

GI SPECIAL 611:



“It’s So Hard. You Hear What He Says And You Want To Believe It, But How Many Times Have We Been Disappointed Before This?”



“I really don’t feel (Obama) is the antiwar candidate,” said U.S. Army Specialist Sean Valdez, a new member of IVAW who served two tours of duty in Iraq.

August 28, 2008 By Alex Kane and Jessica Lee, The Independent! [Excerpts]

DENVER, Colo.—A little more than an hour before Sen. Barack Obama made a surprise appearance at Pepsi Center to conclude the evening at the Democratic National Convention, his campaign had an exchange with Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).

Leading a grueling three-hour-plus long march of an estimated 7,000 demonstrators towards the Pepsi Center late in the afternoon, IVAW hoped to deliver a folded flag and a letter calling on Obama to endorse the three main goals of unity: immediate withdrawal of American troops, full veterans benefits, and reparations for the Iraqi people.

After long moments of contention between the demonstration and the police, finally one IVAW representative, former U.S. Marine Liam Madden, was allowed to cross police lines to meet with representatives of the Obama campaign.

As Madden left on his mission, it seemed as if more than 50 IVAW members were prepared to engage in non-violent civil disobedience and likely arrest.

Less than 10 minutes later, at approximately 7:40pm (CT), an announcement was made by IVAW to the crowd, indicating that Obama had endorsed their three points of unity, causing the crowd to uproar in applause.

But there seemed to be some disconnect between the protesters and Madden’s conversation with the Obama campaign.

IVAW’s statement that the Obama campaign endorsed their points of unity could not be confirmed.

The endorsement seems to be at odds with the Obama campaign’s stated positions on troop withdrawal, which involve a gradual and phased withdrawal of combat troops, with a residual force to stay in Iraq for the time being.

Local news stations have not confirmed the claim that Obama endorsed the three points of unity.

Instead, both the Rocky Mountain News and the Denver Post are reporting that a meeting has been planned between IVAW and Obama's liaison for veterans' affairs.

Members of IVAW expressed pessimism of the Democrats as an antiwar party, noting that although they were elected in 2006 with an antiwar message, they have continually funded the wars.

"I really don't feel (Obama) is the antiwar candidate," said U.S. Army Specialist Sean Valdez, a new member of IVAW who served two tours of duty in Iraq.

"It's so hard. You hear what he says and you want to believe it, but how many times have we been disappointed before this?"

"We're here as veterans, as soldiers, as marines, here to demand that the Democratic Party uphold to the front that they have as an antiwar party, and actually make a stand, and bring our soldiers home now," said 31-year-old Adrienne Kinnie, a member of IVAW who served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserves from 1994 to 2004.

There was no mention of the large demonstration or the concerns of IVAW during the convention presentation inside Pepsi Center, although most of the speeches given throughout the night touched on the Iraq War and the military.

MORE:

**Spc. Valdez Understands
Perfectly:
Troops Will Long Remember Who
Warned That The Democratic Party
President Would Keep The Wars Going,
And Stressed The Importance Of Helping
Build And Strengthen Armed Forces
Resistance Now**

**Troops Will Also Long Remember Who
Pandered To The Huge, Understandable
Hope That Electing Obama Would Stop**

The Wars, And Who, By Arguing For His Election, Participated In The Betrayal

[From GI Special 6E12: May 18, 2008]

Comment: T

The Democratic Party faction in control of Congress has already decided to fund the wars and the killing in Iraq and Afghanistan not merely until their candidate takes the White House, but has agreed to fund the wars and the killing for at least half a year into 2009.

Everybody knows that.

Congressional Democrats have no intention of breaking with either the Democratic Party now over that, or rejecting the Presidential candidate and breaking with the Democratic Party later.

Everybody knows that too.

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

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

Events will be the most powerful teacher.

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

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

MORE:

“The Term Withdrawal, Let Alone A Full Unconditional Withdrawal That Will Satisfy Most Of The Iraqi People,

Has Never Been Part Of Obama's Vocabulary"

July 22, 2008 By Sami Ramadani, The Guardian [Excerpts]

Sami Ramadani is a political exile from Saddam's regime.

Obama sees Iraq as part of a wider theatre of war and potential wars engulfing the entire Middle East, where US strategic goals and interests are at stake.

So his obvious shift on the "surge" operations in Iraq (underlined by deleting criticisms of it from his website last week) is strengthening his call for "redeployment" from Iraq to Afghanistan.

His current strategy could be summed up as: de-escalate the war in Iraq, escalate it in Afghanistan, and talk to Iran.

It is worth noting that the term withdrawal, let alone a full unconditional withdrawal that will satisfy most of the Iraqi people, has never been part of Obama's vocabulary.

