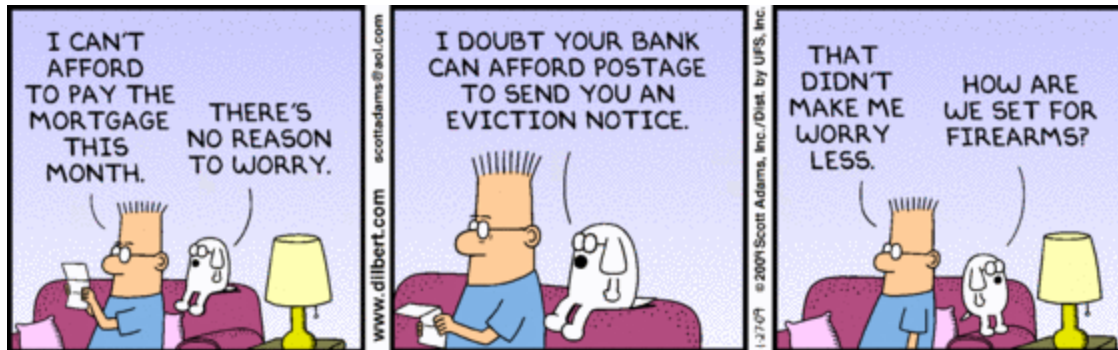


GI SPECIAL 7A18:



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

**Used Up, Thrown Away:
“The Average Wait-Time For
Veterans To Receive An Answer
After Filing For Disability
Compensation Is More Than Six
Months”
“PTSD Patients Face Even Longer
Delays”
“Jennifer Pacanowski, An Iraq
Veteran, Waited Two And A Half
Years To Receive A PTSD Diagnosis,
And 9 Months For Her PTSD Claim To
Be Processed”**

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,534th time, there is no enemy in Iraq or Afghanistan. Their citizens and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started these wars of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: U.S. Imperial wars are about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Project & Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

29 January 2009 by: Maya Schenwar, Truthout Report [Excerpts]

Amid talk of a drawdown of troops in Iraq, new statistics from the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) show that US casualties are still climbing quickly.

Iraq and Afghanistan battlefield injuries and deaths number 81,361, up from 72,043 last January, according to data obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by Veterans for Common Sense (VCS).

Veteran patients - including those who didn't seek care until their return home - shot up to 400,304 (from 263,909 in December 2007).

However, many barriers to adequate care and compensation remain, particularly for veterans filing for disability benefits.

Delays and denials of those claims are routine. Among vets with PTSD, 59 percent have not been approved for benefits, meaning that their claims are pending or rejected - or that, due to any number of deterrents, they have not filed a claim.

According to Paul Sullivan, executive director of VCS, the average wait-time for veterans to receive an answer after filing for disability compensation is more than six months.

A recent VCS lawsuit against VA showed that PTSD patients face even longer delays.

Sullivan points to the case of Iraq veteran Scott Eiswert, who committed suicide after the VA rejected his PTSD disability compensation claim for the third time.

After his death, the VA went further, denying Eiswert's life insurance benefits.

Jennifer Pacanowski, an Iraq veteran now living in Pennsylvania, waited two and a half years to receive a PTSD diagnosis, and nine months for her PTSD claim to be processed.

In the meantime, her mother paid for all her medical care.

Most of Pacanowski's efforts to utilize the VA yielded only frustration.

"Every time I reached out to the VA for help, they tried to have me admitted into the psych ward, which scared me, since all I needed was to talk to someone," Pacanowski told Truthout.

"My family doctor from childhood tried to help with meds and treatment but combat veterans was a completely new thing for him, so it was hit or miss, with months of med changes and severe depression and anxiety, so I could not function."

Pacanowski still can't get all she needs from the VA. Since receiving her diagnosis, she has been eligible for full mental health benefits.

However, the VA is overbooked, crowded and understaffed, and can only offer Pacanowski an appointment once every three weeks.

So her family still shoulders much of the burden, paying for a private psychologist who can fill in the gaps.

Moreover, the VA's intimidating bureaucracy deters some veterans from filing a claim at all. The process is arduous and sometimes convoluted, and, since a positive result is never guaranteed, vets sometimes abandon their attempts.

"We understand from speaking with veterans that some veterans are discouraged from filing claims because the claim form is 23 pages," Sullivan said.

"I have watched veterans turn away in disgust when handed the stack of redundant forms VA requires."

Pacanowski points to other reasons why veterans - especially those with PTSD - avoid the VA.

"I know many veterans with PTSD from all wars," she said. "Most are afraid to go to the VA because of fear of judgment and the constant run-around you get ..."

"The vets I know that don't go to the VA receive most help from fellow veterans. Or try and forget."

MORE:

“Behind The Recent Pentagon Decision To Deny Purple Heart Medals To Soldiers Suffering From PTSD Is A Cold-Blooded Calculation: It Saves Money”

“Purple Heart Awardees Are Entitled To Enhanced Benefits”

“Given A Choice Between Buying Fancy Weapons Systems And Taking Care Of Soldiers Damaged By War, The Military Will Always Choose The Former Over The Latter”

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: I read FPIF regularly, Good solid thinking. And this is the truth, too.]

Worse, soldiers who report behavioral difficulties may find themselves discharged from the service, with the consequent loss of medical care. They may even be billed for their recruitment bonus.

