

GI SPECIAL 6L13:

PIG FOR THE PIGS



12.20.08: A demonstrator gestures with a rotting pig head in front of police during anti-government demonstrations in Athens. Protesters also hurled garbage at riot police. The police killing of a boy set off nationwide unrest. AFP/Aris Messinis)

The Pigs Are Back In Town

[Written by Dennis Serdel during the wave of government terrorism at the Denver Democrat Convention, as police were raiding the homes of anti-war activists and threatening little kids with weapons in the process, gassing and arresting people on the streets, and generally making clear this is the occupied USA, this is printed here now as a preview of what may lie ahead for people who go to the inauguration with less than love for Obama and his Imperial wars and intend to make that publicly crystal clear. T]

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: August 27, 2008
Subject: The Pigs Are Back In Town by Dennis

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

The Pigs Are Back In Town

**The Democrat brain tumors
topped off by Denver smog
stink like the police who surround
and protect them from their own people
as pigs they wallow in drunkenness
power, spray pepper gas in the faces
of peace and loop plastic ties
around their wrists and slam them
into waiting police vans
The Circus is in town and the clowns
like white Clintons do not want
to listen to anybody but themselves
and white Biden as Democrat hacks
push a black man in front of them
who knows, they may win
but the protesters abhor the fenced
in cages provided for them
that make them prisoners
like Jimmy Carter
or sitting behind TV sets
if they haven't been repossessed yet
Inside 95% of the tumors voted for the war
in one way or another
their piggy bank eyes should be ripped
from their heads by the mothers
who's boys are dead or now
are in Iraq or Afghanistan
fighting and dying for the war profiteers
some sponsor this DNC 2008
Obama keeps jumping up
as a jack in the box and keeps repeating
we will end this war "Responsibly"
which is just weasel language**

Meanwhile the protesters are legally led
into chain link concentration camps
far away from the DNC hand shakes
with DNC smiles on their faces
like terrorists blowing up
freedom of speech, freedom to assemble
with IED pigs
that like the DNC of 1968
a Mayor in Chicago
felt happy and proud of it

ACTION REPORTS

Outstanding! Mysterious Stranger(s) Mail Anti- War CDs To 51 National Guard And Reserve Facilities in 36 States:

**“A Classified Meeting About The
Mailings Was Under Way At Midday
Wednesday At The Guard’s Joint
Operation Center”**

**[SSG: “I Never Thought Videos Were
Dangerous, But If They’re Anti-War,
Precautions Must Be Taken!!”]**

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd); Comrade Tribune, Vietnam Veteran; and Johanna Pettit, who sent this in.]

[SSG N writes: “I never thought videos were dangerous, but if they’re anti-war, precautions must be taken!!”]

Dec 17 By EILEEN SULLIVAN, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON – Suspicious packages have been sent to National Guard and Reserve facilities in 36 states, federal authorities said Wednesday.

Initial reports from the Guard that one of the packages contained a powdery substance turned out to be incorrect, officials said.

The 51 packages included anti-war compact discs and began arriving at locations around the country last Friday, said National Guard spokesman Mark Allen.

A classified meeting about the mailings was under way at midday Wednesday at the Guard's joint operation center, which monitors deployments of teams sent out to investigate such incidents, Guard spokesman Randy Noller said.

Some of the packages were postmarked from Tennessee and Oklahoma, Allen said.

"It doesn't appear that we have a problem," Allen said Wednesday.

Officials initially were told by a number of people that a package received at Utah's National Guard headquarters in Draper also contained a suspicious powdery substance that was tested and found not to be toxic.

But Lt. Col. Hank McIntire, a spokesman for the Utah Guard, said Wednesday that "first reports of the incident were incorrect."

The National Guard notified the FBI about the suspicious packages.

However FBI spokesman Rich Kolko said these packages appeared to be someone exercising their First Amendment rights, which is not a crime.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

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 wars, 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

Schofield Soldier Killed In Iraq Blast



Sgt. Solomon T. Sam

December 20, 2008 By William Cole, Military Writer, The Honolulu Advertiser

A married father of three children out of Schofield Barracks was one of two soldiers killed Thursday in Iraq when a suicide bomber detonated a car with explosives near a checkpoint in the northern city of Mosul, officials said.