His first carefully considered statement on Iraq was made in January last year, when he introduced the Iraq war de-escalation act to Congress.

It was then that he envisaged stationing troops in Iraq on a longer-term basis: "A residual US presence may remain in Iraq for force protection, training of Iraqi security forces and pursuit of international terrorists."

Using similar phrases, this is what he outlined in the New York Times last week.

To distinguish his policy from that of his rival for the White House, Obama declared: "Unlike Senator McCain, I would make it absolutely clear that we seek no presence in Iraq similar to our permanent bases in South Korea."

But it doesn't require rocket science to know that keeping "residual" forces requires heavily fortified areas, installations and a state of readiness to go to war.

Unless Obama has discovered something new, such areas are known as military bases.

So it is the word "permanent" that separates the two, as McCain may want to stay "100 years" in Iraq.

The comparison with South Korea is not heartening, considering massive US bases have been in that country for over half a century.

Neither is Obama opposed to signing a military treaty with Iraq. He has two conditions to make Bush's current attempts to impose a pact acceptable: the pact should get Congressional approval, and renounce "permanent" military bases.

However, leaked drafts of this colonialist-style pact do not mention the word "permanent" at all. And his "benchmarks" for continued support for the corrupt Iraqi politicians protected by US forces in Baghdad's Green Zone are strikingly similar to those of the Bush administration.

Tactical differences and issues of style aside, Obama's message on occupied Iraq is deeply troubling - not because it has U-turned but because it has been consistent.

His 300 foreign policy advisers are making sure that he will not stray from protecting US imperialist interests, even if it does mean launching new wars and bolstering puppet regimes and corrupt dictatorships throughout the "greater Middle East".

MORE:

Soldier's Wife Says "These Guys Want To Come Home. It's Been Five Years Now. Enough Is Enough" "No Matter Who's Elected, They Are Going To Be Over There A While More," Marine Says

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

September 01, 2008 Fayetteville Observer [Excerpts]

FORT BRAGG, N.C. -- Army Sgt. David Singleton's first Iraq War deployment was emotional for his wife, Treva. She put on a brave face, but when months would pass without any word from her husband, sometimes she would sneak into a back room at work and cry, she said.

"If I didn't hear from him, I was panicked," Treva said Aug. 31 while folding laundry at the Glam-O-Rama on Yadkin Road.

In 2003, David was deployed to Iraq for 13 months while stationed at Fort Reilly in Kansas, Treva said. He returned this April from a yearlong stint in Kuwait with the 1st TSC.

Treva was more relaxed this time around, she said. Especially since her husband wasn't in a combat zone.

"These guys want to come home," Treva said. "It's been five years now. Enough is enough."

George Ryals, a discharged Marine who served in the first Gulf War, summed it up like this.

"No matter who's elected, they are going to be over there a while more," he said.

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

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

ACTION REPORTS

National Guard Soldier Says "90% Of The Military Is Against These Wars"

From: Alan Stolzer, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: September 01, 2008
Subject: Report

Recently there weren't any soldiers patrolling one [New York area] RR station but there sure were at another.

I spoke with one who told me 90% of the military is against these wars.

Gee, my civilian ignorance had the number at 75%! What one can learn speaking to the troops.

Another overheard and knew me as one of the "Brownie People;" this was in reference to continued outreach of the Military Project to National Guard armories where not only literature but snacks and DVDs are handed out.

As per usual there is almost NEVER any hostility exhibited by troops after contact.

There are occasional polite denials but no snarling and please remember, you needn't be anywhere near a military installation in order to access friends/relatives of troops; just ask any clerk, bus driver, electrician, etc., etc.

You'll get to know them soon enough - the troops I mean.

90% is a big slice - you're bound to find someone as part of it.

MORE ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.

If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.

Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.

They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.

If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.

If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.

NOTE WELL:

Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the war.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.

<p>DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?</p>
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Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Iraq Casualties Rise To 67,861

August 19, 2008 By Michael Munk, Michaelmunk.com

US military occupation forces in Iraq suffered at least 57 combat casualties in the week ending August 19 as the official casualty total climbed to at least 67,861

It includes 33,931 dead and wounded by what the Pentagon classifies as "hostile" causes and more than 33,930 dead and medically evacuated (as of July 5) because of "non-hostile" causes.

The actual total is over 87,000 because the Pentagon chooses not to count as "Iraq casualties" the approximately 20,000 casualties reported only after they returned from Iraq -mainly brain trauma from explosions.

US media divert attention from the actual cost in American life and limb by routinely reporting only the total killed (4,147 as of August 19) and rarely mentioning the 30,561 wounded in combat.