January 28, 2009 Conn Hallinan, Fpif.org [Excerpts]

Behind the recent Pentagon decision to deny Purple Heart medals to soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a cold-blooded calculation: It saves money.

The official rationale for refusing to honor what is widely considered the "signature wound" of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is that PTSD, according to Pentagon spokeswoman Eileen Lainez, is "an anxiety disorder caused by experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event," not "a wound intentionally caused by the enemy."

But a recent study by the Rand Corporation found that up to 320,000 vets returning from the two conflicts suffer from Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI), a condition whose symptoms are almost indistinguishable from PTSD. Virtually all MTBI injuries are the result of roadside bombs, also known as improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Purple Heart awardees are entitled to enhanced benefits, including exemptions from co-payments for hospital and outpatient care. They are also fast-tracked for getting appointments for medical care and psychological services.

Soldiers come home to few psychological services and virtually no individual therapy. It isn't uncommon to wait several months to see a therapist, and then only once a month. MTBI sufferers may see as many as seven different therapists.

The military has made little effort to deal with MTBI and PTSD. Soldiers suffering from PTSD outnumber amputees at Walter Reed Hospital 43 to 1, but there is no PTSD

center. After diagnosis, sufferers usually go to the hospital's psych division, where they are housed with bipolar and schizophrenic patients and tanked up with drugs.

The situation is worse for the National Guard and Reserves, who make up almost 50% of the troops deployed in both wars and who, according to VFA, "are experiencing rates of mental health problems 44% higher than their active duty counterparts."

Health care for such troops is generally inferior — and more expensive — than that offered full-time regulars.

Worse, soldiers who report behavioral difficulties may find themselves discharged from the service, with the consequent loss of medical care. They may even be billed for their recruitment bonus.

PTSD and MTBI both result from deployment in combat zones. Large numbers of these soldiers were exposed to IEDs — the number-one cause of death and injury in Iraq and Afghanistan — but many didn't suffer visible injuries.

To make "shedding blood" the only criterion for being awarded a Purple Heart (and the benefits that go with it) is to deny the nature of the wars the United States is currently fighting.

Fewer than half of those Iraq and Afghanistan vets diagnosed with PTSD or MTBI have received disability benefits.

One Veterans Affairs psychologist in Texas even urged VA staff to "refrain from giving a PTSD diagnosis" and consider instead "a diagnosis of adjustment disorder."

PTSD sufferers receive up to \$2,527 a month, adjustment disorders significantly less.

Terri Tanielian, the co-leader of the Rand Corporation study, says, "There is a major health crisis facing those men and women who have served our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unless they receive appropriate and effective care for these mental health conditions, there will be long-term consequences for them and for the nation. Unfortunately, we found there are many barriers preventing them from getting the high-quality treatment they need."

The major barrier is pentagon-shaped.

And the bottom line is that, given a choice between buying fancy weapons systems and taking care of soldiers damaged by war, the military will always choose the former over the latter.

<p style="text-align: center;">Troops Invited: Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box</p>
--

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Welcome To Liberated Iraq: “Others Accused Shiite Muslim Government Officials Of Deliberately Deleting From The Rolls Those Voters With Traditionally Sunni Names Such As Omar, Othman And Abu Bakr” “People With These Names Are Missing From The List”

January 31, 2009 By Monte Morin, Los Angeles Times & AP

Reporting from Baghdad -- The old man wore a red, checkered headdress and a frown as he left the polling station and shuffled down a bustling Baghdad street that smelled of roasted meat and sewage.

"I have a complaint!" he yelled. "I didn't find my name."

It was a lament that a group of Western election observers would hear often this afternoon in Adhamiya, the Sunni Arab enclave that was once a hotbed of insurgent activity.

Within the high walls of Al Neimaan secondary school for girls, scores of Iraqis clustered outside classrooms that had been converted into polling stations and waited for their chance to cast blue, poster-sized ballots.

Among them, however, were smaller groups of men and women who waved yellow complaint forms and said that they had either been left off voting rolls or been registered to vote in distant precincts.

"We came here for an election," complained a young man in a green track suit who was told he had to vote at another station. "This is a disappointment."

Still others accused Shiite Muslim government officials of deliberately deleting from the rolls those voters with traditionally Sunni names such as Omar, Othman and Abu Bakr.

"People with these names are missing from the list," said Mukdad Hassan, a college professor and polling center volunteer.

"That looks bad to us. We're sure it's the Iraqi government that did this."

Polling officials said about 1,000 to 2,000 people were turned away from polling stations in Adhamiya because they were not registered.

"We've had some problems," acknowledged Hussein Najib, an Adhamiya polling official. "Many people came and didn't find their names."

In the afternoon, entire Iraqi families began appearing at polling centers.

The number of yellow complaint forms swelled.

In Karmah, about 50 miles west of Baghdad, local election observer Sabah Hussein said he found ballots marked in advance for the Iraqi Islamic Party, a bloc that's a partner in al-Maliki's government.

Welcome To Liberated Iraq; Voters Killed & Wounded By Police For Chanting And Carrying Cell Phones

01.31.09 AP

A shooting has occurred in Baghdad during provincial elections. Ghufuran al-Saidi, a Shiite lawmaker in the Sadr City district, said a military officer opened fire Saturday after voters chanted slogans at a polling station. He said two people were injured, one of the seriously.