Sgt. Solomon T. Sam, 26, of Majuro, Marshall Islands, was with the 84th Engineer Battalion and had deployed to Iraq last month on his second tour to the country from Hawai'i.

Sam's wife and children live on O'ahu.

"They are part of the Army family, so we'll certainly take care of them," said Sgt. 1st Class David Gillespie, a spokesman for the 8th Theater Sustainment Command at Fort Shafter. "We're working with them now in helping them through this time."

The Web site www.yokwe.net, devoted to the Marshall Islands, said Sam is believed to be the first loss for the Republic of the Marshall Islands in the U.S. war on terrorism.

Staff Sgt. Neamon Neamon said on the Web site that his family and several other Marshallese soldiers had visited Sam's wife and children early this week.

The Web site said Sam's father is the Rev. Harry Sam from Ujae, Ailinglaplap, Kwajalein, and his mother is Teaoi Sam from Kiribati.

Gillespie said Sam, who joined the Army in 1999, returned from Iraq in 2006 from an earlier deployment with the 84th Engineer Battalion.

Sam's death came as about 9,200 Schofield Barracks soldiers are now based in Iraq.

The total includes about 1,000 with the 25th Infantry Division headquarters; 3,500 with the 3rd Brigade; 4,000 with the Stryker Brigade; and 700 with the 84th Engineer Battalion, which arrived in Iraq in November and this month and is predominantly in Mosul.

Also killed in last week's blast was Sgt. John J. Savage, 26, of Texas, who was with the 94th Engineer Company at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Eight or nine civilians also were wounded.

Suicide bombers killed 18 people in three attacks as the Iraqi government approved a "Status of Forces Agreement" that calls for U.S. troops to withdraw from population centers by June 30.

Pfc. Christopher A. McCraw, 23, came under gunfire in Baghdad on Oct. 14 and was the most recent fatality for Schofield Barracks before Sam's death.

According to the Web site www.icasualties.org, there were 17 U.S. deaths in Iraq in November, compared with 37 for the same month in 2007.

Iraqis Rally To Cause Of Reporter Who Threw Shoes At Bush; "Because Of Muntathar, I Lift My Head High"



Demonstrators chant slogans as they hold up shoes during a protest demanding the release of Iraqi TV reporter Muntazer al-Zaidi from detention, in Baghdad's Sadr City December 19, 2008. REUTERS/Kahtan al-Mesiary

December 19, 2008, By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi journalist who hurled his shoes at President George W. Bush intends to press charges against the people who he says beat him as he was taken into custody, said a member of the Iraqi parliament who's urging his release.

Bahaa al Araji, a member of parliament from a party tied to Shiite cleric Muqtada al Sadr, said journalist Muntathar al Zaidi earlier on Friday had presented his case that he was beaten to an Iraqi judge.

Iraqis in different cities have protested every day this week for Zaidi, and Friday's rally brought together a handful of politicians, Zaidi's siblings and a mix of protesters from several provinces outside of Baghdad.

“Because of Muntathar, I lift my head high. And to be frank, I haven't been proud to be an Iraqi for five long years of humiliation,” said Sheikh Mohammed al Inizi, a leader in the Sons of Iraq movement, which brought Sunni tribes together with American forces to fight terrorist cells.

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



American soldiers inspect a restaurant after a bomber attack in Kirkuk, 290 kilometers (180 miles) north of Baghdad, Dec. 11, 2008. (AP Photo/Emad Matti)

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA refuse to allow Iraqi citizens to return to their homes in Sab al-Boor near Baghdad unless they submit to retina scans. December 15, 2008. REUTERS/Erik de Castro

“We must continue to treat all Iraqi citizens with the utmost dignity and honor.”
Gen. Ray Odierno, U.S. Commanding General, Multi-National Force—Iraq, quoted
by Robert H. Reid, The Associated Press, Dec 5, 2008

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

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

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

OCCUPATION ISN’T LIBERATION

ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three Danish Troops Killed In Gerishk, Another Wounded

20 Dec 2008 DPA

Three Danish soldiers were killed and another was wounded on Friday when their armoured vehicle was blown up in Gerishk district of southern Helmand province, the Danish defence ministry said in a statement.