To further minimize public perception of the cost, they cover for the Pentagon by ignoring the 33,153 (as of July 5) military victims of accidents and illness serious enough to require medical air evacuation, although the 4,147 reported deaths include 777 (up one last week) who died from those same causes, including at least 13 from faulty electrical work by KBR and 145 suicides (suicides last updated March 1).

Williamsburg Soldier Killed In Iraq

8/29/2008 Yvette Martinez, WBIR

A Southeast Kentucky town is mourning after news that one of their hometown boys was killed in combat.

Sergeant David Cooper was died in Baghdad on Wednesday.

Cooper's patrol came under small arms fire in Quadasiyah, Iraq.

He was assigned to the Forward Support Company, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

Friends say the 25 year old was in his third tour in Iraq when he was killed.

Long before Sergeant Cooper was a soldier he was a Williamsburg athlete with an unforgettable smile.

"I remember several aspects of him the student, the athlete, the band performer and then just David the young man," Principal Williamsburg Independent School Gary Peters said

While Williamsburg prepares for Friday night football their plans are overshadowed by tragic news about a former yellow jacket. "He was a great football player and a great teammate and he would just get so excited about Friday nights," high school friend Bill Conn said.

David Cooper was in the Class of 2001 at Williamsburg High School. Now a couple of his close friends are teachers at their alma mater.

"I was looking in our weightroom yesterday kind of thinking back on 'Coop' as we called him," high school friend Steven Moses said. "I'll always remember David as the guy smiling," Conn said

"You were going to have a good time if you were hanging around David Cooper and people like that are special," Peters said.

But his friends and old teachers never thought his life would end in an Iraqi combat zone.

"The war's thousands of miles away but to have a Williamsburg alum lose their life in this war just kind of brings it home," Moses said.

"You just take it for granted everything's going to be ok," Conn said. "David was a hero, is a hero and any time you make the ultimate sacrifice for your country you can't be considered anything less," Moses said.

And future generations will know what this Williamsburg graduate did in both his life and his death.

"I find myself the past couple of days telling the students now of 'Coop' and the things that he accomplished," Moses said.

Williamsburg city and school officials are planning a tribute to Sergeant Cooper for homecoming next week, but their plans are not finalized yet.

Meanwhile, flags in front of Williamsburg Independent School, city buildings and several businesses are flying at half-staff in honor of Sergeant Cooper.

Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear has ordered that flags at all state office buildings be lowered to half-staff from sunrise to sunset on the day of Sergeant Cooper's burial.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Army soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division take cover from snipers in Sadr City, Baghdad, May 12, 2008. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Oregon Soldier Killed In Afghanistan

Aug 28, 2008 The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Military officials say a 20-year-old soldier from Beaverton was killed in Afghanistan after his patrol took on small-arms and rocket propelled grenade fire.

The Department of Defense said that Pvt. Tan Q. Ngo died Wednesday in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Ngo was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, in Hohenfels, Germany.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed; Nationality Not Announced

September 1, 2008 Associated Press

A roadside blast in southern Afghanistan on Sunday killed a NATO soldier.

Obama Promises 10,000 More U.S. Troops For This War: “They Attacked The House And Killed Two Children”



Slain Afghan children lie on a bed covered with flowers, in Kabul on September 1, 2008.
(AFP/Massoud Hossaini)

KABUL (AFP)

Hundreds of Afghans took to the streets Monday in protest at what they said was the murder of four civilians, including two baby boys, in an early morning raid by international troops.

The demonstrators showed journalists the bloodied bodies of the children shot dead with their father on the eastern outskirts of the capital, an AFP reporter said.

“They attacked the house and killed two children, almost two years-old, a woman and a man,” Mohammad Naweed from Hoodkhail village said.

Naweed said “foreign forces” also took three men from the house after blasting open the main gate and opening fire.

Local television stations showed pictures of women wailing as they were standing by the bodies demanding President Hamid Karzai stand down.

Amazing News! “Heavy-Handed Bombing Raids And House Raids Have Stirred Up Afghans’ Strong Independent Streak And Ancient Dislike Of Invaders”

August 25, 2008 By CARLOTTA GALL, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Afghan Council of Ministers decided Monday to review the presence of international forces and agreements with foreign allies, including NATO and the United States, after a series of military operations that have caused mounting civilian losses.

The ministers demanded a status of forces agreement, which would stipulate that the authority and responsibilities of international forces be negotiated, and they said that aerial bombing, illegal detentions and house raids by international forces must be stopped.

As security has deteriorated in the country and economic conditions have worsened, the government and its international partners have encountered rising popular dissatisfaction.