Iraq's military spokesman, Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi, told Al-Arabiya television that one person was killed and one injured after some people tried to carry mobile phones through security cordons. (AP)

Oops:

The Search For “Al-Qaeda Operatives,” Abominable Snowmen And Tooth Fairies Fucks Up

Feb 1 2009 AFP

US soldiers killed two out-of-uniform Iraqi policemen in a shootout near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the American military said.

The policemen were killed "after they opened fire on coalition force members conducting an operation targeting Al-Qaeda in Iraq operatives near Mosul," the military said in a statement.

The statement said a joint search of the building with Iraqi security forces later "revealed two Iraqi police, who were not in uniform, were killed during the exchange."

An Iraqi police source confirmed the deaths but told AFP the two men were killed "for no reason" and that the incident took place in southern Mosul at a checkpoint.

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Rifles' Soldier Killed In Musa Qaleh

30 Jan 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great regret that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from 1st Battalion The Rifles was killed in Afghanistan today, Friday 30 January 2009.

The soldier died from wounds he received during an exchange of fire while on a joint UK and Afghan National Army patrol north of Musa Qaleh, Helmand Province.

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

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; ALL HOME, NOW



American Army soldiers, thinly spread, patrol in Afghanistan. Danfung Dennis for The New York Times, January 22, 2009

TROOP NEWS

Legal To Sign, Legal To Drink

From The Forums
Army Times
1.26.09

I don't get the connection between drinking and military service that is so often championed, but if you are a legal adult, you should have the rights and responsibilities of one.

Heck, you can sign a contract. That often does you more damage than drinking a couple beers.

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 Douglass, 1852

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

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

**"When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, "No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country."
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

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

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

**Today's Blinding Flash Of The
Obvious:
"No Matter How Strenuously The Other
Side Insists That It Is Motivated By A
World-Spanning Ideology, Its Real
Motives Are Mostly Political And Quite
Local (Vietnamese Nationalism Then,
Iraqi And Afghan Nationalism Now)"**

29 January 2009 By Gwynne Dyer, Arab News [Excerpt]

You aren't really the US president until you have ordered an airstrike on somebody, so Barack Obama is certainly president now: Two in his first week in office.

But now that he has been blooded, can we talk a little about this expanded war he is planning to fight in Afghanistan?

Does that sound harsh?

Well, so is killing people, and all the more so because Obama must know that these remote-controlled Predator strikes usually kill not just the "bad guy," whoever he is, but also the entire family he has taken shelter with.

It also annoys Pakistan, whose territory the United States violated in order to carry out the killings.

It is not a question of whether the intelligence on which the attacks were based was accurate (although sometimes it is not.)

The question is: Do these killings actually serve any useful purpose?

And the same question applies to the entire US war in Afghanistan.

Obama may be planning to shut Guantanamo, but the broader concept of a “war on terror” is still alive and well in Washington. Most of the people he has appointed to run his defense and foreign policies believe in it, and there is no sign that he himself questions it.

Yet even 15 years ago the notion would have been treated with contempt in every military staff college in the country.

That generation of American officers learned two things from their miserable experience in Vietnam.

One was that going halfway around the world to fight a conventional military campaign against an ideology was a truly stupid idea.

The other was that no matter how strenuously the other side insists that it is motivated by a world-spanning ideology, its real motives are mostly political and quite local (Vietnamese nationalism then, Iraqi and Afghan nationalism now).

Alas, that generation of officers has now retired, and the new generation of strategists, civilian as well as military, has to learn these lessons all over again.

So turning Afghanistan into a second Vietnam is probably the wrong strategy, isn't it?

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

January 31, 1968: Resistance Anniversary: The Tet Offensive

Peace History: Carl Bunin

The Tet (the lunar new year) Offensive began as North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces launched surprise attacks against major cities, provincial and district capitals in South Vietnam.

The attack had been anticipated but, nonetheless, half of the ARVN troops (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) were on leave because of the holiday.

There were attacks in Saigon (the South's capital) on the Independence Palace (the residence of the president), the radio station, the ARVN's joint General Staff Compound, Tan Son Nhut airfield, and the United States embassy, causing considerable damage and throwing the city into turmoil.

January 31, 1876: Betrayal



Sitting Bull: One of several chiefs who refused to comply.

Carl Bunin Peace History Jan 28 - Feb 3

The U.S. government ordered that all Native Americans must move to reservations by this date or be declared hostile.

Most Sioux did not even hear of the ultimatum until after the deadline.

January 31, 1945: Anniversary Of A Murder;

The Execution Of Private Eddy Slovik



Pvt. Eddie Slovik

Carl Bunin Peace History Jan 28 - Feb 3

Private Eddie Slovik became the first American soldier since the Civil War to be executed for desertion.

Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered Slovik's execution be carried out, he said, to avoid further desertions in the late stages of the war.

[Excerpt from the article by Joe Allen; Death Row At The "Castle": Inside The U.S. Military's Judicial System; the International Socialist Review. Joe Allen is a member of Teamsters Local 705 in Chicago and the International Socialist Organization.]

