

GI SPECIAL 6L4:

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



The casket of Army Spc. Corey Shea at St. Mary's church in Mansfield, Mass., Nov. 24, 2008. Shea was killed in Mosul, Iraq on Nov. 12, 2008. (AP Photo/Stephan Savoia)

“We Are Fighting Two Wars Every Single Day”

“We Were There Simply As An Occupying Force”

“There Are A Lot Of Afghanistan Veterans Who Want To See Immediate Withdrawal From Afghanistan”

“We Were Not Only Harassing The Population Through Giant Shows Of Military Force, But Also Through Thuggish Intimidation, Kidnapping And Abuse Of Detainees”



[Thanks to Johanna Pettit, who sent this in.]

December 4, 2008 Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

CORPORAL BRYAN Casler served with the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines Fox Company as an infantryman from 2002 to 2006. In those four years, he was sent to Iraq twice and Afghanistan once.

He came back profoundly changed by his experiences, joined Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and dedicated himself to building the antiwar movement.

But since his return and throughout his organizing activities, he says that he's rarely been asked about his time in Afghanistan.

“Afghanistan was a high-stress environment,” explains Casler. “We worked 100-plus hours a week with a skeleton crew.

“Most of us had already deployed to Iraq, and one of the striking things is that our training for Iraq and Afghanistan wasn't any different. We treated the situation exactly like it was Iraq. If it was really a different war with different things happening there, they would have trained us differently, but they didn't.”

When President-elect Barack Obama takes office in January, he has pledged to withdraw a battalion a month from Iraq--and begin a surge of U.S. troops to Afghanistan.

But to antiwar U.S. soldiers, Afghan civilians and even a growing portion of the Afghan elite, the consequences of a sharp increase in foreign troops in Afghanistan are predictable and dire -- more civilian deaths, more soldiers in harm's way, and more damage to what little remains of Afghan society.

As Casler puts it, "It's time for us to start talking about Afghanistan."

THE OCCUPATION of Afghanistan is entering its eighth year, and yet the situation for the U.S. [translation: for the U.S. Imperial government] is getting worse, not better.

The reasons are many.

First and foremost, the U.S. has increasingly relied on air strikes to suppress the growing influence of the Taliban--to a jaw-dropping extent. U.S. fighters flew only 86 bombing raids in all of 2004; in 2007, the number of air strikes grew to nearly 3,000. The bombing continued to rise in 2008, with 600,000 pounds of bombs dropped on Afghanistan in June and July alone, almost equal to the amount dropped in all of 2006.

In early November, U.S. air strikes killed 65 civilians in a wedding party--a horrific toll but not unprecedented, as such parties, with their large concentrations of people, have been targets of air strikes in the past.

"The Americans are hitting civilian houses all the time," exclaimed Mohammad Tawakil Khan, a provincial council member in Baghdis, whose two sons and a grandson were killed along with four others in a U.S. air strike the same week as the wedding party massacre.

"They don't care, they just say it was a mistake...Afghan officials are only offering their condolences.

"After some 100 times that they have killed civilians, we have to take revenge, and afterward say our condolences to them."

TED GOODNIGHT served in Afghanistan in 2003 and 2004 with the North Carolina Army National Guard and was stationed primarily at the Bagram Air Base, and for a time at a forward operating base near the Pakistani border.

Like Casler, his time overseas--combined with his horror at deploying to Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina fully armed to repress the people he thought he was supposed to be helping--persuaded him to end 15 years of service with the National Guard after he returned, and to join IVAW.

What he saw and heard in Afghanistan shocked him. "Despite all the planning and flawless execution of all the elements of a combined arms task force, based on supposedly actionable intelligence, we continually came up short--no one captured of any value," says Goodnight.

"I thought there's something wrong with this picture, so I asked my company commander why we kept coming up short. Was it an intelligence failure? Or something else?"

"And the response that I got was that these were simply shows of force, that in reality there were no legitimate targets.

"I also remember the various snatch-and-grabs of Afghans that the military carried out. They would come off the helicopters with their handcuffs and leg shackles and hoods over their heads, and were led into this compound, where they were never seen or heard from by us again.

"I remember being in the dining facility and overhearing conversations between military police personnel who were in charge of interrogations, and they were bragging among themselves about their brutality--who could be more intimidating and more demeaning to the detainees.

"This was about dehumanization. They weren't people. They were acronyms, PUCs, 'persons under control.'

"So we were not only harassing the population through giant shows of military force, but also through thuggish intimidation, kidnapping and abuse of detainees. We were there simply as an occupying force."

Goodnight says that the U.S. totally failed to deliver on any of its promises to provide humanitarian relief.

"We haven't provided any significant assistance to the farmers who make up the majority of the labor force in Afghanistan," he said. "We haven't put forth any real effort to provide alternative crops, so the only option has been to turn to opium production, which the Taliban had largely eliminated before the U.S. came in and kicked them out.