Heavy-handed bombing raids and house raids, which are seen as culturally unacceptable by many Afghans who guard their privacy fiercely, and the detention of hundreds of suspects for years without trial at the Bagram air base and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, have stirred up Afghans’ strong independent streak and ancient dislike of invaders.

Kandahar: “Security Has Further Deteriorated”

“Catastrophic Weakness Of The Afghan Government, Its Army And The Police”

The collapsing confidence in the government of President Hamid Karzai is so serious that if the Taliban had wanted to, they could have seized control of the city of Kandahar on the night of the prison break, one Western diplomat in Kabul said. The only reason they did not was they did not expect the government and the NATO reaction to be so weak, he said.

August 26, 2008 By CARLOTTA GALL, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

The prison break, on June 13, was a spectacular propaganda coup for the Taliban not only in freeing their comrades and flaunting their strength, but also in exposing the catastrophic weakness of the Afghan government, its army and the police, as well as the international forces trying to secure Kandahar.

In the weeks since the prison break, security has further deteriorated in this southern Afghan city, once the de facto capital of the Taliban, that has become a renewed front line in the battle against the radical Islamist movement.

The failure of the American-backed Afghan government to protect Kandahar has rippled across the rest of the country and complicated the task of NATO forces, which have suffered more deaths here this year than at any time since the 2001 invasion.

“We don’t have a system here, the government does not have a solution,” said Abdul Aleem, who fought the Taliban and helped to put some of its members in the prison.

He said that without the presence of international forces in the city, the situation would be even worse. “If we did not have foreigners here, I don’t think the Afghan National Army or police would come out of their bases,” he said.

A rising chorus of complaints equally scathing about the failings of the government can be heard around the country.

The collapsing confidence in the government of President Hamid Karzai is so serious that if the Taliban had wanted to, they could have seized control of the city of Kandahar on the night of the prison break, one Western diplomat in Kabul said.

The only reason they did not was they did not expect the government and the NATO reaction to be so weak, he said.

In fact, interviews with local officials and other people here who witnessed the bold prison break and its aftermath show that the level of government organization and security was woefully inadequate around what was clearly a high-priority target for the Taliban.

There were only 10 guards at the prison that night and about 1,400 inmates, said Col. Abdullah Bawar, the new head of the prison.

Haji Muhammad Musa Hotak, a member of Parliament from Wardak Province, near the capital, Kabul, warned that the gap between the people and the government had grown dire.

So wide is it, in fact, the situation reminds him of the end of the Communist era, when support for the government of the Soviet-backed president, Najibullah, began collapsing under the onslaught of the mujahedeen, who had waged a 13-year resistance in the name of Islam against successive Communist rulers.

The Taliban attack has also shaken local confidence in the international forces here and exposed the difficult situation of the understaffed Canadian troops in Kandahar, who have lost 90 soldiers in the last two and a half years in the province trying to contain an increasingly virulent Taliban insurgency.

The failings make people wonder what the foreign troops are really doing in Afghanistan, said Mr. Daoud, the shopkeeper.

“The Canadians are here, but things are getting worse and worse.”

TROOP NEWS

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



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

**The Pentagon Defies Congress
And Breaks The Law To Deny
Troops Disabled By War Their
Legislated Benefits:
Vets Organizations Say Chu
Engaged In “Deliberate, Systemic
Betrayal”
“Marine Cpl. James Dixon Incurred A
Traumatic Brain Injury From A
Roadside Bomb On His Third Tour In
Iraq”
“According To The Pentagon, ‘The
Disability Did Not Result From A
Combat-Related Injury’”**

“Sadly, the 2007 Walter Reed scandal, which resulted mostly from poor oversight and inadequate leadership, pales in comparison to what we view as the deliberate manipulation of the law” by David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and his deputies, the letter states.

Aug 29, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

In a letter going out to members of Congress next week, the directors of two major veterans’ groups say the Pentagon’s personnel chief has intentionally withheld benefits from wounded service members.

“We need your immediate assistance to help end the Defense Department’s deliberate, systemic betrayal of every brave American who (dons) the uniform and stands in harm’s way,” states the letter, signed by David Gorman, executive director of Disabled American Veterans, and Paul Rieckhoff, executive director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

“Sadly, the 2007 Walter Reed scandal, which resulted mostly from poor oversight and inadequate leadership, pales in comparison to what we view as the deliberate manipulation of the law” by David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and his deputies, the letter states.

Kerry Baker, legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, said Chu sent out a memorandum in March redefining which injuries qualify as “combat-related.”

The definition is important because Section 1646 of the 2008 Defense Authorization Act said service members with combat-related disabilities no longer must pay back any disability retirement severance they receive from the Defense Department before they become eligible for disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, as has been the case under longstanding policy.