Alvin "Tommy" Bridges, a military policeman during the war and a future police chief, recounted his very bitter memories of "military justice" to Studs Terkel in the Good War: "They shot some of those same guys up there that were—if you'd go to a municipal court, they'd dismiss the case. Depending a lot upon the commanding officer."

Near the end of his narrative, Bridges makes clear the extent of summary "justice" and who was responsible:

"Eisenhower says that's the only guy (Eddie Slovik) that was ever executed for it (desertion). That's what burns me up, when a gross of them that I know were executed for probably more minor things than what Slovik was. They said he was the only one. We had to make a show of it. The son-of-a-bitches."

Eddie Slovik was a Polish working-class kid from Detroit who had a minor criminal record and spent some years in a youth reformatory. His draft classification was originally 4-F (unfit for military service) and therefore not eligible to be drafted. He married and got a decent paying job in the auto industry, whereupon he was reclassified 1-A.

The army was then drafting anybody it could get its hands on in preparation for the invasion of Europe. It was also clear that Slovik couldn't kill a living thing and was terrified of combat. In his "confession" after he deserted he said, "I'll run away again if I have to go their." (He misspelled "there," and by "there" he meant going into combat).

Over 40,000 other deserters tried by lesser courts-martial were punished by confinement to disciplinary centers or dishonorably discharged. Another 2,864 were tried by general courts-martial. Most were sentenced to long terms in prisons (many left prison soon after the war was over), but forty-nine were sentenced to death. All the sentences for desertion were commuted except Slovik's.

Slovik's story is recounted in William Bradford Huie's book *The Execution of Private Slovik*.

Why Slovik?

It seems likely that the reason Slovik was singled out was because he deserted at the time of stiffening German resistance in late 1944, when the Allied forces came dangerously close to collapsing on the Western front. Yet, curiously, the army never publicized his execution beyond his company, never told his wife, and buried him in a secret cemetery.

It would be nearly a decade after Slovik's death before Huie began investigating the strange circumstances surrounding it. Despite the efforts of many people, Slovik's wife never received the paltry \$10,000 plus interest she asked for in GI life insurance. Slovik's remains were finally returned to the U.S. in 1987, to be buried beside the grave of his deceased wife.

While many people believe that Slovik was the only American soldier executed during the war, that is not true.

Many were executed on charges other than desertion, and African American soldiers once again bore the brunt of these executions.

**NEED SOME TRUTH?
CHECK OUT THE NEW 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

Report From Gaza:

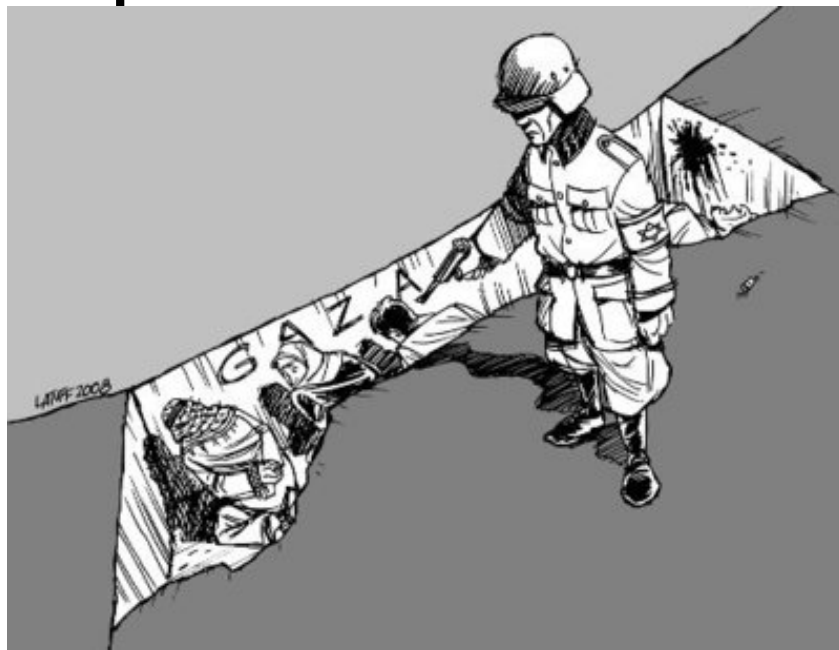
**“This Has Been Genocidal War,
Committed By The State Of
Israel Against The Palestinian
Civilians Of Gaza”**

**“Israel Has Transformed Gaza,
Into The Largest Concentration
Camp In The World--Larger Than
The Warsaw Ghetto And Even
Auschwitz”**

**“If This Offensive Has Done
Something, It Has Succeeded In
Radicalizing People And**

Strengthening The Will To Resist The Occupation”

“Coexistence With Zionism, People Here Feel Now, Is Impossible--Exactly Like Coexistence With Apartheid Was Impossible For The Black Indigenous Population Of South Africa”



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

January 26, 2009 Haidar Eid, a professor of English, political commentator, activist and resident of Gaza City, interviewed by Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Ruder: DO YOU think the cease-fire will hold?

Haidar Eid: THE CEASE-FIRE is holding because Israel wants it to. Israel didn't want to spoil the Obama inauguration party. Israel wanted to join the party.

Israel unilaterally declared a cease-fire, and then 12 hours later, the Palestinian resistance movement also declared a one-week cease-fire, as long as Israel withdraws all of its troops from Gaza.

