, UFPJ quoted from its own national assembly resolution passed last summer stating that “our movement has been too silent on Afghanistan, and UFPJ must take leadership to expose the horrors and costs of this engagement.”

But during the last year, UFPJ has done very little to rectify this “silence,” and the August 14 e-mail doesn’t show any sign of exercising “leadership to expose the horrors and costs” of the occupation of Afghanistan.

Instead, the e-mail poses a series of questions without making any case whatsoever.

And some of the questions are framed in a way that leaves the door open to continued support for U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, such as “Should the peace movement support U.S. military forces in a policing role, rather than counter-insurgency role?” and “Was a military invasion of Afghanistan an appropriate reaction to the September 11 attacks?”

In addition, UFPJ continues to orient its efforts on influencing Congress rather than exposing Congress’ commitment to pursuing U.S. global hegemony.

As disastrous as this strategy has been in ending the U.S. war on Iraq, it will be that much worse in the case of Afghanistan, considering that support for the war in Afghanistan is an article of faith within the Democratic Party.

GI organizations such as Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) face a similar set of challenges.

To date, IVAW has not taken an official position on the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. Indeed, it appears that one current within IVAW feels that adding opposition to the U.S. war on Afghanistan to its mission would hurt its ability to recruit among active-duty troops--because, the argument goes, there is more support within the military for the war on Afghanistan than the war on Iraq.

But with increasing numbers of troops being sent to face fierce fighting in Afghanistan, the opposite is true.

If IVAW doesn’t address the despair, anger and disillusionment of U.S. soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, vets and active-duty troops will go elsewhere for a way to express their antiwar views.

[For the record, ever-increasing numbers of members of Iraq Veterans Against The War are publicly, loudly demanding immediate withdrawal from Iraq *and* Afghanistan. T]

For soldiers gripped by the senselessness of their mission and a desperate drive for self-preservation, Afghanistan presents a situation at least as harrowing as Iraq.

As an article earlier this year in the New York Times Magazine reported:

“As hard as Iraq was, (Capt. Dan Kearney) said, nothing was as tough as the Korengal. Unlike in Iraq, where the captains and lieutenants could let down their guard in a relatively safe, fortified operating base, swapping stories and ideas, here they had no one to talk to and were almost as vulnerable to enemy fire inside the wire as out...

“So what exactly was (Kearney’s) job out here? To subdue the valley. It’s a task the Marines had tried, and then the soldiers of the Army’s 10th Mountain Division--a task so bloody it seemed to drive the 10th Mountain’s soldiers to a kind of madness.

“Kearney’s soldiers told me they’d been spooked by the weird behavior of their predecessors last May: near the end of their tour, many would sit alone on the fire base talking to themselves.

“Privates disobeyed their sergeants, and squad leaders refused to step outside the wire to show the new boys the terrain.

“No one wanted to be shot in the last days of his tour.”

TROOP NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



The coffin containing the body of U.S. Army 1st Class Sgt., Dominican Jose Enrique Ulloa, who was killed in Baghdad, during his funeral service in Jima Arriba, north of Santo Domingo, Aug. 21, 2008. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

“We Shouldn’t Have Sent These Young Men To Go And Get Killed”

Aug 21, 2008 By James Mackenzie, PARIS (Reuters) [Excerpts]

France reacted in shock on Wednesday to the death of 10 of its soldiers in an ambush in Afghanistan and questions began to be asked about the country’s worst military loss in 25 years.

“We shouldn’t have sent these young men to go and get killed,” Roland Gregoire, the uncle of one of the dead, told Reuters.

“What’s certain is that they died in an ambush, like game animals,” he said.

After Devastating Injuries In Combat, Army Scum Fuck Over Another Veteran, Cheating Him Of Deserved Benefits:

“You Are Still Treated Like You Are Trying To Beat The Government Out Of Money”

“The Army Was Raking These Guys Over The Coals”

“His Extensive Injuries Easily Should Have Been Rated 100 Percent, According To The Veterans Affairs Schedule”

August 25, 2008 By LIZETTE ALVAREZ, New York Times [Excerpts]

In July 2005, Sergeant Wood’s Humvee hit a roadside bomb cemented into the curb.

The blast set off a chain reaction, triggering two American fragmentation grenades inside the Humvee along with an antitank weapon and countless rounds of ammunition. The two other soldiers riding with him died in the blast.