The wounded soldier was transported to a NATO military hospital in the region, it said.

Dutch Soldier Killed In Uruzgan, Another Wounded

December 19, 2008 (AP)

A Dutch soldier was killed and another wounded in the province of Uruzgan on Friday, the Dutch military said.

Gen. Peter van Uhm said 24-year-old Sgt. Mark Weijdt was killed Friday when he stepped on an explosive device during a fire-fight with the Taliban in the southern Afghan province of Uruzgan.

Occupation Oil Tankers Attacked In Landi Kotal, Drivers Killed

Dec 20 By Ibrahim Shinwari

JAMRUD, Pakistan (Reuters)

Pakistani Taliban militants killed three truckers returning after taking fuel to Western forces in Afghanistan, officials said on Saturday, the latest in a growing spate of attacks on NATO supplies.

The latest attack occurred on Friday night when militants fired rocket-propelled grenades at oil-tankers in the Landi Kotal area of the Khyber region, when they were coming back from the Afghan border.

“Two drivers died on the spot while the third succumbed to his injuries today,” said Khyal Hussain, a government official in Khyber.

The U.S. military sends 75 percent of supplies for the Afghan war through or over Pakistan, including 40 percent of the fuel for its troops, the U.S. Defense Department says.

Supplies have been disrupted by the violence but some have been getting through from depots on the outskirts of Peshawar, through the Khyber Pass to the border at Torkham

The main truckers' association that handles the bulk of NATO supplies between Karachi and Peshawar said this month its members would no longer transport supplies because of the violence.

TROOP NEWS

The Last 40 Macedonian Solders Come Home From Iraq



Macedonian soldiers attend a ceremony of the returning of the last 40 Macedonian solders from Iraq, at army barracks in Macedonia's capital Skopje, Dec. 19, 2008.

Macedonia announced on Friday the end of the four and half years participation into the US occupation of Iraq. Since June 2003, about 480 Macedonian soldiers have been serving in Iraq. (AP Photo/Boris Grdanoski)

Fort Bragg Soldiers Spent “Weeks” Scraping And Carrying Deadly Asbestos With No Masks To Protect Them; Stupid Ass-Kissing Liar Says Exposure Wasn’t Dangerous

[Even the dumbest dumb-fucker on the face of the earth knows by now that inhaled asbestos causes lung cancer. This effort to protect command is despicable.]

12.22.08 Army Times [Excerpts]

The Army said Fort Bragg paratroopers assigned to clean a barracks storage room were exposed unknowingly to asbestos, but a soldier’s father said the military should have known about the material.

He said his son and others didn’t get masks to protect them.

Medical tests showed that up to 10 soldiers in the 82nd Airborne Division were exposed to asbestos, but not at dangerous levels, division spokesman Master Sgt. Thomas Clementson said Dec. 10. **[What stupid lying bullshit. All levels of inhaled asbestos exposure are dangerous. That’s why civilians doing exactly the same work are required to wear hazmat protection at all times.]**

Officials said soldiers in the 1st Brigade Combat team scraped floor tiles and carried out debris during the past few weeks, exposing them to asbestos.

[Soldiers “scraping and carrying” asbestos completely unprotected? “Weeks” of exposure? “Not dangerous”? Master Sgt. Clementson missed his calling. He would have been truly valuable in 2002 working at the Pentagon fabricating up much more important stupid lies about how Iraq was full of WMDs.

[Not fair to Master Sgt.? Fine. If so, then he’ll cheerfully be willing to volunteer to spend “weeks” scraping and carrying asbestos himself, won’t he? Since he says it’s not at “dangerous levels?” How could he possibly object? T]

Survival Guide for Veterans

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.]

December 19, 2008 Editorial, New York Times [Excerpts]

Far too often, military veterans find themselves desperately short of the information they need as they make the torturous quest for benefits within one of this country's most daunting bureaucracies, the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Officials say help is on the way, but administrators are forever promising to streamline procedures for an era of conquered paperwork that never seems to come. That is why it is heartening to see that one promising form of help has indeed arrived: a 599-page guide to veterans' issues, from educational help to vocational rehabilitation, from housing to citizenship.