But I think the proper word to describe what is going on is not withdrawal, but redeployment.

Israel wants to redeploy its troops around Gaza, and again transform Gaza into the concentration camp it had been before December 27, when they began their criminal war.

We still have 24-hour surveillance by Israeli drones flying overhead, we still hear the F-16's and Apache helicopters, and I can see the gunship in the Mediterranean from where I now sit. I don't know whether to call that a "commitment to the cease-fire" or what.

The day before yesterday, I went to a farm near the Jabaliya refugee camp in the eastern part of Gaza. Some 75 to 80 percent of the houses were demolished by Israeli Caterpillar bulldozers.

I also visited the house of a friend who was shot dead, and then his family had to keep him in their home for 11 days because no medics could pick up the body for fear of being attacked by the Israelis.

I went to the funeral and gave my condolences to his father. I talked to families whose houses were demolished.

There's just extreme...I don't know what the right words are. Sadness, anger, frustration.

But also resilience and steadfastness.

Then yesterday, I went to the house of a friend who is an academic--who works at Al Azhar University. His house was also attacked, and he lost everything. Everything. I took some pictures. All the rooms are completely destroyed--three bedrooms, the bathroom, the kitchen. He can't bring his family back.

Then I went to the Zeitoun area, where the Samouni family lives.

Israel forced all the members of the family into a single building, and then they shelled the building. So far, 37 family members are confirmed dead, and they believe there are still relatives under the rubble.

If death has a smell, it was there. The stench was horrible. That is Gaza under cease-fire.

The grandfather of the Samouni family was looking at his grandson, and I'll remember what he said for the rest of my life. He said, "Where can I bring him a father from? Where can I bring him a mother from?" Because his grandson's parents and all of his brothers and sisters have been killed.

Our Arab brothers have failed us. Our Muslim brothers and sisters have failed us. And the international community at large failed us. We were left alone to face the fourth-strongest army in the world, and the official Arab governments failed, for 19 days, to even hold a summit.

I also spoke with Amira Qirm, a 14-year-old girl, whose father, brother and sister were killed by exposure to white phosphorous bombs.

She was also wounded and crawled on her knees for half a kilometer, and then she managed to get into an empty house. She laid on a mattress on the floor from Wednesday to Saturday, surviving on water alone. I visited her because she was found in my cousin's house.

WHAT ABOUT the flow of food and humanitarian and medical supplies into Gaza?

PRIOR TO the war, we were under this medieval siege for two and a half years. Then they started this war, but now we are back under siege.

In other words, we experienced slow-motion genocide, as Israeli historian Ilan Pappé has described it.

I don't know what to call what happened during the war.

Gaza already has been transformed into the Auschwitz of the Middle East, as a famous Palestinian journalist said.

The right description for Westerners is probably the scenes from the German city of Dresden after the Second World War. But it is even worse than that, judging from the pictures I've seen of Dresden. There are more than 40,000 houses and institutions completely destroyed by the Israeli war machine.

That includes the houses I've been telling you about, that includes part of the Islamic University, legislative council buildings, police stations, schools, UN schools for refugees, 18 mosques, and on and on.

We need something like \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion to start "standing up," as we say in Arabic.

And the prevailing view amongst Gazans is that the cease-fire is only temporary. What guarantees that Israel will not come back?

If you remember, in March 2008, Israel gave us a rehearsal of what would happen by attacking the Beit Hanoun and Jabaliya area.

I remember at that time that Natan Vilnai, the deputy minister of war (who they call deputy minister of defense) threatened us with a bigger "shoah"--the Hebrew word for holocaust.

So if you talk to people, they say the Israelis might come back tomorrow. What is there to stop them? Nothing.

The Arab summit produced nothing but empty rhetoric.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon visited Gaza yesterday.

He was spineless.

He came in a convoy of cars, then drove from the border wearing a bulletproof vest, as if someone was going to shoot him from the Eretz checkpoint to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency headquarters.

Never visited Jabaliya, never visited the Zeitoun area. And then he talked about the shocking scenes. But he didn't see anything.

Not a single Arab country intervened.

The best example of solidarity was from Bolivia and Venezuela (which severed diplomatic ties with Israel to protest the war on Gaza).

So the joke here in the streets of Gaza goes, "Long live, Venezuela! The leading Arab country."

We can't go to the south--to Rafah, to Khan Younis--but we can go to the middle camps, such as Nusayrat and Burayj. We've been able to move around some.

But no food and still shortages of medicine.

And the question is why?

Why did Israel have to target children?

They killed 438 children. And then there are the 120 women, 95 old people, 16 medics, four journalists, five foreigners. And 85 to 90 percent of those who were killed were civilians.

If this offensive has done something, it has succeeded in radicalizing people and strengthening the will to resist the occupation.

People have now understood that this is the end of the so-called negotiations with Israel. It's clear that negotiations with Israel within the current imbalance of power are not going to lead us anywhere, but surrender.

This is what the official leadership of the Palestinian Authority has been doing. It has surrendered to the Zionist leadership of Israel.

And coexistence with Zionism, people here feel now, is impossible--exactly like coexistence with apartheid was impossible for the Black indigenous population of South Africa.

Therefore, as I see it, Israel must be transformed into a secular democratic state--from a state for Jews only to a state for all its citizens.