The policy affects service members who receive a disability rating of 20 percent or less from the Defense Department, and thus receive a severance payment rather than lifetime disability retirement pay.

Baker said he has seen cases in which, for example, a veteran receives a \$30,000 severance payment from the Pentagon, uses it for medical care or education, and then, even if subsequently awarded a full 100 percent disability rating by VA, must pay the \$30,000 back first before he can draw any VA compensation.

Baker said this leaves many veterans who may not be able to work in a quagmire of debt. DAV and IAVA think no veteran should have to pay back money he or she earned before becoming eligible for VA benefits, but they still see the new law extending such waivers to veterans with combat-related disabilities as a step forward.

Under a separate program called Combat Related Special Compensation, which eliminates the offset in retired pay required of some retirees who also receive VA disability compensation, “combat related” is defined as any injury or illness incurred in a combat zone or performing tasks related to combat, such as training for deployment or hazardous assignments like jumping out of airplanes.

But according to Chu’s memo, the definition of “combat related” for the purposes of the new severance pay waiver is limited only to those injured in a combat zone in the line of duty or as a direct result of armed conflict.

In June, Defense Department spokeswoman Eileen Lainez told Military Times that Chu did not remake the definition to save money, as Baker has charged.

She also noted that the law on repaying severance money left it to the secretary of defense to define “combat related.”

But three lawmakers have told Military Times that their interpretation puts Baker in the right and Chu in the wrong — that they expected the Defense Department to adopt the existing definition used for the CRSC program.

“The Department of Defense appears to be interpreting this law in the most narrow and tightfisted way possible,” said Rep. Timothy Walz, D-Minn., a House Veterans Affairs Committee member. “I am disappointed that (the department) is implementing this policy in a way that makes as few veterans as possible eligible for the benefit.”

After Walz weighed in, DAV sent a letter to Chu asking for an explanation. William Carr, one of Chu’s senior deputies, responded in a letter dated Aug. 14 by saying the intent “was to direct the enhanced benefit to those hurt in combat.”

“Such an approach is consistent with our strong belief that there must be a special distinction for those who incur disabilities while participating in the risk of combat, in contrast with those injured otherwise,” Carr wrote.

But Baker, and the authors of the new letter, continue to insist that congressional intent was not to make a special distinction that leaves out service members hurt in activities defined as “combat related” under other programs.

“The law defines such disabilities as those caused by armed conflict, instrumentalities of war, hazardous service and conditions simulating war,” Gorman and Rieckhoff wrote. “The (Defense Authorization Act) did not change these definitions; in fact, it reinforced them, and it added disabilities incurred ‘in the line of duty in a combat zone.’ “

The letter states that Chu “lacks the authority to change the will of Congress.”

In an interview with Military Times, Baker laid out cases of veterans already affected by the new memo.

A female soldier in her 30s, who asked that her name not be used, dove for cover into a pile of rocks in Iraq during a mortar attack wearing full battle rattle — Kevlar and body armor that can weigh 20 pounds.

Afterwards, she suffered a fused spine and had to have her hips replaced, all of which her doctors said was directly attributable to her dive to safety.

“The rating was good, but they said it was not combat-related,” Baker said. “You can see Chu’s memo confusing the issue. This is a disease process that began in Iraq in the line of duty.”

In a second case, Marine Cpl. James Dixon incurred a traumatic brain injury from a roadside bomb on his third tour in Iraq. He has headaches, insomnia, short-term memory loss, hearing loss and post-traumatic stress disorder.

According to the Pentagon, “the disability did not result from a combat-related injury,” Baker said.

Dixon’s ruling was changed on appeal, but Baker said there should have been no question to begin with about whether his injuries were combat-related.

Army Sgt. Richard Manoukian served two combat tours, but when he was diagnosed with PTSD and bipolar disorder after he tried to commit suicide — as well as suffering a spine disability after a hard helicopter landing in Kuwait — the Defense Department called his injuries “not combat related,” Baker said.

“The list of cases like this is reprehensible and growing every day,” Gorman and Rieckhoff wrote in their letter.

“Moreover, if cases like these are ruled not combat-related, then one can only imagine how many other less obvious cases are suffering the same fate.”

They asked Congress to look into how many cases have been ruled not combat-related under Chu’s memo and have them reviewed by a group independent of the Pentagon.

“Congress should then take immediate action to ensure DoD upholds the plain and unambiguous language of the law,” they wrote.

“Most of these service members have no representation in the military disability evaluation system and are therefore unaware of the benefits stolen from them — they are depending on you.”