It's called "The American Veterans' and Servicemembers' Survival Guide," and it comes, unsurprisingly, from outside the system. It is a publication of the nonprofit advocacy group Veterans for America, available as a free download at veteransforamerica.org.

This electronic book is a descendant of "The Viet Vet Survival Guide," which was published a decade after the end of that conflict — when veterans were still being routinely and shamefully denied their rights.

The new book was written by veterans and lawyers for a new generation of soldiers with old problems, like post-traumatic stress, and new ones like traumatic brain injury, the brutal legacy of Iraq's and Afghanistan's roadside bombs.

The authors caution that while the guide will help a veteran understand what's going on, it is not a substitute for a good lawyer or other advocate. And it isn't the only source of information: The government, too, has vast Web sites explaining things — for example, how officers help veterans through the disability evaluation system.

(In military acronyms, it's how the Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer, or Peblo, helps with the D.E.S.)

The "Survival Guide" does this, too, but with a difference: It also warns veterans to "pay careful attention to what you say to your Peblo," because the Peblo is not required to act in their best interests the way an attorney is, and things told to a Peblo are not necessarily confidential.

No book will ever defeat a bureaucracy this large, but a book can help people to subdue it.

Veterans and their families often praise the dedication of health-care providers, but at the same time express utter frustration over incomprehensible thickets of rules and the glacial pace at which benefits and appeals are decided.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The “Moment Of The Shoes”
“Many Iraqis Are Saying That The Situation In Iraq Now Is Like It Was Before The Revolution In 1920 Which Threw Out The British Occupying Forces”
“In That One Small Action He Lit A Spark In Them That Reminds Them Of Their History And Their Dignity”



Residents take part in a protest demanding Iraqi TV reporter Muntazer al-Zaidi be freed from detention in central Baghdad December 20, 2008. REUTERS/Mohammed Ameen

“The tribal leaders have said that they hope it is now clear that they have only one enemy - the occupation of Iraq. “Anyone who knows Iraqi history knows very well what the anger of the tribes can do.”

Sunni and Shiite tribal leaders have publicly asked that Muntather not be referred to using his tribal affiliation (Muntather Al-Zaidi), because they believe his tribal affiliation now encompasses all the tribes of Iraq: They've asked for him to be referred to as "Muntather Al-Iraqi" (Muntather the Iraqi).

[Thanks to Judith Karpova, who sent this in.]

December 17, 2008 By Najlaa A. Al-Nashi, with Noah Baker Merrill. [Excerpts]

Najlaa Al-Nashi is Middle East coordinator and Noah Baker Merrill is an administrator for Direct Aid Iraq (DAI), where this story was published. DAI supports displaced Iraqis by providing funds for crucial medical expenses. It works in partnership with the Electronic Iraq news and analysis website.

It was only a few seconds - the shoes were flying toward President Bush, and with them a huge insult in Iraqi tradition.

You may have heard the news that an Iraqi journalist threw his shoes at the American president, but as an Iraqi I'd like to share with you a few details about the journalist, and why he did that.

Muntather Al-Zaidi, the journalist mentioned in the reports, is 28 years old. He is from the Southern city of Nasiriyah, and lives in Baghdad. He works for the Egyptian-owned Al-Baghdadiya channel, but he is Iraqi.

Muntather is well-known among those who know him as being against the occupation.

Muntather's last reporting assignment, which ran last month, was an investigation of the conditions for Iraqi widows and orphans. As a result of three wars, the rule of a dictator, devastating sanctions, and a disastrous occupation, it is estimated that 5 million children are without at least one of their parents and there are 1.5 million widows.

As he prepared this report, he was deeply impacted by what he saw, and he can be seen crying in the film that was broadcast in Iraq.

Now let's have a look at what's going on in Iraq, and how these events are viewed among Iraqis:

At Baghdad University and Al Mustansiriya University, students have refused to study or attend classes. Instead, they are protesting and asking for the release of Muntather by Iraqi security forces.