IS YOUR point about the "end of negotiations" that the last remaining hope has been extinguished among Palestinians that the Oslo Accords would accomplish a two-state solution?

ABSOLUTELY. WHEN Israel started this war, it killed the two-state solution. People were mostly already convinced that such a solution was impossible--with the construction of the apartheid wall, with the increase of the number of settlers to more than half a million, the expansion of the settlement bloc around Greater Jerusalem, and so on.

This is what we, as one-state activists, have also been arguing. But now, I think, people on the street have come to realize that Israel is not sincere about the two-state solution, and by launching the latest war against Gaza, it has shot the two-state solution in the head.

The previous Palestinian national program represented the interest of the bourgeois within Palestinian society, in the form of the Fatah movement headed by Yassir Arafat in the 1980s and 1990s. That led to the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accord.

But from 1993 until now, Israel has taken every possible step to squash the two-state solution--by the measures I outlined: increasing the number of settlers, annexing Jerusalem, the apartheid wall and so on.

The last bullet was when Israel launched the war on Gaza, but during the last three years, Israel has transformed Gaza, with the complicity of the international community, into the largest concentration camp in the world--larger than the Warsaw Ghetto and even Auschwitz.

And the West Bank has been transformed into three large Bantustans--one in the north with Jenin and Kalkilya, one in the middle with Ramallah, and one in the south with Beit Lahoun and Hebron.

In other words, the two-state solution has become a façade, a fiction. I think people understand this now.

WHEN ISRAELI Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced the end of Israeli operations, he said that Israel had accomplished all of its goals--that Hamas and its armed wing of 15,000 fighters had been hit hard, and that Israel had perhaps achieved even more than it had expected. But there are also Israeli observers who are skeptical about this. So what do you think of the political and military consequences, both for Israel and for Hamas?

THE PROBLEM I have with this kind of question when it comes from the mainstream media is that the war has been misrepresented as a war between Israel and Hamas. But I know that you don't ask the question in this way.

This has been a criminal war, a genocidal war, committed by the state of Israel against the Palestinian civilians of Gaza.

We need to understand that Israel is a colonial-settler state--an apartheid state, based on deep-rooted racism and a fundamentalist interpretation of Judaism.

Israel is defined as a Jewish-only state, and therefore, there shouldn't be anyone who is not Jewish on this land, according to this logic.

So the war on Gaza is a continuation of the genocidal war that Israel has waged since 1948.

In 1948, Israel kicked more than two-thirds of the Palestinian people out of their homes, and there was no Hamas.

There were no Qassem rockets launched against the Jewish settlements in Palestine before 1948.

In 1967, Israel occupied Gaza, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Desert, and killed thousands of Palestinians without Hamas launching rockets against Israel.

Now, Israel is arresting and killing Palestinians in the West Bank, although we know that there are no rockets launched from the West Bank against Israeli settlements inside the West Bank--though according to international law, we as occupied people have the right to resist Israeli occupation.

I think to judge the outcome, you need to look at the objectives of the war and what Israel has achieved so far.

At the beginning, Israel made very clear its objectives: 1) to destroy the infrastructure of the "terrorist organization," 2) to put an end to the launching of rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel proper, and 3) to create a new security situation in the Gaza Strip.

Which of these objectives has been achieved?

None.

One, Hamas is still functioning. It is still in control of the security situation in the Gaza Strip. Today, they issued a very powerful press release in the Jabaliya refugee camp, which was the first refugee camp to be attacked during this war.

Two, after Israel unilaterally declared a cease-fire, the Palestinian resistance movement--not Hamas--shot seven rockets against Sderot and other Israeli cities to say, "We are still here."

Three, the new security situation that Israel was talking about was to weaken the Islamic resistance movement of Hamas in order to pave the way for the return of the pro-Oslo forces. But that has not happened.

So in other words, none of the three objectives declared at the beginning of the war have been achieved, and therefore Israel has lost the war.

If killing 438 children, if killing more than 120 women, if demolishing more than 40,000 houses, religious and government buildings and so forth--if that is how winning is defined, then Israel has won the war.

According to a press conference by the al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, Hamas lost 48 fighters. Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad, lost 37 fighters. The National Brigades, the armed wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, lost 12, I think. I don't know how many the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine lost.

That's a tiny proportion of the number of people Israel killed during the war.

So my conclusion is that Israel, with the fourth-strongest army in the world, with 120 nuclear warheads, F-16s, Apache helicopters and Merkava tanks, up against starving people, against stones and crude homemade rockets--still, Israel was not able to reoccupy the Gaza Strip.

They were able to move around in empty areas--in the Netzarim settlements and north of Gaza, but they were not able to enter the Jabaliya refugee camp, Gaza City or the Rafah crossing.

And I have more bad news for them. They said they attacked the Palestinian-Egyptian border in order to destroy the tunnels.

And I can tell you that today, we started getting things through the tunnels.

ON THE eve of the cease-fire, there was a meeting in Sharm el Sheik in Egypt, between Israel, the European Union countries, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and Egypt. I was struck by the announcement that the chief point of agreement was to collaborate in order to insure that Hamas was unable to re-arm during the "peace." They didn't utter a word about Israel's atrocities, or discuss how to stop Israel from using U.S. weaponry to carry out another massacre.