"The humanitarian efforts that we have undertaken have been primarily carried out by contractors who perform shoddy work with foreign workers.

"The majority of the population needs that income and those jobs, so how are we supposed to win hearts and minds with construction efforts using foreign contractors and foreign workers when the population, which is capable of skilled construction work, is left by the wayside?"

The bombings and callous disregard for civilian life, the routine abuse and mistreatment of detainees, the lack of humanitarian assistance--all of this explains, according to Goodnight, why the Taliban has been able to reassert itself in Afghanistan.

"The Taliban represents an alternative," says Goodnight.

"They say to the people--you know what we've done.

"We provided stability and security, and yes, we were brutal in the enforcement of religious laws, but we provided more for the people and the farmers than the U.S. has or will.

“So the people figure that they prefer the lesser of two evils--which in this case is in the Taliban.”

Matthis Chiroux was sent to Afghanistan for a week as an Army reporter in 2005, and he is now fighting the U.S. military's attempt to reactivate and deploy him involuntarily to Iraq. He echoes Casler's sentiments.

“An occupied Afghanistan will never submit, and it shouldn't.”

Even before the September 11 attacks, the U.S. had issued threats against Afghanistan's Taliban regime, which Washington once considered benign but later deemed an obstacle to its plans for controlling the shipment and distribution of oil and natural gas resources in Central Asia.

This is the crucial context for understanding the meaning of an escalation of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan.

“Obama's plan to shift troops into Afghanistan and then bring the aerial war into Iraq is bringing another failed policy and a failed tactic into a country already devastated by occupation,” says Casler.

“I'd personally like to see the removal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, and some real reparations for the people of both these countries, not just 'reparations' at the end of the barrel of a gun.

“I'm actively campaigning to include Afghanistan as part of IVAW's points of unity, but if the organization as a whole doesn't vote that through, I'm of course going to continue my organizing against the war in Iraq.

“But we have to understand that there are a lot of Afghanistan veterans who want to see immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan and reparations for the Afghan people, just as in Iraq.

“It's up to everybody to educate themselves about Afghanistan. We've been so hyper-focused on Iraq that the issue of Afghanistan hasn't been brought up as much as it should have.

“But we are fighting two wars every single day.

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

Big Surprise

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

Dec 5 (AFP) & AP

In a letter to the nearly 150,000 troops, Gen. Ray Odierno sought to reassure members of his command that the new agreement would not diminish their ability to defend themselves, even though new rules spelling out when, where and how soldiers can open fire will be published.

“US forces will continue to be authorised to engage in combat operations,” General Raymond Odierno, the commander of US forces in Iraq, wrote in a letter to the troops.

12 Nations Getting All Their Troops The Fuck Out Of Iraq By Dec. 31; They Get To Go Home Forever

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) & Phil G., who sent this in.]

December 4, 2008 By Adam Ashton, McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — The Tongan marines left with a song, their vowel-rich war choruses echoing in the marble halls of a palace built for Saddam Hussein but now occupied by the U.S. military.

Fifty-five of them had spent the past four months guarding Camp Victory, a base that sits on a plush estate near the Baghdad airport. It was the fourth rotation in Iraq for the marines from the tiny Pacific island nation.

Their departure this week marks the exit of another member of the “coalition of the willing,” the 49 nations that signed on to support the war in Iraq since 2003.

Most of the remaining 18 countries are shutting down their operations swiftly and heading home before the United Nations mandate that allows them to deploy their forces in Iraq expires Dec. 31.

The United States is holding ceremonies for each of them. It sent off the Tongans on Thursday, a contingent of Azerbaijanis on Wednesday and South Koreans on Monday.

The Tongan marines, like the departing coalition troops of other countries, weren't asked to stay by the Iraqi government, an invitation that's necessary now that the U.N. mandate for the war is ending.

All but six nations — the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, El Salvador, Estonia and Romania — will be gone by Jan. 1, [U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Nicolas] Matern said.

The five other Western countries remaining in Iraq won't have to negotiate those arrangements, said Abbas al Bayati, a member of the Iraqi parliament's security and defense committee.

Instead, Iraq is treating about 5,500 soldiers from those countries as advisers who'll help train Iraqi forces and lead humanitarian missions.

The Tongan marines will be replaced by private guards from Uganda who are working for EODT, a U.S. security contractor.

Matern said that a mix of Iraqi forces and private security companies probably would fill in for the departing coalition forces across the country.

The Tongan marines were scheduled to stay in Iraq through February, but the end of the U.N. mandate will get them home in time for Christmas.

That's good news to Pvt. Mavae Moe Liku.

"We are so happy," he said of the prospect of seeing his family for the holidays.