[Someday, somewhere, somehow, the traitor Chu will find himself taken prisoner, placed on trial, and judged by veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who have been wounded in combat. That’s called justice. T]

As Another Thieving Officer Arrested, Brig. Gen. Rodney Johnson Publicly Warns Bush To “Beware”



The Traitor Bush: No Honor, No Sense Of Duty (Photo: AFP/Jim Watson)

Aug 28, 2008 By Caryn Rousseau - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

CHICAGO — Two U.S. military personnel and several contractors allegedly exchanged nearly \$100,000 to arrange contracts worth more than \$1 million at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, according to bribery and conspiracy indictments unsealed Wednesday.

The two military personnel and a co-conspirator allegedly accepted three payments of \$30,000, one payment for each of three Defense Department contracts, according to the indictments unsealed at the U.S. District Court in Chicago.

Charged are Army Maj. Christopher P. West of Chicago and Air Force Sgt. Patrick W. Boyd of Rockledge, Fla., who were arraigned before District Court Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan. Also arraigned Wednesday were contractors Abdul Qudoos Bahkshi and Noor Alam of Afghanistan, along with Tahir Ramin of Pennsylvania and Afghanistan.

West served with the Illinois Army National Guard at Bagram and was arrested Monday. Boyd was arrested Tuesday.

During 2004 and 2005, the Ramins paid West, Boyd and the co-conspirator \$30,000 for a contract to supply the airfield with bunkers and barriers, cement structures used for force protection and perimeter walls, the indictment alleges.

Separately, the indictment says Alam and his company, Northern Reconstruction Organization, paid West, Boyd and a co-conspirator \$30,000 for a contract to provide asphalt paving services at airfield. Qudoos and his Naweed Bahkshi Company are accused of paying West, Boyd and a co-conspirator \$30,000 for a second asphalt paving contract.

Brig. Gen. Rodney Johnson, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, promised in the same news release to continue investigating allegations of contractor fraud.

“Anyone who is contemplating putting themselves in a position where their selfishness and greed overtakes their honor and sense of duty to the nation and taxpayers they serve should beware,” Johnson said.

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/)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action



A destroyed police vehicle is towed after a bomb attack in Baghdad September 1, 2008. A bomb attached to car wounded two policemen, in Karrada district in central Baghdad on Monday, police said. REUTERS/Mohammed Ameen

31 Aug 2008 (Reuters) & INI & Sept 1 (Reuters)

Insurgents killed an off-duty police officer and wounded his brother in a drive-by shooting on Saturday in eastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Police found the body of a bodyguard of one of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's advisers with gunshot wounds just after he was captured on Saturday in southern Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A member of a U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol and three of his relatives were killed when militants opened fire on Friday in Diyala Province, northern Baghdad, One Iraqi soldier was also wounded, the U.S. military said.

Guerrillas in Iraqi Army uniforms wounded police Lieutenant-Colonel Yas Khudaier and killed his wife when they stormed their house in the early morning in western Kut, 150 km (95 miles) southeast of Baghdad, police said.

Roadside bomb wounded seven policemen, when it exploded in Tuz Khurmato, 170 km (105 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. A roadside bomb wounded police Lieutenant-Colonel Hussain Ali just outside his house in Tuz Khurmato.

A sniper shot dead two Iraqi soldiers on Sunday in Mansour district, in western Baghdad, police said.

Three policemen were wounded by roadside bombs on Sunday in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Cops Were Reaching Out Into The Front Lines Of Demonstrators And Breaking Fingers”

[This is a comment on the article referenced about police terror against unarmed citizens in Minnesota this weekend.]

From: Doug A
To: GI Special
Sent: August 31, 2008 5:17 PM
Subject: Re: GI Special 6H22: Enemy Combatants Raid Minneapolis

They did something like this at the Democratic Convention at Staples Center in L.A.

They did pre-emptive raids on alternative media vans, a street puppet theater and other political organizations.

They shot a number of peaceful demonstrators with rubber bullets, some in the head, including members of the legal observer team and the press, and they cornered demonstrators in cul de sacs and opened up on them with rubber bullets.

There were five thousand cops in riot gear there from all over the state.

It looked like something out of science fiction.

Cops were reaching out into the front lines of demonstrators and breaking fingers.

To this day, no one has been held accountable.

What you've just published is even worse. I'm hoping the next administration takes a good look at violations of civil liberties during this administration.