The explosion tore through Sergeant Wood's arm and abdomen and then ricocheted inside his body, leaving only his heart untouched. His liver had a fist-size hole, he lost his spleen and part of his stomach, and he sustained damage to his lungs and diaphragm.

Sergeant Wood's first memory after the bomb was opening his eyes at Walter Reed Army Medical Center about a month later, seeing his wife, and asking, "Why are you in Iraq?"

Doctors patched up most of his physical wounds over five months. But his wife, who was born with mild brain injuries, noticed that Sergeant Wood, a military policeman, was not himself mentally.

He did not remember someone who had just walked out of the room. He forgot questions he had just asked. He struggled to read one chapter of a book.

While he was at Walter Reed in December 2005, Sergeant Wood said doctors gave him a brain injury test. But it was inconclusive.

"They tried to say I had A.D.D., I needed a good night's sleep, you name it," he said, referring to attention deficit disorder.

As he recovered in the Warrior Transition Unit at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, Sergeant Wood tried to decide whether to stay in the military by switching to less taxing jobs, an idea he hated, or to leave, collect his benefits and find a civilian job. But his previous jobs — professional cowboy, scuba instructor, construction worker — were out of the question.

"My T.B.I. has impacted my ability to get a good job," he said, adding that he fears the best position he can get now is as "a greeter at Wal-Mart."

With four foster children, two biological children and a wife, he steered the safe course and applied to try to stay in the military.

The Army Medical Board deemed him unfit for active duty and sent him to the Physical Evaluation Board for a disability rating that would determine his benefits package once discharged from the Army.

When he saw his rating in March, he was floored. Despite his extensive wounds — brain injury, constant pain, failing hips, headaches, noise sensitivity, no spleen, lung damage, liver damage, panic attacks and chronic esophagitis — he received only a 50 percent rating.

His brain injury made up 10 percent of the total.

A memorandum from the board said that his "stated difficulties are more consistent" with post-traumatic stress disorder.

As a last resort, Sergeant Wood can turn to the federal courts. (He said he had not made that decision yet.)

He is not the first soldier to receive a low rating for his injuries from the Army since the Iraq war began.

The ratings so distressed Congress that as of January, it ordered the military to follow solely the ratings schedule issued by the Veterans Affairs Department, which consistently grants veterans more money for the same injuries.

“The Army was raking these guys over the coals,” said Mr. Baker, of Disabled American Veterans.

Asked by The New York Times to review Sergeant Wood’s paperwork, Mr. Baker said his extensive injuries easily should have been rated 100 percent, according to the Veterans Affairs schedule.

“This was completely wrong,” Mr. Baker added.

Sergeant Wood has stayed in the Army under a program for soldiers injured in combat.

He sits at a Hawaiian jail and alerts the military when a soldier gets locked up. He fears he will get an even lower rating the next time he goes before the Army Medical Board, simply because he is doing his job well.

“You are still treated like you are trying to beat the government out of money,” Sergeant Wood said. “It’s not like I fell off a barstool.”

DemoRats Kill Educational Benefits For California National Guard Members

August 20, 2008 By Nancy Vogel, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

SACRAMENTO -- While they have been beating back wildfires across the state and fighting wars on two fronts overseas, the citizen soldiers of the California National Guard have also been waging a battle in the Legislature -- and losing.

For the second year in a row, state lawmakers have rebuffed the Guard’s effort to win state money to help cover the cost of college for its members.

California is the only state that gives no educational benefit to National Guard members.

Gov. Schwarzenegger has called the lack of benefits “unconscionable” and proposed spending \$3.3 million this year and next to help Guard members with tuition assistance.

That is enough to cover most tuition and fees at community colleges or a state university for about 2,000 people.

Democrats in the Senate scuttled a bill that would have created the program and then stripped the \$3.3 million from a Democratic budget plan.

Last month, more than 1,000 Guard members and 17 Guard helicopters helped state and local firefighters battle wildfires.

California's 21,000 Guard members have also served 27,000 deployments overseas since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Some members have been deployed several times.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

8.24.08 By SINAN SALEHEDDIN, Associated Press Writer & Reuters & Aug 25 (Reuters) & Aug 26, 2008 (Reuters) & AFP & By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

A bomber wearing an explosive vest struck a crowd of Iraqi police recruits at a recruitment station in a volatile northern province on Tuesday, killing 28 and wounding 45, a police source said.