ABSOLUTELY. WHY allow Israel to be armed to the teeth? This is the policy of blaming the victim.

And within Arab countries, official politics is nothing more than a cocktail of the politics of cowardice and hypocrisy when it comes to the Palestinian situation. That also applies, unfortunately, to European politics, when it comes to the question of Palestine.

We Palestinians are paying a heavy price for a guilt-complex that Europe has been suffering from--as a result of the terrible holocaust in which more than 6 million Jews were killed.

But we did not kill these Jews--it was Europe.

Anti-Semitism is a European phenomenon.

So today, instead of supporting the victim, Europe supports the victimizer, the oppressor.

The EU has decided to upgrade its ties with Israel. It is rewarding the oppressor and punishing the oppressed.

So again, I ask you, is there really any hope of a new direction from Western governments? I don't think so.

And that is why our only hope is among civil society organizations and political parties such as yours--people on the left, people who understand the conflict, people who know who the victimizer is and who the victim is.

[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

Racist Rats At Jet Blue Must Pay \$240,000 To Passenger Forced To Cover His T-Shirt Because It Displayed Arabic Script

Jan 5 NEW YORK (AFP)

An airline passenger forced to cover his T-shirt because it displayed Arabic script has been awarded 240,000 dollars in compensation, campaigners said Monday.

Raed Jarrar received the pay out on Friday from two US Transportation Security Authority officials and from JetBlue Airways following the August 2006 incident at New York's JFK Airport, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) announced.

"The outcome of this case is a victory for free speech and a blow to the discriminatory practice of racial profiling," said Aden Fine, a lawyer with ACLU.

Jarrar, a US resident, was apprehended as he waited to board a JetBlue flight from New York to Oakland, California, and told to remove his shirt, which had written on it in Arabic: "We will not be silent."

He was told other passengers felt uncomfortable because an Arabic-inscribed T-shirt in an airport was like "wearing a T-shirt at a bank stating, I am a robber," the ACLU said.

Jarrar eventually agreed to cover his shirt with another provided by JetBlue.

He was allowed aboard but his seat was changed from the front to the back of the aircraft.

Last week, nine Muslims, including three children, were ordered off a domestic US flight after passengers heard what they believed were suspicious remarks about security.

Although the passengers, eight of them US citizens, were cleared by the FBI, they were reportedly still barred from the AirTran flight.

Corrupt Cops Defy The Law: At Least 20% Of Cops In Drug Cases Are Criminals; Fake “Evidence” & Perjury In Court Common

"It is an open secret long shared by prosecutors, defense lawyers and judges that perjury is widespread among law enforcement officers," though it's difficult to detect in specific cases, said Alex Kozinski, a federal appeals-court judge, in the 1990s.

JANUARY 29, 2009 By AMIR EFRATI, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

Of course, defendants themselves can be the ones lying, but the problem of police perjury -- and what can be done about it -- is being debated anew.

Questionable testimony by police comes up most often in firearm- or drug-possession cases in which officers often testify that a defendant had a bulge in his pocket -- which they thought might be a gun -- or dropped drugs in plain sight as they approached him, giving the officers the right to seize the contraband.

Defense lawyers say in many of these cases, officers are "testilying" and that the guns or drugs were actually discovered when their clients were unjustly frisked by officers. They also say testilying frequently occurs in more serious cases.

In Boston, a federal judge last week ruled that a police officer there falsely testified at a pretrial hearing in a gun-possession case about the circumstances of the defendant's arrest. The judge, Mark Wolf, is considering sanctions against the prosecutor for not immediately disclosing that the officer's testimony contradicted what he told prosecutors beforehand.

A federal judge in Brooklyn, N.Y., last fall ruled that a U.S. marshal and a New York City police officer lied when they testified that a defendant dropped two bags of drugs in front of them and then invited the officers to his apartment, where he revealed a large cache of cocaine.

Though few officers will confess to lying -- after all, it's a crime -- work by researchers and a 1990s commission appointed to examine police corruption shows there's a tacit agreement among many officers that lying about how evidence is seized keeps criminals off the street.

To stem the problem, some criminal-justice researchers and academic experts have called for doing polygraphs on officers who take the stand or requiring officers to tape their searches.

Criminal-justice researchers say it's difficult to quantify how often perjury is being committed.

According to a 1992 survey, prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges in Chicago said they thought that, on average, perjury by police occurs 20% of the time in which defendants claim evidence was illegally seized.

"It is an open secret long shared by prosecutors, defense lawyers and judges that perjury is widespread among law enforcement officers," though it's difficult to detect in specific cases, said Alex Kozinski, a federal appeals-court judge, in the 1990s.

Testilying may have taken off after a 1961 Supreme Court decision boosted the exclusionary rule by requiring state courts to exclude -- or throw out -- some evidence seized in illegal searches, such as when police frisk people without probable cause or search a residence without a warrant.

Immediately after the decision, *Mapp v. Ohio*, studies showed that the number of annual drug arrests in the U.S. -- most cases are prosecuted in state court -- didn't change much but there was a sharp increase in officers claiming that suspects dropped drugs on the ground.

"Either drug users were suddenly dropping bags all over the place or the cops were still frisking but saying the guy dropped the drugs," says John Kleinig, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Civil liberties advocates and defense lawyers say losing the exclusionary rule would harm the public.