Reply: The degree to which any given regime in DC engages in police terror is in direct proportion to the degree to which it fears mass movements by citizens. Were the next administration to keep its word and continue the wars of Empire in Afghanistan and Iraq, and were

“Stop The War- War Never Ends”

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

By Kristin Lee, 2006

My Father Asks “When Will They Bring The Troops Home”

**In the war that never ends, he sits in his room.
For years his mind would pretend
that he hadn't lost it all, freedom, love, dignity.
Left with wounds so deep they never mend.**

**Maybe a wiser man to lose your mind,
when the visions that flicker on and on,
show a world gone so wrong.
He knows many are blind.**

**She cries in the night, that awakes her from sleep
haunted by voices, that scatter and seep in hallow asylum walls,
that echo in administration's war calls.**

**He was called to fight, he was the young, the strong, the fated pawn.
The warrior marches on,
with stories of combat undergone, memories of precious lives that fell.
Images of hell that tangle and twist in his mind,
and stories so buried he can never tell.**

**With his battle's scars, he dwells in fear,
in places so dark, who can he tell?
When no one seems to want to hear.**

**Traded a young man's dreams and wishes for death, partitions,
flag draped coffins, and ammunitions.
Close as breath a memory seems, his fear never softens.**

Alone in his room he stares and stares

as the television blares,
he tells his daughter he's had a bad day,
but not to worry as it's been that way for years.
She feels her tears.
He says, "the news declares more troops died today"
He asks her "if anyone cares?" What can she say?

They all told him in Nam "you won't remember the wounded, the dead"
Yet, he remembers their faces and pain as he recites them by name,
with stories of how they each reached their end.
Lost for time in a battlefield haze that lives in his head.
Where his mind returns again and again to honor those slain.
Until he asks her again, "How much longer until we bring the troops
home?"

He sees them all die again and again,
and prays for the ones who make it back home.
Home does not change, everything in their head.
He knows many will roam on a hard road to tread,
The meds, buried friends, hospital beds, a soldier, a vet alone.
In a system he knows well, too many will dwell.

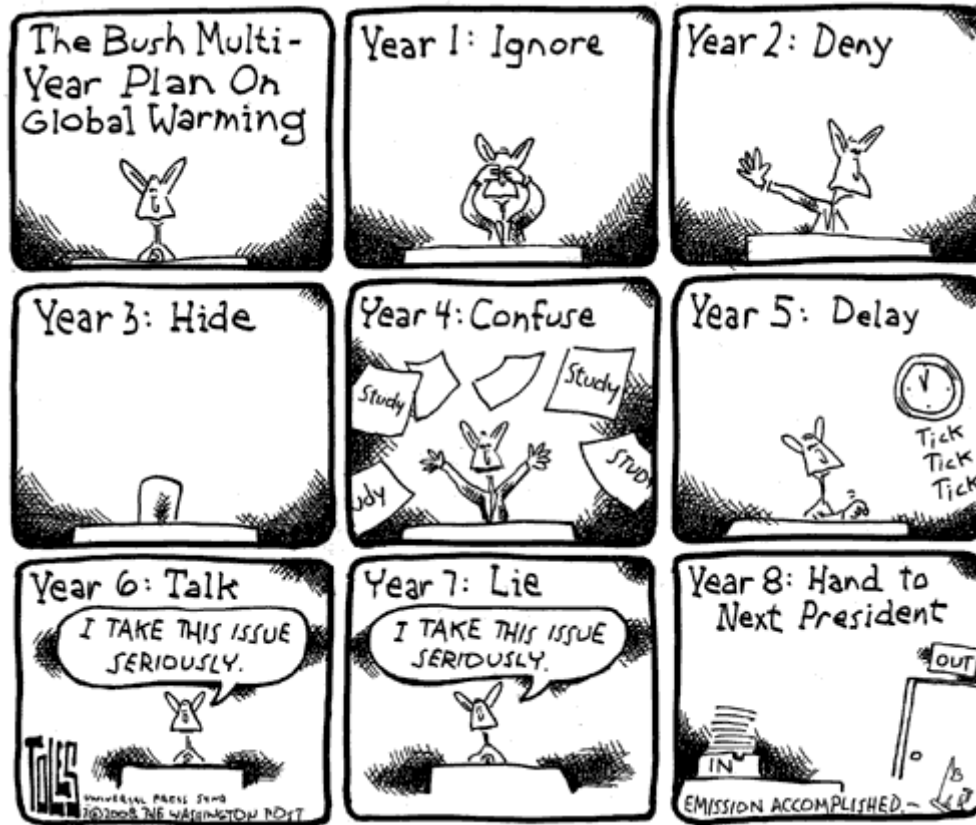
They seal his fate and say he lost his mind,
as they lock away the soldier who knows.
It seems his thoughts become clear, when he has his daughter near.
His soldier's wisdom to find in prose.
He knows what he sees is so wrong,
He asks her to write a peace song,
War scenes on flicker on and on.