The bomber mingled in the crowd of would-be police recruits and then detonated explosives hidden beneath his dishdasha robe, police said. The bomb was packed with nails and ball bearings to maximize casualties, police said.

The attack occurred in the town of Jalula, a remote, impoverished community about 80 miles northeast of Baghdad that lies in Diyala province, where a U.S.-Iraqi offensive is being waged against the last major insurgent stronghold near the capital.

Police guard Falah Hassan, 28, said he was standing at the gate of the Jalula police compound when he heard a thunderous explosion about 100 yards away and was hit by debris.

He said tribal sheiks had been asked to send recruits for a new police emergency response unit, and applicants came to the police center Tuesday to check whether they had been accepted.

A car bomb in Tikrit injured four policemen on Tuesday, police said. The downtown explosion occurred at 7:30 am (0430GMT) next to the central health department, a police official said.

A roadside bomb exploded near a convoy carrying Major-General Hamad Namis Yasin, the police chief of Salahuddin province, wounding six of his guards in central Tikrit, 150 km (95 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb was planted near the house of Basim Mohammed, a Lieutenant-Colonel of the government facilities guard force, killing his daughter and wounding two sons on Sunday in Mussayab, 60 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents driving an ambulance opened fire on a foot patrol in Baqouba, capital of the turbulent Diyala province, killing three policemen and wounding six, police said.

In eastern Baghdad, assailants set off back-to-back roadside bombs, killing a policeman. The first bomb was detonated when a police patrol stopped in the area, according to Maj. Mark Cheadle, spokesman for U.S.-led coalition forces. When a quick response unit of the Iraqi security forces arrived at the scene, a second blast went off wounding seven members of the security forces.

A roadside bomb killed four soldiers and wounded eight when it exploded near an Iraqi army patrol in Balad Ruz, 90 km (55 miles) northeast 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.**

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

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

Goosed



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: August 25, 2008
Subject: Goosed

Goosed

It was rumored that the Pentagon built highly classified Canadian geese “ drones “ to spy on the Winter Soldier II Investigation, held at a labor college in Silver Spring, Maryland. When these two geese were approached by IVAW members, they suspiciously waddled away. I followed the geese around for over an hour, periodically taking pictures. I noticed that during that hour, they never crapped once. Which is proof, that the U.S. government is full of shit.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
March 17, 2008

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

Report From Abkhazia **Before** Russia V. Georgia Buried History Under A

Mountain Of Bullshit Propaganda And Lies By All Concerned: Russia “Fanned The Conflict First By Encouraging The Georgians, Then Backing The Abkhaz”



July 3rd 2008, The Economist: SUKHUMI AND TBILISI

AT MIDDAY Ochamchira, in Abkhazia, is almost empty. A derelict cement tower and rusty fairground wheel are the backdrop to an empty stretch of Black Sea coast that was once the Soviet riviera. The ageing owner of a bar is reading a book of Soviet recipes, but his only customer is a woman who downs her vinegary red wine and leaves. “This time 15 years ago people were queuing outside,” he says. Then there were 25,000 residents; today 3,000 are left.

The ethnic conflict between Georgia and its breakaway enclave, Abkhazia, was one of many detonated by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Recently, this patch of land, in law part of Georgia but in effect controlled by Russia, has become a new frontier between Russia and the West.

Two months ago Georgia and Russia came close to war.

Russia accused Georgia of preparing a strike on Abkhazia, mobilised paratroopers and artillery to join its “peacekeepers”, and shot down a Georgian drone. Hotheads in Tbilisi and Moscow said that war was all but inevitable.

Diplomatic intervention by Europe and America staved it off, but tensions remain high.

This week bombs exploded in the Abkhaz town of Gagra and the capital, Sukhumi, prompting Abkhazia to close its border with Georgia; and Russia reopened a sea route between Sochi and Gagra.

On July 2nd a bomb ripped through an apartment block in Sochi, host of the 2014 winter Olympics.

The Russians make no bones over linking trouble in Abkhazia to Georgia's hopes of securing NATO membership, which they strongly resist.

But even as Georgia and Russia argue, nobody pays much heed to the Abkhaz themselves.

The Abkhaz and the Georgians belong to different ethnic groups but have shared this bit of Black Sea coast for centuries.