"We'd risk far greater invasions of privacy because officers would have carte blanche to do outrageous activity and act on hunches all the time," says JaneAnne Murray, a criminal defense lawyer in New York.

**“Bring On The Shackles”
“How Are These Ruthless, Careless
Ghouls Who Murdered The Economy
Still Walking Around?”**

“Let The Show Trials Begin”

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

January 27, 2009 By MAUREEN DOWD, The New York Times

As President Obama spreads his New Testament balm over the capital, I'm longing for a bit of Old Testament wrath.

Couldn't he throw down his BlackBerry tablet and smash it in anger over the feckless financiers, the gods of gold and their idols — in this case not a gilt calf but an \$87,000 area rug, a cache of diamond Tiffany and Cartier watches and a French-made luxury corporate jet?

Now that we're nationalizing, couldn't we fire any obtuse bankers and auto executives who cling to perks and bonuses even as the economy is following John Thain down his antique commode?

How could Citigroup be so dumb as to go ahead with plans to get a new \$50 million corporate jet, the exclusive Dassault Falcon 7X seating 12, after losing \$28.5 billion in the past 15 months and receiving \$345 billion in government investments and guarantees?

(Now I get why a \$400 payment I recently sent to pay off my Citibank Visa was mistakenly applied to my sister-in-law's Citibank Mastercard account.)

The “Citiboobs” — as The New York Post, which broke the news, calls them — watched as the car chieftains got in trouble for flying their private jets to Washington to ask for bailouts, and the A.I.G. moguls got dragged before Congress for spending their bailout on California spa treatments. But the boobs still didn't get the message.

The former masters of the universe don't seem to fully comprehend that their universe has crumbled and, thanks to them, so has ours.

Real people are losing real jobs at Caterpillar, Home Depot and Sprint Nextel; these and other companies announced on Monday that they would cut more than 75,000 jobs in the U.S. and around the world, as consumer confidence and home prices swan-dived.

Prodded by an appalled Senator Carl Levin, Tim Geithner — even as he was being confirmed as Treasury secretary — directed Treasury officials to call the Citiboobs and tell them the new jet would not fly.

“They woke up pretty quickly,” says a Treasury official, adding that they protested for a bit. “Six months ago, they would have kept the plane and flown it to Washington.”

Senator Levin said that the financiers will not be able to change their warped mentality, but will have to be reined in by Geithner's new leashes.

“I have no confidence that they intend or desire to change,” Levin told me. “These bankers got away with murder, and it's obscene that close to nothing is being asked of

financial institutions. I get incensed at the thought that a bank that's getting billions of dollars in taxpayer money is out there buying fancy new airplanes."

New York's attorney general, Andrew Cuomo, always gratifying on the issue of clawing back money from the greedy creeps on Wall Street, on Tuesday subpoenaed Thain, the former Merrill Lynch chief executive, over \$4 billion in bonuses he handed out as the failing firm was bought by Bank of America.

In an interview with Maria Bartiromo on CNBC, Thain used the specious, contemptible reasoning that other executives use to rationalize why they're keeping their bonuses as profits are plunging.

"If you don't pay your best people, you will destroy your franchise" and they'll go elsewhere, he said.

Hello?

They destroyed the franchise.

Let's call their bluff. Let's see what a great job market it is for the geniuses of capitalism who lost \$15 billion in three months and helped usher in socialism.

Bartiromo also asked Thain to explain, when jobs and salaries were being cut at his firm, how he could justify spending \$1 million to renovate his office.

As The Daily Beast and CNBC reported, big-ticket items included curtains for \$28,000, a pair of chairs for \$87,000, fabric for a "Roman Shade" for \$11,000, Regency chairs for \$24,000, six wall sconces for \$2,700, a \$13,000 chandelier in the private dining room and six dining chairs for \$37,000, a "custom coffee table" for \$16,000, an antique commode "on legs" for \$35,000, and a \$1,400 "parchment waste can."

Does that mean you can only throw used parchment in it or is it made of parchment?

It's psychopathic to spend a million redoing your office when the folks outside it are losing jobs, homes, pensions and savings.

Thain should never rise above the level of stocking the money in A.T.M.'s again. Just think: This guy could well have been Treasury secretary if John McCain had won.

Bartiromo pressed: What was wrong with the office of his predecessor, Stanley O'Neal?

"Well — his office was very different — than — the — the general décor of — Merrill's offices," Thain replied.

"It really would have been — very difficult — for — me to use it in the form that it was in."

Did it have a desk and a phone?

How are these ruthless, careless ghouls who murdered the economy still walking around (not to mention that sociopathic sadist Bernie Madoff?) — and not as perps?

Bring on the shackles. Let the show trials begin.

RECEIVED

Afghan Cops

From: JM
To: GI Special
Sent: January 30, 2009
Subject: Afghan cops

From Article: "That's 10 Of Us, Covering An Area That's Probably Easily The Size Of Chicago"

Said of Afghan cops who are probably very expert with guns but don't want to show it:

"We asked, 'What do you do?' They're like eating, sleeping, nothing. I mean, what are they policing?"

Maybe if they were paid a living wage they would want to do more.

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

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT THE BLOODSHED
THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS**

GI Special www.militaryproject.org

This is how Obama brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.



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