From all over the world, Iraqis are sending messages thanking Muntather and his family for their son's message. In TV interviews and with phone calls, Iraqis are expressing their support of his actions.

Bush hurt everyone, they say, and so why is he surprised when he is met with an angry and insulting response on behalf of the people of Iraq?

Whether Sunni or Shi'i (and some tribes contain members of both sects), in Iraqi tradition if a member of a tribe takes an action or is in trouble, members of his tribe will represent him and will be responsible for supporting him.

But in Muntather's case, tribal leaders from throughout Iraq, from the North to South and from East to West, have claimed him as their son. They have said that they want him released safe and sound, offering to pay whatever fine the government will set for him.

Muntather's actions have, for these days, united Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians. It united Iraqis as Iraqis. And it only took a few seconds.

Sunni and Shiite tribal leaders have publicly asked that Muntather not be referred to using his tribal affiliation (Muntather Al-Zaidi), because they believe his tribal affiliation now encompasses all the tribes of Iraq:

They've asked for him to be referred to as "Muntather Al-Iraqi" (Muntather the Iraqi).

At the same time, the tribal leaders have said that they hope it is now clear that they have only one enemy - the occupation of Iraq.

The Iraqi response shows clearly that Muntather's actions have triggered a deep release in Iraqi society.

It gives an indication to the outside world how much so many Iraqis oppose the occupation and the ongoing presence of foreign troops in their country, but have been without a voice that cut through the walls of silence and the filtered mainstream media.

It is important to be clear that this action by a single man does not arise from his role as a journalist, or from some specific incident or time in his life. It comes from an Iraqi man who, like all of his people, has suffered greatly from occupation, from the actions of mercenaries like those employed by Blackwater Worldwide, from the torture of Iraqis by American soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison and elsewhere, and from the sectarian violence that the occupation has cultivated, fueled, and allowed to thrive. Muntather himself was kidnapped a few months ago, though thankfully he was released alive.

Now let's stop to analyze the situation. Why do so many Iraqis consider Muntather "their son", and why are they calling him a hero?

Why are people printing his photo and distributing it in many parts of Iraq as a symbol to promote Iraqi courage and freedom?

His actions expressed the same anger and pain they feel.

But his actions gave it a voice, and in that one small action he lit a spark in them that reminds them of their history and their dignity.

His symbolic act of protest told the whole story, cutting through the carefully constructed image that has been built by Bush and his supporters since they defied the UN and the world to invade and occupy Iraq.

More than 200 Iraqi and Arab lawyers have volunteered to defend him in Iraqi courts, if they are given that opportunity.

One Iraqi businessman signed a blank check and called on Muntather to make it out for any amount, as long as the businessman could receive the shoes that Muntather threw. Another man from Saudi Arabia offered 10 million dollars for the shoes.

Muntather's nephew is about 6 years old. He was shown on video carrying another pair of his uncle's shoes, and he told Al-Baghdadiya Channel that he was prepared to throw this second pair of shoes, too, if they wouldn't release his uncle.

In Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, there have been strong expressions of support, including protests and celebrations.

Many Iraqis are saying that the situation in Iraq now is like it was before the revolution in 1920 which threw out the British occupying forces.

They're saying that Muntather might be a spark for a new revolution in his country.

In recent days, there have been protests all over Iraq asking for Muntather's release.

Crowds in Najaf threw shoes at occupying forces. The streets of Iraq are filled with anger as people learn that Muntather has been beaten and tortured while in the custody of US-supported Iraqi forces.

Yesterday in Jordan, a good Iraqi friend of mine got into a taxi cab. For Iraqi refugees in Jordan, riding in a cab often means insults, scorn, and disdain from Jordanians and Palestinians unhappy to have so many Iraqis seeking refuge in their country.

But this time, it was different. The cab driver treated her with respect.

Recognizing her Iraqi accent, he said he'd take her anywhere she wanted to go, and he would do it with pleasure, because she was one of the "shoe throwers".

His case is not just a personal case - it is a national concern.

The Iraqi government says he will likely have to serve 7-15 years in jail, with no possibility of paying a fine to be released.