When the Bolsheviks occupied Georgia, Abkhazia was given the status of a Soviet republic.

Only in 1931 did Stalin (a Georgian) turn Abkhazia into an autonomous region of Georgia.

Later his secret-police chief, Beria (also a Georgian, born in Abkhazia), resettled Georgians from the western part of the country in Abkhazia, tipping its ethnic balance further in favour of Georgians.

Abkhaz schools were shut and the language was banned.

When the Soviet Union fell apart, various ethnic time-bombs planted by Stalin across the Caucasus began to go off.

In August 1992 Georgia, itself in near anarchy, began a war in Abkhazia.

Nominally under the rule of Eduard Shevardnadze, the country was run by nationalist warlords who recruited criminals to their armies.

These troops pillaged Abkhazia, defeating the ill-armed Abkhaz.

When the tide of the war turned and the Abkhaz, helped by Chechens and Russian mercenaries, stormed back, they massacred ethnic Georgians.

Atrocities were committed on both sides, and some 250,000 of the pre-war Georgian inhabitants (who accounted for 45% of the total population) were forced out through ethnic cleansing.

But the Abkhaz look back on the conflict as a war of independence and show little sympathy for Georgian refugees. Their mistrust of Georgia is boosted by Russia's anti-Georgian propaganda.

Russia, which fanned the conflict first by encouraging the Georgians, then backing the Abkhaz, has throughout played a highly dubious role.

It claims to be an impartial peacekeeper, but it has strong vested interests.

The Russians have ignored sanctions on Abkhazia meant to force the Abkhaz to take back their refugees, and have also given most Abkhaz Russian passports that let them travel abroad. With 90% of the population enlisted as "Russian citizens", watching Russian television, using Russian money and receiving Russian pensions, Abkhazia is barely autonomous.

And though the Russians often talk about Kosovo as a precedent, they do not really want to see Abkhazia's independence.

The Abkhaz realise the dangers of assimilation into Russia and are wary of Russian nationalism. When Russia tried to dictate their choice of president, Abkhaz voters picked his rival.

Yet even if integration with Russia seems unappealing, to many the idea of being part of Georgia is worse.

"At least Russia did not fight against us," says Stanislav Lakoba, head of Abkhazia's security council. He adds that Georgia's hard line and Europe's indifference have driven Abkhazia into Russia's arms.

The Abkhaz also know that the only reason for the sudden interest in their plight is Russia's increasing belligerence.

But Sergei Bagapsh, the de facto president, has ruled out replacing or even altering the Russian peacekeeping force. "Our interests will be represented only by Russia," Mr Bagapsh said after meeting Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's president, recently.

Some of the blame for this situation rests with Georgia's president, Mikheil Saakashvili.

When he swept to power in 2004, he did not use his popularity to apologise for Georgia's past actions or disown the legacy of his predecessors.

By late 2004, Georgia was getting closer to a deal with Russia and a no-use-of-force agreement with Abkhazia, but neither document was signed. Mr Saakashvili said that "we are not inviting separatists to Georgia, we will ourselves return to Abkhazia."

His populism irritated the Abkhaz, as did his decision to banish Irakli Alasania, the only man the Abkhaz side trusted as a negotiator, as ambassador to the UN in New York.

In 2006 the Georgians forced their way into the upper Kodori gorge, violating a 1994 peace agreement.

They said they had to clear the area of a local warlord.

But Paata Zakareishvili, a Georgian analyst, believes he could have been nabbed in Tbilisi.

Ruslan Kishmaria, who oversees Gali, a region where 50,000 Georgian refugees spontaneously returned after the war, says Georgia refuses to let the UN verify their return.

Georgian television channels disseminate false reports of Georgians being assaulted from the Abkhaz side. Earlier this year the UN secretary-general said that “inaccurate reports originating in the Georgian media and occasionally the Georgian authorities...have contributed to growing distrust and insecurity.”

In the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Mr Saakashvili's latest peace plan, offering Abkhazia unlimited autonomy, was dismissed as propaganda by the Abkhaz.

Mr Saakashvili announced it on Georgian television (which is blocked in Abkhazia).

When it was delivered to the Abkhaz, they refused to touch it.

Georgia talks of developing free-trade zones in Abkhazia, but is yet to lift sanctions that do not work anyway.