Though he has come home decades ago, he lives in war that never ends.
He wonders were it all went wrong, lost years,
and how many will come home to sing his sad song,
of a war that lasts far too long

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



Denver And The Dems: (Some Scattered Observations On The Ridiculous)

08/25/2008 By Richard Myers, Colorado.indymedia.org

Since we've known the Dems were coming, Denverites have noticed some dramatic changes in the Mile-High City.

Not every development has been praiseworthy; for example, in the very city that declares small amounts of cannabis a low priority for law enforcement, we've experienced the embarrassment of a City Council obsessed with illegal possession-- of urine and feces.

Elected officials blame their bathroom ordinance on protesters, whom they accuse of harboring nefarious and disgusting plans. But as far as we can tell, the Council's potty preoccupation has been a preemptive pipe dream that should have been flushed at conception.

There have been other ridiculous rules.

Even as we've been relentlessly buzzed by military helicopters, and overflowed by fighter jets, we don't dare fly our radio-controlled model airplanes within 30 miles of the Pepsi Center.

I'm thinking what it might be like to get caught and having to do the hard time: "Whatcha in for kid?" "Felonious possession of a paper airplane..."

All the high-level discussions about stun guns and Mark IV pepperball launchers have been delivered with assurances that Denver will not look like a police state.

What a relief; good to know we've only imagined our kids had a new favorite pastime, guessing which machine-gun toting, riot-gear clad ninja turtles are Homeland Security flunkies, and which ones might be Blackwater.

Speaking of which, what are all those "hidden assets" they keep telling us about? Are they keeping Karl Rove in reserve?

Meanwhile there has been Orwellian talk of "counter-snipers" on the government payroll.

Raises the question: to have a counter-sniper, don't you first have to have a sniper?

Pretty soon we'll no longer have the U.S. Marines, we'll only have the Counter-Marines.

See how the frame of reference changes? Suddenly its always the other guy's fault, no matter who starts the ruckus.

We've noticed cameras on most every street in the downtown area. Surely they're just making videos for traffic congestion studies.

We can take heart from the great job Denver has done in destroying all existing copies of their spy file databases, right?

Hey everyone, no need to worry about privacy, Denver is just experimenting with Google-Earth in real time!

And all those videos of everyone's license plates could be quite helpful-- the spouse can call the local PD to discover where you're stuck in traffic.

With the DNC in full swing, traffic gridlock once noticed at rush hour can now be enjoyed at all hours... Those of us unfortunate enough to rely upon automobiles are a bit jealous when bicycles glide past.

Yet bicyclists aren't so lucky; their bike locks and key-chain carabiners have been outlawed due to well-known terroristic potentialities.

Better a stolen bike or lost keys than a cop subjected to that most awful of predicaments, confronting a potential arrestee who puts on her own handcuffs!

But wait-- we Denverites have read in our newspapers that bicycles themselves are possible protest weapons, with the nefarious battlefield capability of blocking walkways.

Don't buy that trike for junior, you'll turn him into a sidewalk terrorist!

Cops have been warned that anyone in possession of nails, self-tapping screws, tiki lamps, or wooden-handled protest signs is likely a violent protester.

As one of our friends observes, your local hardware store is a criminal conspiracy.

Meanwhile the Dems have passed their own rules.

Apparently verboten contraband disallowed in the audience at Obama's acceptance speech includes cowbells, frisbees, and shoes with wheels. There is talk of kazoos, so they may be banned as well.

Do you think the Dems are practicing for when they take over?

Meanwhile any major convention brings out the supreme effort of folks who desire delegate dollars. On Friday a convertible pulled into traffic ahead of me, and it was difficult not to notice the g-string adorned young woman mooning the following traffic as her partner tossed strip club passes into open windows. (I didn't get one, so don't ask me which club...)

Ahhh, but the character of Denver's main drag, Colfax Avenue itself hasn't changed much; Colfax has always been the one street in Denver that never sleeps. In some circles it is declared "the longest commercial street in the U.S.A.", and you can find most anything on Colfax. The thoroughfare even has its own website:
<http://www.colfaxavenue.com/>

Well, there is one difference overlooking the strip.

Amnesty International chose the large size when they opted for a billboard to get the message out to any delegates who might chance to pass Colfax and Gilpin.

It is great (and to be honest, a little surreal) to see such a high-visibility commitment to a progressive cause, right in the heart of the city.

I think Denver ought to adopt that sign, and forget the next convention.

RECEIVED

Re: Minnesota Police Terror Complaints

From: Clancy Sigal
To: GI Special
Sent: September 01, 2008
Subject: Minneapolis

Phones listed in Minn/StP reports not too apt.

I've phoned in my outrage. Best numbers are:

Sheriff 651 266 9333

Minn mayor 612 673 2100

St. Paul complaints 651 266 8989



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

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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