But in spite of this news, it does seem as if they will have to release him soon. If they don't, they risk losing the tenuous control they have in many parts of Iraq.

Muntather's actions could serve as a spark bringing Iraqis to unite to oppose the occupation and the US-supported government.

Anyone who knows Iraqi history knows very well what the anger of the tribes can do.

Before the British were thrown out of Iraq in 1920, there was a recently-signed agreement on the status of occupying forces in the country. Under the pressure of a sustained national uprising opposing foreign occupation, the troops left far sooner than the British occupiers had hoped.

It may well be that the agreement that Bush and Nouri Al-Maliki signed just before the “moment of the shoes” will fail before 2011, following the same course.

Many Iraqis today hope so.

Meanwhile, Muntather is still in jail, where he has suffered serious injuries, including what are likely a broken hand and arm, an injury to his eye, and possibly to his legs.

Today there were protests in many of Iraq’s governorates demanding his release.

I remember, in the early days of 2003, it was said that invading US troops would be “greeted with flowers”.

No one said anything about how Iraqis would say farewell to Bush and his 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

UFPJ Bows Down Before Their New Imperial Master: Serving Him Well, The Opportunists In Command Do Their Job: “Deflect Attention From The Democratic Party’s Plan For Endless Occupation In Iraq And Escalation In Afghanistan”

December 19, 2008 By Ashley Smith and Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

THE MAIN U.S. antiwar coalition, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), held its national convention in Chicago on December 12-14.

While the U.S. continues to occupy Iraq and is planning a major escalation of forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the conference drew only 248 attendees, fewer than at its convention last year.

Such a low turnout should come as no surprise; UFPJ has not called a major national antiwar demonstration in close to two years and has invested the bulk of its forces either directly or indirectly in campaigning for the Democratic Party.

At the convention, the majority of UFPJ’s leadership and featured speakers argued forcefully that the antiwar movement should credit itself for helping get Obama elected and be encouraged that we will now finally have an ally in the White House.

Only Ali Abunimah of Electronic Intifada, who spoke on the Saturday evening plenary, dissented from the chorus of praise for the incoming administration.

Obama has promised to retain tens of thousands of U.S. troops and private mercenaries after “withdrawal” from Iraq as a residual force to “provide security.”

He has also repeatedly promised to escalate the war in Afghanistan and continue supporting Israel's occupation of Palestine.

He may conduct U.S. policy with more diplomacy and humanitarian aid than the Bush administration, but Obama's goals do not represent a break with decades of U.S. imperial policy.

As Zaineb Alani, an Iraqi antiwar activist now living in Ohio, said: "With all this talk of change in Washington, the Iraqi people do not see any change.

"They're not going to see any change in the next three years because they will still be under occupation."

To counter this argument, supporters of UFPJ's leadership spoke of the importance of broadening the constituency and agenda of UFPJ. But the logic of their position was to insist that no antiwar demonstration take place in Washington. They invoked Martin Luther King's legacy to justify their call for April 4 in New York, the date and site of King's famous antiwar speech "Beyond Vietnam" in 1967.

But their arguments turned the meaning of King's speech on its head. In April 1967, King broke his silence on the U.S. war on Vietnam and called for protest against the administration of Democrat Lyndon Johnson.

King was making the case for directly taking on the questions of war and militarism.

UFPJ's leadership is using King as a vehicle to do the exact opposite--deflect attention from the Democratic Party's plan for endless occupation in Iraq and escalation in Afghanistan.

"If there were more Iraqis present, and they observed this reaction, the one message it sends is 'we don't care,'" said Zaineb Alani.

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

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

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters 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.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Comment Unnecessary



Palestinian demonstrators throw their shoes at Israeli soldiers, during a demonstration against Israel's ghetto wall enclosing Palestinians, and calling for the release of Iraqi journalist Muntadhar al-Zeidi, in the occupied West Bank Palestinian village of Bilin near Ramallah, Dec. 19, 2008. (AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Eyewitness Report: "Days Of Struggle That Have Shaken Greece"

“The Hatred Of Police Repression And The Country’s Rich Was Everywhere” “Tuesday Morning, Dawned On A Terrified Government”



A riot police officer uses his shield to hit a press photographer as the police tries to disperse a crowd of anti-government protesters in central Athens' Syntagma Square , Dec. 20, 2008. Riot police used pepper spray to attack the protesters. (AP Photo/Petros Karadjias)

The demonstrators made their objectives known: By targeting the police department, they were attacking the government’s authoritarian policy of repression. By targeting the banks, they were attacking the symbols of capitalism to show their anger with neoliberal policy.