Mr Alasania, whose father was killed in the 1990s war, says that “the key to this conflict lies not in Washington or Moscow but in Tbilisi and Sukhumi...we have to take the first steps towards reconciliation.”

Rebuilding trust between the two sides may take years—and even then it may not lead to full reintegration of the country. But if Georgia wants to stay democratic and prosperous, it has no other option. And if they want to preserve their sense of identity, the Abkhaz must do their bit too.

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

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WAR



Thanks to Linda Olson, who sent this in. [Military Humor: Tom-phillips.info]

OCCUPATION REPORT

**Maliki Regime Fools Decide To Cause Attacks On U.S. Troops:
“If It Is Useless To Talk To The Government, I Will Be Forced To Carry My Weapons And My Pistol”**

“The Last Time We Humiliated Thousands Of These Guys Is Back In 2003, And We Got The Insurgency”

August 20, 2008 By Leila Fadel, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD — A key pillar of the U.S. strategy to pacify Iraq is in danger of collapsing because the Iraqi government is failing to absorb tens of thousands of former Sunni Muslim insurgents who'd joined U.S.-allied militia groups into the country's security forces.

“We cannot stand them, and we detained many of them recently,” said one senior Iraqi commander in Baghdad, who spoke only on the condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the issue.

He said the army was considering setting a Nov. 1 deadline for those militia members who hadn't been absorbed into the security forces or given civilian jobs to give up their weapons. After that, they'd be arrested, he said.

Some militia members say that such a move would force them into open warfare with the government again.

“If they disband us now, I will tell you that history will show we will go back to zero,” said Mullah Shahab al Aafi, a former emir, or leader, of insurgents in Diyala province who's the acting commander of 24,000 Sons of Iraq there, 11,000 of whom are on the U.S. payroll.

“I will not give up my weapons. I will never give them up, and I will carry my weapon again. If it is useless to talk to the government, I will be forced to carry my weapons and my pistol.”

Colin Kahl, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, a centrist policy institute in Washington, who recently visited Iraq, said the dispute over the militias could set the stage for a return of widespread bloodshed, particularly because the Maliki government seemed intent on thwarting the plan.

He noted that of the militia members slated to join the security forces, only 600 have completed the required training.

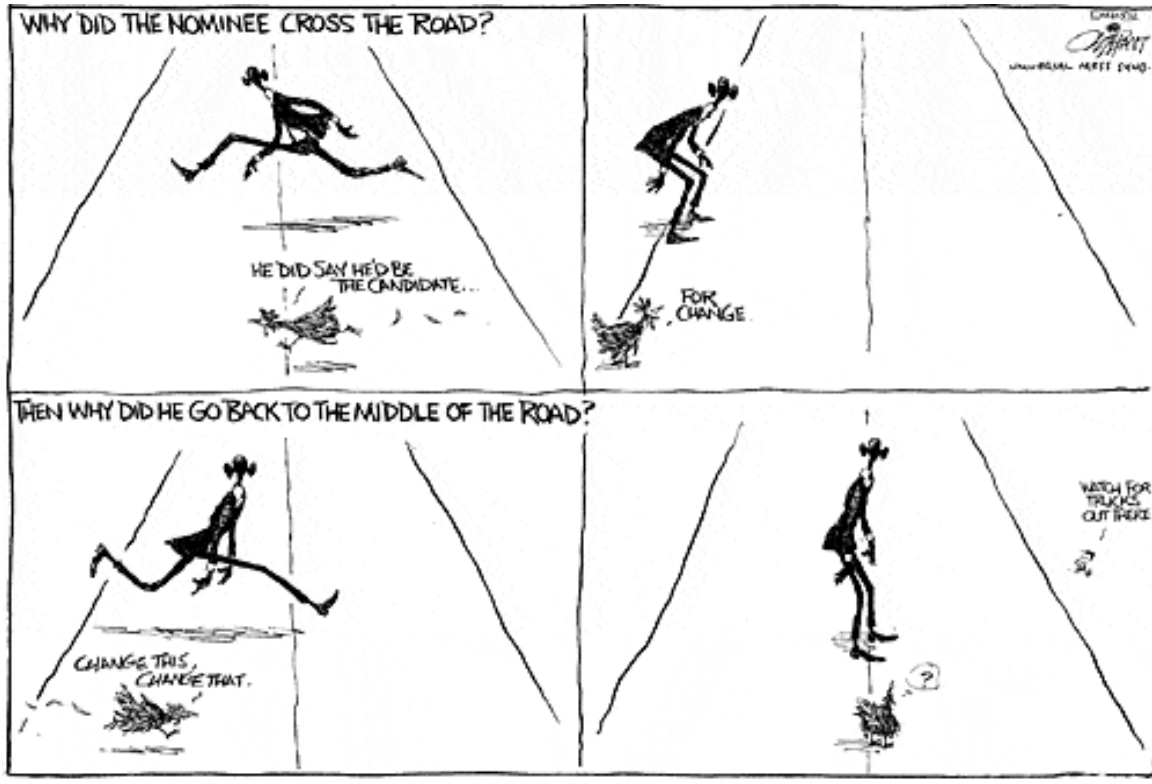
Kahl, who spoke with senior U.S. officials during his visit to Iraq, said that the Iraqi government was providing jobs to the militia members in “humiliating ways.”

