

GI SPECIAL 7B14:



[Thanks to a whole shitload of good people who sent this in.]

**More Change You Can
Believe In:
Obama Expands Missile Strikes
Inside Pakistan:**

He Is “Extending Bush Administration Policy In Using American Spy Agencies”

“The C.I.A. Strikes Inside Pakistan Have Not Been Publicly Acknowledged”

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

February 20, 2009 By MARK MAZZETTI and DAVID E. SANGER, The New York Times Company

The missile strikes on training camps run by Baitullah Mehsud represent a broadening of the American campaign inside Pakistan, which has been largely carried out by drone aircraft.

The strikes are another sign that President Obama is continuing, and in some cases extending, Bush administration policy in using American spy agencies against terrorism suspects in Pakistan, as he had promised to do during his presidential campaign.

It is unclear why the Obama administration decided to carry out the attacks, which American and Pakistani officials said occurred last Saturday and again on Monday, hitting camps run by Mr. Mehsud's network. The Saturday strike was aimed specifically at Mr. Mehsud, but he was not killed, according to Pakistani and American officials.

The Monday strike, officials say, was aimed at a camp run by Hakeem Ullah Mehsud, a top aide to the militant.

The strikes came after a visit to Islamabad last week by Richard C. Holbrooke, the American envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In a telephone interview on Friday, Mr. Holbrooke declined to talk about the attacks on Mr. Mehsud. The White House also declined to speak about Mr. Mehsud or the decisions that led up to the new strikes. A C.I.A. spokesman also declined to comment.

Under standard policy for covert operations, the C.I.A. strikes inside Pakistan have not been publicly acknowledged either by the Obama administration or the Bush administration.

MORE:

“The Obama Administration, Siding With The Bush White House,

Contended Friday That Detainees In Afghanistan Have No Constitutional Rights”

“They’ve Now Embraced The Bush Policy That You Can Create Prisons Outside The Law”



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

Feb 20, 2009 By Nedra Pickler and Matt Apuzzo - The Associated Press

The Obama administration, siding with the Bush White House, contended Friday that detainees in Afghanistan have no constitutional rights.

In a two-sentence court filing, the Justice Department said it agreed that detainees at Bagram Airfield cannot use U.S. courts to challenge their detention.

The filing shocked human rights attorneys. **[Do not ever hire for your lawyer any lawyer so incapable of detecting lying bullshit as to have believed Obama’s lying**

bullshit, and is now “shocked.” You will lose and lose and lose. That’s what losers too credulous to see reality do: they lose. T]

“The hope we all had in President Obama to lead us on a different path has not turned out as we’d hoped,” said Tina Monshipour Foster, a human rights attorney representing a detainee at the Bagram Airfield. “We all expected better.” **[No, “we” didn’t expect better. There are huge numbers of us who did, however, know better, and didn’t “expect” shit from the new Emperor.]**

The Supreme Court last summer gave al-Qaida and Taliban suspects held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the right to challenge their detention. With about 600 detainees at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and thousands more held in Iraq, courts are grappling with whether they, too, can sue to be released.

Three months after the Supreme Court’s ruling on Guantanamo Bay, four Afghan citizens being detained at Bagram tried to challenge their detentions in U.S. District Court in Washington.

Court filings alleged that the U.S. military had held them without charges, repeatedly interrogating them without any means to contact an attorney. Their petition was filed by relatives on their behalf since they had no way of getting access to the legal system.

After President Obama took office, a federal judge in Washington gave the new administration a month to decide whether it wanted to stand by Bush’s legal argument. Justice Department spokesman Dean Boyd says the filing speaks for itself.

“They’ve now embraced the Bush policy that you can create prisons outside the law,” said Jonathan Hafetz, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union who has represented several detainees.

It’s not the first time that the Obama administration has used a Bush administration legal argument after promising to review it. [Hey, they didn’t lie. They did review it. And they like it just fine.]

Last week, Attorney General Eric Holder announced a review of every court case in which the Bush administration invoked the state secrets privilege, a separate legal tool it used to have lawsuits thrown out rather than reveal secrets.

The same day, however, Justice Department attorney Douglas Letter cited that privilege in asking an appeals court to uphold dismissal of a suit accusing a Boeing Co. subsidiary of illegally helping the CIA fly suspected terrorists to allied foreign nations that tortured them.

Letter said that Obama officials approved his argument.

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

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed Near Baghdad

Feb. 21, 2009 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20090221-07

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division–Baghdad Soldier died Feb. 21 while conducting a combat patrol near Baghdad.

Grand Rapids Soldier Dies In Iraq

01/27/2009 By: Renee Passal, WDIO-TV

A Grand Rapids soldier has made the ultimate sacrifice. 36-year-old Philip Windorski Junior was killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq.