SHRINKING COALITION:

12 coalition members and their departure dates:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nov. 29

South Korea, Dec. 1

Azerbaijan, Dec. 3

Tonga, Dec. 4

Japan, Dec. 6

Ukraine, Dec. 9

Czech Republic, Dec. 10

Bulgaria, Dec. 13

Lithuania, Dec. 16

Denmark, Dec. 17

Albania, Dec. 18

Moldova, Dec. 18

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



US soldiers in the cordoned off area following a car bomb after it detonated close to the police academy on Palestine Street in central Baghdad. (AFP/Ali Yussef)

Pogueville: “It’s As Large As An Active Duty Base Back Stateside And The Headquarters Of Way Too Many Officers”

December 4, 2008

By Joe; Fobbits Need Ice Cream Too; Kbrsecurity.blogspot.com/

Age: 23
Gender: Male
Industry: Military
Occupation: Ice Cream Man
Location: An Nasiriyah, Scania, BIAP, TQ, Taji, Balad, Mosul, Baqubah: Iraq

Today we had a detail which was to take all of our crew-served ammo (linked .50 cal, 40mm MK19, linked 7.62 and linked 5.56) along with our pyro (grenades, smoke grenades, flares...etc) to turn in so that we can leave this shithole.

The turn-in site is a base next to Kuwait City; Camp Arifjan which might as well be called Pogueville.

It's as large as an active duty base back stateside and the headquarters of way too many officers. I passed more lieutenant-colonels, colonels and 1-star generals than I ever want to see again.

At first I wondered why we got stationed at our shithole, but after spending the day there, I realized it's good that we are secluded at our own base. There are way too many females at Arifjan; civilians and military women in civilian clothes with apparently no regulation. I saw a girl in line in burger king with transparent fleece pants on; we (myself and the other 5 guys on the detail) had to pull ourselves away from staring at this girl's twat. 12 months at this base and I could see our company going home without any rank or money left.

The detail itself made me slip into my first PTSD bout of rage.

Turning in the ammunition should be pretty simple; we cleaned, inspected and counted all of it at our base.

The ammo inspection point is run by a 300lb civilian lady and her 4 indian or pakistani helpers who speak zero english. When I think of 4 people to help organize and count all the ammunition turned in in theater, I definitely don't think of third country nationals who can't count or speak english.

We had to lay our every belt of ammo, recount it, ensure that the sequence was correct (proper ratio of ball to tracer...tracer ammo shows up red when you fire it at night so that you can see where your bullets are going even at night). Then HogZilla had to inspect the ammo for rust...chips...whatever.

She classed most of our ammo as "H" which means it gets sent for repair and if it can't be repaired, EOD will detonate it. She marked ammo as "H" if one round was rusted or the links were dirty. While putting a .50 cal belt back into it's can, I had HogZilla telling me the tips were the wrong way, then I had the 4 other guys yelling at me in non-english different ways and after being told what to do in 5 different ways by 5 different people, who are all civilian, I threw the belt down on the table.

HogZilla told me to leave because slamming ammo will set off the primers and detonate the entire building.

All the other guys counting stopped to laugh in her face and the NCO we brought had me go sit in the truck for 20 min and take a break. HogZilla's working hours were 0930-1130, breaking from 1130-1330 for lunch and then 1330-1630 (closing time).

We had to inspect all of our rounds in 5 hours or else we had to pack it back up and bring it back tomorrow at 0500 and try to get it all done again.

Luckily we finished, but had to spend the afternoon listening to HogZilla lament about how much her feet hurt and how alike we are because she is "kind of deployed" just like us. Except she makes 6 figures and can leave whenever she wants.

She argued with our armorer for 30 minutes because she wanted us to come back Saturday to pick up some paperwork even though we have to be back Sunday at 0500 to turn the last of our ammo in.

Civilians.

Comments:

GRUNTSBIT said...

fuck that bitch i hate those fucking people they have fucking banker hours get paid a shit ton when they can take any fucking REMF hiding on fort jackson from any MOS and tell them how to fill out paper and count fucking rounds and work that fucker until the job is done...

i remember the ac repair guys told us they didn't work over time and it took 2 captains to pull me out of the fob beater because i was headed down to there AO with a pick axe so i could fix their AC..

fucking scum bags

DeSelby said...

Funny as hell, man. You have about summed up KBR in Q-8.

bigD said...

Yeah...what Gruntshit said! That was a seven f*ck comment and it sounds like those idiots deserved every one of them.

Hang in there Joe. I think the frustration level is going to get worse before it gets better.

Pinball said...

The irony is that you can't just burn it off. Who ever heard of turning in ammo, what utter bullshit! Throw it at the next guys and let them either burn it or bury it.

When ever they close an active duty base they find unexpended ammo buried or just left out in the maneuver area. Why? Because it is such a pain in the ass to turn it in!

I went to a war and arrived at a garrison.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

3 Canadian Soldiers Killed In Arghandab; Two More Wounded

December 5, 2008 By Mike Blanchfield, Canwest News Service

CFB PETAWAWA, Ont. - Three Canadian soldiers were killed in Afghanistan on Friday, bringing the country's military death toll in the war-torn country to 100.