He said former Iraqi army officers were being absorbed as low-level beat cops, and men who saw themselves as the “slayers of al Qaida” were being asked to become plumbers and bricklayers.

“The last time we humiliated thousands of these guys is back in 2003, and we got the insurgency,” Kahl said.

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**NEED SOME TRUTH?
CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

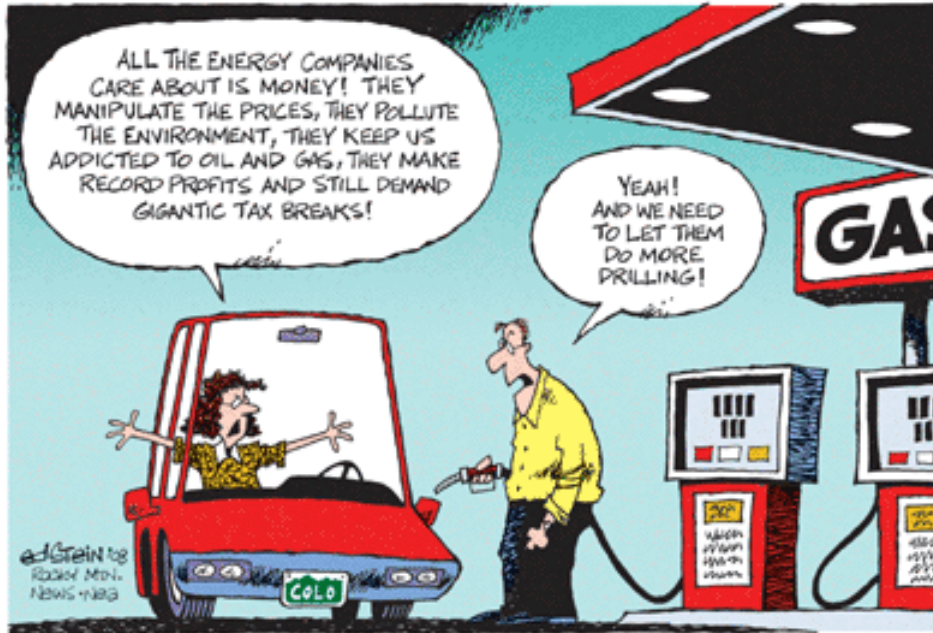
Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces.

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

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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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News Of Fresh Disasters: Triparty Repo Risks

8.23.08 By Sudeep Reddy, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

One area of potential financial-system instability cited by Mr. Bernanke involves so-called triparty repurchase agreements.

Repurchase agreements, or repos, are a way for financial institutions to get short-term cash loans. They sell securities to another institution and agree to buy them back the next day.

In the triparty repo market, a clearing bank, such as Bank of New York Mellon Corp. or J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., helps facilitate the repos by standing in between lenders and borrowers. The clearing bank holds the securities on behalf of the firms and handles the transfer of cash from one account to the other.

In recent years, dealers' use of triparty repos has grown significantly. They draw on some \$2.5 trillion of funds daily in this market.

Regulators worry that if a large financial institution runs into trouble, it might have difficulty making triparty repo transactions because the clearing bank might be worried about a default.

That could disrupt the functioning of the broader repo market.

Mr. Bernanke said the Fed is encouraging firms to reduce their reliance on triparty repos.

"In the longer term, we need to ensure that there are robust contingency plans for managing, in an orderly manner the default of a major participant," he said.



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