December 15, 2008 By Panos Petrou, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Panos Petrou, a member of Workers Internationalist Left (DEA, by its initials in Greek) and part of the editorial board of DEA’s newspaper Workers’ Left, reports on the mass demonstrations shaking the conservative government.

ON THE night of December 6, a special police squad in Athens murdered a 15-year-old student in cold blood in Exarchia, a neighborhood with a long tradition of activism among young people, the left and anarchists.

This was only the latest instance of police brutality against immigrants, and left-wing and anarchist activists--especially youth, in the wake of a major youth resistance movement against privatization of education that rattled the right-wing government of Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis.

The next day, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), revolutionary left organizations and anarchist activists called a demonstration at police headquarters in Athens.

This was the first shock.

Although the demonstration wasn't well organized, and in spite of the climate of fear cultivated by the government and the big media, tens of thousands of people came out in the streets.

At the same time, demonstrations were organized spontaneously in smaller cities around the country.

The police attacked the demonstration, using chemical sprays and tear gas. The demonstrators resisted by building barricades and bonfires all night long in the center of Athens.

However, the real earthquake happened the next day.

On December 8, DEA members visited schools, proposing occupations and demonstrations. We found out that the idea was already on the minds of a majority of students.

All schools in the country closed, and thousands of students poured into the streets.

The students occupied the centers of cities all over Greece, and in many cases, they besieged the police departments.

The sizes of the protests were huge, especially in Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras. Hundreds of demonstrations took place in smaller towns, and even in villages.

It was already obvious within a matter of days that this would be a generalized explosion of youth after years of oppression, poverty and deep cuts in the government's social spending.

The demonstrators made their objectives known: By targeting the police department, they were attacking the government's authoritarian policy of repression. By targeting the banks, they were attacking the symbols of capitalism to show their anger with neoliberal policy.

That afternoon, SYRIZA called a demonstration for the center of Athens. Despite the police presence and the use of tear gas, tens of thousands of people participated. The police again used violence to disperse the demonstrators.

What followed was a wild night of confrontations.

More than 30 banks and many big stores and public buildings were set on fire. The same thing took place in other cities around the country.

In addition to students, the poor and immigrants came out to the demonstrations. The hatred of police repression and the country's rich was everywhere.



Policemen stand in front of a shoe thrown at them during anti-government demonstrations in Athens December 20, 2008. People are protesting over the fatal shooting of a youth in central Athens two weeks ago at the central Syntagma square. REUTERS/Yiorgos Karahalis

THE NEXT day, Tuesday morning, dawned on a terrified government.

Rumors circulated that Prime Minister Karamanlis intended to declare a state of emergency in Athens and Thessaloniki, which would mean a “temporary” suspension of all democratic and political freedoms.

But any such plans were withdrawn after the government realized the strength of the demonstrations would cancel out the strength of any “extraordinary measures.”

Karamanlis called together the leaders of the political parties in successive meetings, demanding their consent for stopping the crisis with threats of brutal police intervention. It was obvious that pressure was being directed at the radical left coalition SYRIZA.

But the leadership of SYRIZA withstood it.

The head of SYRIZA's parliamentary group, Alekos Alavanos, came out of a meeting with Karamanlis and called on the workers and students to continue their struggle to topple the Karamanlis government.

Alavanos also demanded a "real apology" toward the youth--which would mean disarming the police, the end of all privatization measures in education and a policy to strengthen employment for young people.

Though pressed hard by the media, he made it clear that SYRIZA wasn't participating in the riots, but he refused to condemn the "violence" of the demonstrators, insisting that the point was the fight against police violence.