Cpl. Mark Robert McLaren, who was wounded on a 2006 tour of duty, was killed. Pte. Demetrios Diplaros, on his first deployment to Afghanistan, was also killed. The name of the third soldier was being withheld at the request of their family.

The soldiers died while riding in an armoured vehicle in the Arghandab district, west of Kandahar City.

All three soldiers were from Canadian Forces Base, Petawawa, Ont., west of Ottawa.

All of Friday's dead were from 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, based in Petawawa. They were part of an Operational Mentor Liaison Team, or OMLT, that is responsible for training Afghan National Army soldiers.

"This was a very large IED. It killed them all instantly without question," said Thompson.

Earlier in the day, two Canadian soldiers were injured, one seriously in another incident.

**“After Fighting The Taliban For
The Past Seven Years, Many
Working For The Afghan Security
Forces Are Now Switching Sides”**

“Our Soil Is Occupied By Americans And I Want Them To Leave This Country”

“The Recruits Carry Weapons Provided By The Afghan Government And Certificates For Weapons Training By The US”

October 15, 2008 Al Jazeera [Excerpts]

After fighting the Taliban for the past seven years, many working for the Afghan security forces are now switching sides.

Sulieman Ameri and his 16 men were until a month ago serving the Afghan government as police patrolling the border with Iran.

Now they answer to the Taliban and their goal is to drive all foreign troops out of Afghanistan.

Ameri, now a Taliban commander, told Al Jazeera that he joined the Taliban because of what he called anti-Muslim behaviour by international soldiers.

“Our soil is occupied by Americans and I want them to leave this country. That is my only goal,” he added.

But Ameri and his men are not the only renegade government forces – some 70 police and soldiers have switched allegiances across the western region in the past two months.

Al Jazeera’s Dan Nolan, reporting from Afghanistan, said “low wages for a dangerous jobs” did not seem to be the reason behind the desertions.

Instead, they deserted for ideological reasons, Nolan explained.

“When Russia came it was only one country, today we have 24 foreign infidel countries on our soil. All our men and women should come and join the jihad,” Fida Mohammad, a new Taliban recruit, told Al Jazeera.

But though they reject the “infidels”, they are not averse to receiving weapons or military training from them.

The recruits - so fresh that many have not yet grown their beards, while some are still smoking, a practice banned by the Taliban - carry weapons provided by the Afghan government and certificates for weapons training by the US.

Abdul Rahim, another new recruit, said he received training from American military contractor Blackwater for 45 days.

"I can use the training to save my life in these mountains and I can also use it to fight them," he said.

The switch in allegiances comes as the UN special envoy to Afghanistan warned on Tuesday that the Taliban's influence continues to spread beyond traditional strongholds to provinces around the capital, Kabul.

“Relief Fund For The Victims Of The American Blind Bombardment” [Press Release From Afghan Resistance]

12-03-2008 Statement By Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Theunjustmedia.com

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

The other day, the stooge Afghan parliament debated on the setting up of relief fund for the members of those victim families, which have been killed in American bombardment. They emphasized that foreigners should undertake to provide the fund for the relief because it is they who are involved in the killings of the Afghans.

Apparently, this is a spectacular step by the parliament, showing sympathy and considerations of the members of the Lower House with the victim families. On the other hand, if we ponder over the proposal, we can see clearly that the parliament, in its capacity as a stooge entity, is trying to put seal of confirmation on the atrocities of the foreign forces.

Through this step, the parliament is indirectly, providing outlet of justification for the invaders to shed further blood of the Afghans at free hands, because the existence of relief fund will compensate for their crimes.

The Relief Fund will come forward, in a way, to pay the blood money.

Truly speaking, if the members of the parliament were true protectors of the Afghan nation, they would come to the forefront for the safeguard of the defenseless people; should have staged demonstrations and raised uproar to protest against the almost daily-occurring bombardment, which usually result into the killing of many of our compatriots. They should have exposed these atrocities and racial cleansing at the world's level and should have threatened to resign in case of continuation of the blind bombardment.

The opening of the Relief Fund signifies that the parliament is aware of would-be bombardment by the murderous forces in the ensuing time. Ironically, through their pseudo-humanitarian step, they help to prolong the brutal chain of blind bombardment and, at the same time, are trying to weaken the spirit of national upheaval among the Afghans, which is in the process of taking momentum now.

They are endeavoring to convince the common Afghans that the air strikes by the invading forces were a mistake, therefore, they are paying for it by providing the fund for the war victims.

In the view of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the outburst by Hamid Karzia, lashing out at the bombardment now at this juncture of time when almost eighty thousands of the Afghans have lost their lives, is simply tantamount to throwing dust into the eyes of the Afghans.

However, the recent tactical move by the Stooze Administration and the parliament is an effort in failure because the nation has seen with its own eyes the reality of their humanitarian norms, civilization and rehabilitation.

It is a campaign of electioneering to secure for themselves the power corridors for another five years.

The Afghans are not going to trust them, nor will lay down their arms merely on some emotional rhetoric by Mr. Karzai or by inauguration of propaganda oriented relief funds.

Five Members Of Congress Who Want More U.S. Troops Sent To Afghanistan 200 Yards From Car Bomb Explosion [Better Luck Next Time]

12.5.08 Kansas City Star [Excerpts]

During a Thanksgiving military briefing at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton of Missouri got a taste of Afghanistan's security failings when a car bomber struck less than 200 yards away.

The attack claimed at least four lives.

Neither Skelton nor any of the other five House members traveling with him was injured. After an hour-long lockdown, they proceeded by helicopter for a Thanksgiving dinner with dozens of Missouri National Guard members on duty in Afghanistan on a trailblazing agriculture development project.

The explosion underscored what Skelton and others have said for months: that the war against extremists in Afghanistan is not going well and will require more troops and new focus when the Obama administration assumes power.

NATO Air Raid Against Taliban Kills Flock Of Sheep



“New Taliban Secret Weapon” [Uruknet]

December 4 (RIA Novosti)

NATO aircraft killed a flock of sheep in the Afghan province of Laghman, in a botched attack on Taliban gunmen, according to sources in the governor’s office.

Provincial police say the incident occurred on Wednesday night near the town of Mehtar Lam. Shots fired from NATO helicopters killed over 200 sheep belonging to local shepherds.

The sources told reporters that NATO troops claim they were targeting Taliban warriors.

If the slaughtering of the animals is proven, local authorities will demand that the NATO pilots pay the herdsmen around \$50,000 in compensation. The price of one sheep in Afghanistan is between \$200 and \$300 depending on its size.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action:



Destroyed police station in Fallujah Dec. 4, 2008. Two police stations were destroyed when truck bombers struck within minutes. (AP Photo/Bilal Fawzi)

Dec 5 (Reuters) & Dec 6 (Reuters) & (CNN)

A bomb attached to a vehicle killed Wathab Kareem, an inspector for the Labour Ministry.

A roadside bomb killed a policeman when struck a police patrol on Thursday in northern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents shot and wounded an off-duty policeman at a restaurant in northern Mosul on Thursday, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded two army officers, when it struck an army patrol in northern Mosul on Thursday, police said.

Armed men attacked the headquarters of an Awakening Council, a U.S.-allied neighbourhood guard unit, east of Baquba before dawn on Saturday, killing three and wounding four Awakening guards.

At least one police officer was killed and seven police were wounded when a bomber detonated an explosive vest near a police academy in Kirkuk, according to a police official. Kirkuk is located in oil-rich northern Iraq, about 150 miles north of Baghdad.

A bomb attached to a vehicle wounded an off-duty soldier and a civilian in central Tuz Khurmato, 170 km (105 miles), north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded two policemen in western Mosul, 390 km (240 km) north of Baghdad, police said.

One of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's security guards was killed by a roadside bomb in Udham, 90 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. The guard was off duty.

Three Iraqi Army soldiers were wounded when a roadside bomb struck an army patrol in northern Baghdad's Qahaira neighborhood, the Interior Ministry official said.

At least 19 people were wounded in a bombing at a coffee shop in Baquba, a security official in Diyala province said. The coffee shop is frequented by U.S.-backed fighters. The explosion wounded 17 group members, the official said.

A leader of the U.S. allied Sons of Iraq was killed Saturday when a bomb attached to his vehicle exploded in southern Baghdad's Dora district.

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

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“As He Moves Closer To The
White House, President-Elect
Obama Is Making Clearer Than
Ever That Tens Of Thousands Of
American Troops Will Be Left
Behind In Iraq”
The Response From The Sellout**

“Antiwar” Wing Of The Democratic Party?”

“These People Consider Themselves Part Of The Team – Obama’s Team”

December 5, 2008 By Justin Raimondo, Anti-War.com

Is it really possible that President-elect Barack Obama intends to break his campaign promise to “end the war” in Iraq, and keep US troops in that country well beyond the sixteen month timetable for withdrawal he advocated during the campaign?

The answer, according to the New York Times, is a fairly certain yes:

“On the campaign trail, Senator Barack Obama offered a pledge that electrified and motivated his liberal base, vowing to “end the war” in Iraq.

“But as he moves closer to the White House, President-elect Obama is making clearer than ever that tens of thousands of American troops will be left behind in Iraq, even if he can make good on his campaign promise to pull all combat forces out within 16 months.

“I said that I would remove our combat troops from Iraq in 16 months, with the understanding that it might be necessary — likely to be necessary — to maintain a residual force to provide potential training, logistical support, to protect our civilians in Iraq,’ Mr. Obama said this week as he introduced his national security team.”