One disappointing response was that of the Communist Party of Greece. After meeting with Karamanlis, the party's secretary, Aleka Papatrifa, denounced SYRIZA and demanded that it stop pandering to the anarchists. The same line was taken by the leader of the right wing, Georgios Karatzaferis, who also targeted SYRIZA and accused it of being the "political wing" of the rioters.

The real problem, however, is the attitude taken by the large social democratic party, PASOK, led by Georgios Papandreou. In order to oppose Karamanlis' center-right New Democracy party, Papandreou denounced the murder and police oppression. But at the same time, he denounces the demonstrations, proposing instead silent candlelight vigils to "mourn" the young student who was killed.

The murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos came as the economic crisis reached a new level. Greece's trade unions had already called for a 24-hour general strike on December 12.

But the social democratic leadership of the Confederation of Greek Workers--terrified by the wave of demonstrations and complying with Karamanlis' request--canceled a labor rally planned for that day.

The rally did take place after a mobilization by SYRIZA and organizations of the revolutionary left.

It was massive, very militant and peaceful.

Participation in the strike call was almost total. This broke through the climate of fear and scaremongering promoted by the government.

The right-wing government is headed toward its downfall.

Every opinion poll shows that it has already suffered a huge loss of support after the outbreak of big corruption scandals revolving around illegal sales of public land in collaboration with the church. .

DEA is participating enthusiastically in the resistance movement. We support the unity of the young demonstrators fighting against repression and the workers and their unions fighting against exploitation.

To achieve unity, we need a left that is massive and effective, but also a left that is radical--that can inspire all the people now in struggle with the belief that this society, capitalism, should be overthrown, and that an alternative that meets our needs, socialism, is a feasible solution.

This is the potential presented clearly in front of us during the days of struggle that have shaken Greece.



RECEIVED

Prisoners Against The War

[Identifying information removed to protect the writer. The letter will be passed on to Stanley Howard, Prisoners Against The War chapter, Military Project, for reply. T]

[XXXX]
C.D.C. # [XXXX]
Kern Valley State Prison

[XXXX]
PO Box 5103
Delano, Ca. 93216

December 2, 2008

The Military Project
PO Box 5102
2576 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

Re: Information

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing in request of any information you have doing with Iraq Veterans Against The War, and access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars.

I just had a nephew Sergeant [xxxxx] die in Iraq... I would like to know why?

Respectfully:
[XXXX]
A.K.A. [XXXX]

“I Am Looking For Veterans And Soldiers Who Can Provide Information Or Witness Accounts About The Use Of Swedish Products In Iraq And Afghanistan”

From: Christopher Holmbäck [holmback@gmail.com]
To: GI Special
Sent: December 15, 2008
Subject: Swedish weapons in Iraq and Afghanistan

I got your contacts from Jeff E [Iraq Veterans Against The War].

I met him during my year and a half in the US when I wrote about veterans turned activists for Swedish and Spanish media.

I also worked with Courage to Resist.

I wonder if you are able to help me with my ongoing long term project.

It's dealing with Swedish weapons exports to the US.

As one part of the project, I am looking for veterans and soldiers who can provide information or witness accounts about the use of Swedish products in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This project is not to focus on the actions of soldiers but on the participation and responsibility of Sweden in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Swedish products include AT-4, M3/Carl Gustaf (aka the goose), red dot sights from Aimpoint, ammunition from Norwegian-run Nammo, and Excalibur.

I have talked to a couple of veterans but would like to talk to a few more people.

Perhaps you have heard of any experiences with these weapons, or maybe you know someone who could be willing to talk to me about their experiences of Swedish weapons.

Please let me know if you could assist me in any way or if you want more information about the project.

In solidarity,

Chris

Christopher Holmbäck

+46 737 32 72 18

+1 530 554 13 07

Skype: christopherholmback

“It’s Afghanistan”

From: Elizabeth C
To: nola discussion
Sent: October 21, 2008
Subject: GI Special 6J19: Never Forgive, Never Forget

Two million dollar mansions, menacing armed guards? Landcruisers with blacked-out windows? Corruption a cancer eating away at the structure of things?

Sounds like America.

But it's not. It's Afghanistan.

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

Telling the truth - about the occupations 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 to Imperial wars 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 Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)



GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

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

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;

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