Tens of thousands – a prime target for terrorists, a “residual force” that, in any other context, would be seen as an army of occupation, and a reminder to the Iraqis that they still aren’t free of us, nor we of them.

That “residual” force, we are told, could number as high as 70,000 troops “for a substantial time even beyond 2011.”

At a cost of billions, to be sure.

This is not “ending” the war.

The retention of Gates, the appointment of Hillary the Hawk, the “team of rivals” gambit that is supposed to inoculate Obama against criticism from the pro-war right – this pre-inaugural political drama is a dress rehearsal for betrayal.

Antiwar voters, who put Obama in office, are about to get screwed – and their alleged spokespersons, at least amongst the left-wing punditariat, are bending over with alacrity.

From all the formerly outraged “antiwar” personalities in the media and politics, we hear nothing in response to Obama’s preemptive betrayal – carried out before he even takes office – except a very loud and embarrassing silence.

Where is the ever-voluble Arianna Huffington? Busy choosing her wardrobe for the Inaugural Ball.

As for Keith Olbermann, I hear he’s demanding GE Capital’s bailout check be made out directly to him. After all, he’s earned it – they’ve all earned it.

It’s been remarked before that Team Obama is a re-run of the Clinton administration, as far as appointments are concerned, but there’s been less attention paid to what this actually means, stylistically: the return of the old Clintonian trick of redefining words to fit the circumstances.

They’re going to redefine us out of Iraq, whilst leaving the occupation intact, by re-labeling military personnel and “changing the mission.”

Since the mission is being reduced to specific tasks, like force protection, these will no longer be “combat troops.” They’ll be something else – but not, technically, an occupying force.

The moral slackness, the complete lack of perspective, and of course the boundless arrogance – it’s all coming back to Washington. So when did it ever leave?

Well, then, expect a ratcheting up, at the very least, of all the worst aspects of the old Clinton administration, especially in the foreign policy realm. These people have forgotten where they’ve come from so quick that, in a few months, they’ll be acting just like their predecessors: warlike, imperious, and ready to rumble. As far as the future of American foreign policy is concerned, I have only three words to say: watch out, Pakistan!

So where is the left, anyway?

Where are the “antiwar” liberals?

They’re on their way to the Inauguration, and you’ll have to pardon them if they slam the door of the limousine in our faces.

As for Obama, in a statement on his election victory they take credit for his success:

“For more than six years, United For Peace and Justice and the antiwar movement have stood firm in our opposition to the war in Iraq. Our consistent work played a major role in turning public sentiment against the war, and that sentiment helped lay the foundation for the Obama campaign’s success.”

You’ll note that there’s no mention of Afghanistan, until much later, and then only in an ambiguous context.

After all, these people consider themselves part of the team – Obama’s team:

“Obama has put forth the challenge and United For Peace and Justice is ready to meet that challenge as we work to change our nation’s path from militarism and greed to peace and justice.”

The real challenge these leftist appendages of the Obama administration face is explaining to their own supporters how and why we’re still going to be in Iraq at the end of Obama’s first term.

In the meantime, however, they can gush over their multiculti messiah and even take credit for his election – and forget about all those tiresome antiwar demonstrations.

This loud silence from the ostensibly antiwar Left is all the more inexplicable given the fact that they’re right: Obama does owe his election in large part to their efforts, which helped turn public opinion against the crazed foreign policy of the Bush White House.

Sooner or later, the antiwar movement will have to respond, as the Afghan front takes center stage in our perpetual “war on terrorism,” and the War Party digs its spurs into the hindquarters of the national security bureaucracy, which actually administers and implements American foreign policy.

The quick extension of the conflict into Pakistan by the Obama administration is another development we have to look forward to, complete with an Indo-American alliance and the ratcheting up of regional tensions. China, Russia, and Iran all have legitimate cause for concern.

I note that the UFPJ statement comes out strongly against “militarism.”

I have news for them: they haven’t seen anything yet.

Another enemy, another crusade, another “necessary” war that requires the production of arms and the militarization of labor – just like the “good war” did.

If Obama is indeed a post-racial version of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as the lefties hope, then it becomes ever more important to keep a very close watch on his foreign policy.

After all, Clare Booth Luce was dead on right when she said of FDR: “He lied us into war.”

To The Peacemakers Who Want Us To Travel Half The Way With BHO. . . .

12.2.08 By Yoshie Furuhashi, editor, Monthly Review. She is indebted to Mojtaba Aghamohammadi for the two proverbs used in this poem.

To the peacemakers
who want us to travel
half the way with BHO. . . .

In a book of Persian proverbs
I find:

ریا شمش یکی بردی یا پنبه سر م یکی

This one kills with a sword,

That one, with cotton.

Wisdom of the ages

Abandoned by wanderers

Lost in the desert

To whom

Even an old shoe

Is a gift from God.

**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. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

**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/)

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionist Occupation Troops Butcher More Kids



Omar Abu-Hamad

December 4, 2008 International Solidarity Movement

On Tuesday 2nd December 2008 Gaza Strip, Palestine added two more child martyrs to its already long list of thousands of dead children, the products of U.S. tax-payer money providing the ways and the means for Israel to continue its genocidal occupation and siege.

15 year-old Omar Abu-Hamad, born 28th January 1993 and 19 year-old Ramzi El Dahini were blown to bits standing in the street outside their homes – they both lived in the same neighborhood and were also cousins.

Two other children were seriously injured and taken to Al-Najar hospital in Rafah, Gaza Strip. Their injuries were so serious that they are being transferred to a hospital inside Israel, since the hospitals in Gaza are so very limited in the treatment they can give to those who need urgent emergency care.

According to Omar's family, he and his mother were home when they both heard an explosion. It sounded like a gas canister and they went out to see what happened.

An Israeli remote operated drone plane had shot a missile nearby.

Omar's mother came back into the house and heard another explosion. She had thought that Omar had come back into the house with her, but he wasn't around. She went back outside looking for him. She questioned the people in the street about Omar and the neighbors said that he wasn't there in the street among the dead, for her to look elsewhere.

But her heart told her that he was there in the street, blown to bits by the remote controlled missile.

She saw a shoe in the street and recognized it as her son's and knew that he was dead.

She went to the hospital and asked about her son, they didn't want to let her see him, he was in parts, no longer in one recognizable body.

Omar's brothers, 17 year-old Emad, 12 year-old Ibrahim, and 10 year-old Mahmoud told everyone how they had found out about Omar's death.

Emad was at home when the shooting took place. He went outside and was told like his mother that Omar was not dead, but Emad insisted on going to the hospital.

Once there he went to the morgue and told the technicians to open the refrigerator where they store the dead bodies.

He saw Omar's pants and one of his legs and before seeing the rest of the blown apart body knew that it was Omar.

Ibrahim had come home from school and asked about Omar, his mother told him that he had been killed. Mahmoud came home from school and found a house full of women and he was told "your brother was killed". The people in the street also told him that Omar was dead.

Amal, Omar's 18 year-old sister was at the clinic the day he was killed. She came home from the clinic and they chatted and then he went outside and was killed. She didn't believe that he was dead.

ISM Gaza Strip volunteers had gone to the home of Omar to pay respects and some of the family were reminiscing about him.

When Omar was still going to school, in the morning he would stop by at a poor woman's house in the neighborhood and bring her bread. One day when he went there he found her dead in her bed.

After looking closer he saw bullet holes in her wall and saw that she had been killed by being shot by a bullet. This incident impacted him so strongly that he couldn't focus on his studies and stopped going to school.

His mother reminisced that he was very clever, he could fix anything – the computer, the closet – just give it to him and he would find a way to fix something broken or to build something that was needed. He was also very clever in school.

His sister, Amal, talked about his personality – he would make jokes and he was very helpful. Everyday he would get up at 6:00am and go to his step-mother's house to take his step brother to the store.

She remembered that he had planted the trees outside of their home and had painted his name on the walls of the house. How can they continue to live in this house now?

The family continued to talk about Omar, saying that he had a sheep which had recently had a lamb. The family had decided to not sacrifice the sheep or the lamb for Eid Al-Adha, but to keep them both in remembrance of Omar.

The family talked about the relationship of the father with Omar.

The father has been in an Israeli prison for the last 9-10 months and he still does not know that Omar has been killed, murdered by the Israeli occupation force army.

His health is suffering and the family is concerned about how the news might affect him.

The father used to say that Omar was his right arm and in his letters to the family he would mention how much he depended on him. The family also mentioned that the father had told Omar to write a letter expressing how he felt.

Omar asked him to whom he should write the letter and the father told him to write it to a good friend. Omar said the children are my friends. The family remembered that Omar would call a 10 month-old child his son and one of Omar's younger brothers would call him "Ba", another Arabic name for father.

Ramzi was at home before the incident, when a friend called by and asked him to go to help repair his bicycle. He joined a group of young people who were sitting on a fence at the side of the road just in front of his house, chatting.

A few minutes later the Israeli drone fired a missile. People in the neighborhood had observed the drone flying west, away from the area, and thought it was safe.

But then the drone returned.

Ramzi's mother said she heard a loud explosion and ran out of the house to see what had happened.

She saw the bodies of the teenagers not realizing that one of them was her son. She went back into her house to get some blankets to cover the bodies as the ambulance hadn't arrived yet.

Ramzi's brother was on the scene. She asked him if Ramzi was one of the people killed and he told her that he was. It was a huge shock.

She later commented that she raised her son for nineteen years only for the Israeli army to steal his future.

The families of Omar and Ramzi are still in shock over the sudden losses of their beloved sons, brothers, cousins and uncles.

Unarmed children standing in a field after one explosion hit the area, torn to smithereens by a second murderous missile.

These families will have a gaping hole of loss for the rest of their lives.

It was a genocidal attack that killed also the future generations of these two man-children. The loss of life reverberates throughout the world – this genocide of Palestinians can be stopped, it must be stopped, the only question is when?!

[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

**Workers Occupy Chicago
Factory:
They Refuse To Leave "Until They
Win The \$1.5 Million In Severance
And Vacation Pay Owed Them By
Management"
"This Is Money That Belongs To Us"
"These Are Our Rights"**



Mario Neria, right, stands in the doorway at the Republic Windows and Doors factory on Dec. 6, 2008 in Chicago as workers laid off from their jobs at the factory occupy the building. (AP Photo/Brian Kersey)

Workers were especially outraged that Bank of America, which recently received a bailout in taxpayer money, won't provide credit to Republic. "They get \$25 billion from the government, and won't loan a few million to this company so workers can keep their jobs?" said Ricardo Caceres, who has worked at the plant for six years.

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) & Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

December 6, 2008 Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker & By RUPA SHENOY, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

WORKERS OCCUPYING the Republic Windows & Doors factory slated for closure are vowing to remain in the Chicago plant until they win the \$1.5 million in severance and vacation pay owed them by management.

In a tactic rarely used in the U.S. since the labor struggles of the 1930s, the workers, members of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110, refused to leave the plant on December 5, its last scheduled day of operation.

"We decided to do it because this is money that belongs to us," said Maria Roman, who's worked at the plant for eight years. "These are our rights."

Word of the occupation spread quickly both among labor and immigrant rights activists-- the overwhelming majority of the workers are Latinos.

Seven local TV news stations showed up to do interviews and live reports, and a steady stream of activists arrived to bring donations of food and money and to plan solidarity actions.

Management claims that it can't continue operations because its main creditor, Bank of America (BoA), refuses to make any more loans to the company.

After workers picketed BoA headquarters December 3, bank officials agreed to sit down with Republic management and UE to discuss the matter at a December 5 meeting arranged by U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-III), said UE organizer Leah Fried.

BoA had said that it couldn't discuss the matter with the union directly without written approval from Republic's management.

But Republic representatives failed to show up at the meeting, and plant managers prepared to close the doors for good--violating the federal WARN Act that requires 60 days notice of a plant closure.

The workers decided this couldn't go unchallenged. "The company and Bank of America are throwing the ball to one another, and we're in the middle," said Vicente Rangel, a shop steward and former vice president of Local 1110.

Many workers had suspected the company was planning to go out of business--and perhaps restart operations elsewhere. Several said managers had removed both production and office equipment in recent days.

Furthermore, while inventory records indicated there were plenty of parts in the plant, workers on the production line found shortages. And the order books, while certainly down from the peak years of the housing boom, didn't square with management's claims of a total collapse. "Where did all those windows go?" one worker asked.

Workers were especially outraged that Bank of America, which recently received a bailout in taxpayer money, won't provide credit to Republic.

"They get \$25 billion from the government, and won't loan a few million to this company so workers can keep their jobs?" said Ricardo Caceres, who has worked at the plant for six years.

Outside the plant, protesters wore stickers and carried signs that said, "You got bailed out, we got sold out."

"We're going to stay here until we win justice," said Blanca Funes, 55, of Chicago, after occupying the building for several hours. Speaking in Spanish,

Funes said she fears losing her home without the wages she feels she's owed. A 13-year employee of Republic, she estimated her family can make do for three months without her paycheck. Most of the factory's workers are Hispanic.



Workers and union organizers rally outside of the Republic Windows and Doors factory Dec. 6, 2008 in Chicago. Workers laid off from their jobs at the factory have occupied the building since Friday. (AP Photo/Brian Kersey)

THE MEMBERS of Local 1110 have a history of struggle. In 2004, they decertified the Central States Joint Board--a union notorious for corruption and sweetheart contracts with management--and brought in UE, a far more democratic organization.

In May of this year, Local 1110 mobilized for a contract by organizing a "practice" picket, and 70 workers used their lunch break to confront the boss with a petition listing their demands. The workers were able to turn back company's effort to win major concessions and won solid pay increases. Now, management is trying to get revenge by pocketing money that belongs to the workers.

UE officials and workers acknowledge that it will be difficult to stop the plant from closing. But they're determined to get the money owed to them--and they believe that by fighting, they can set an example for other workers facing layoffs and plant closures as the recession deepens.

Negotiations are set for Monday, December 8.

Whatever happens, however, the workers have already sent a message to employers that if they violate workers rights and the law, they can expect a fight.

"This is a message to the workers of America," said Vicente Rangel, the shop steward. "If we stand together, we will prevail until justice is done, and we get what we're due."

Members of Local 1110 need your support. Make checks payable to the UE Local 1110 Solidarity Fund, and mail to: 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60607.

Messages of support can be sent to leahfried@gmail.com [2]. For more information, call UE at 312-829-8300.



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