The military said that two U.S. helicopters crashed in northern Iraq. Enemy fire does not appear to be involved.

Windorski graduated from Grand Rapids in 1991. He was the eldest of three boys, a husband, father, and step-father.

His family was notified early Monday morning. They told Eyewitness News they were in shock.

Windorski joined the service right after high school. His brother said Windorski loved the military, and always wanted to be a pilot.

This was his third tour of Iraq. Most recently he and his family had been stationed in New York.

His mother said funeral arrangements will likely be in Grand Rapids.

At least 4,236 U.S. military members have died in Iraq, since 2003.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Bomb In Uruzgan Kills 3 Foreign Occupation Troops

Feb 20 (AP)

A roadside bomb killed three coalition troops Friday during a patrol in Afghanistan's dangerous south, the U.S. coalition said.

The attack came in Uruzgan province. The coalition did not release any other information, including the troops' nationalities. U.S., Dutch and Australian troops operate in Uruzgan.

“Death To America” Afghans Block Road To Protest Killing Of Civilian

February 20, 2009 AFP

Hundreds of Afghans blocked a key road outside Kabul for several hours to protest the alleged killing of a civilian in an international military operation, police said.

Four other men were arrested in the overnight operation in the province of Logar, adjoining the capital, provincial police chief General Mustafah Mohseni said.

Locals said the four were also civilians.

The angry mob that blocked the road about 30 kilometres south of Kabul paraded the body of the dead man and burnt tyres, witness Hamidullah Sangar said.

They also chanted “Death to America,” said the police chief, who put the crowd at 350 to 400 people.

“The person killed - Abdul Khaliq - was a young student,” said General Mohseni. “One of the arrested was a student and others are locals. I think they are innocent.”

Notes From A Lost War:

“Home To More Than 860,000 People, The Two Provinces Control The

Approaches To Kabul From The Taliban's Southern Bastions” Until The 2,700-Strong 3rd Brigade Combat Team Deployed, “There Were Only 300 U.S. Troops In Logar, Wardak And Three Neighboring Provinces”

Five miles from the muddy bazaar where smiling merchants offered tea to U.S. Army Col. David Haight and insisted that outsiders were making all the trouble, a deadly reception had been prepared for his five-vehicle patrol.

Feb. 20, 2009 Jonathan S. Landay, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

BARAKI BARAK, AFGHANISTAN -- Five miles from the muddy bazaar where smiling merchants offered tea to U.S. Army Col. David Haight and insisted that outsiders were making all the trouble, a deadly reception had been prepared for his five-vehicle patrol.

A U.S. pilot had spotted men burying what turned out to be a bomb by the road where Haight was stopping to ask how he could help poor farmers and jobless youths who were desperate for any kind of work, including setting explosives for the Taliban.

The stocky combat veteran from Fairfax, Va., wasn't buying what he was hearing about all the troublemakers being outsiders.

“The IED” -- improvised explosive device -- “that was put on the road down there? The guys are from Baraki Barak,” Haight said as he and his men made their way past dingy shops and fruit carts, their fingers rarely straying from the triggers, grimy children gamboling noisily in their wake.

Down the road, U.S. military engineers found and blew up the remote-controlled bomb.

The encounter illustrates the distrust and anger that U.S.-led forces face as the Obama administration tries to stem the Taliban-led insurgency by sending more American troops to Afghanistan -- including thousands from North Carolina -- and ramping up a strategy to start making good on years of empty U.S. vows to better the lives of ordinary Afghans.

The region where Haight's 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division, from Fort Drum, N.Y., deployed six weeks ago is shaping up as one of the most crucial proving grounds for the revamped U.S. counterinsurgency strategy.

The 2,700-strong force has its headquarters about 40 miles from Kabul. It's the first major foreign contingent to deploy in Wardak and Logar provinces, a measure of how the Taliban are expanding their presence around the national capital.

Home to more than 860,000 people, the two provinces control the approaches to Kabul from the Taliban's southern bastions.

Afghanistan's main national highway -- and the key U.S. supply route from Pakistan's port of Karachi -- runs up Wardak's border with Logar to Kabul and connects to Bagram, the largest U.S. base in the country.

Until the 3rd Brigade Combat Team deployed, there were only 300 U.S. troops to help Afghan forces in Logar, Wardak and three neighboring provinces.

Because no major American contingent was present for so long, U.S. officers have tagged much of the region "the Black Hole," an acknowledgement that they don't know the full extent of the Taliban threat in the area.

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team's most recent five-hour patrol from Baraki Barak to Logar's provincial capital, Pul-e-Alam, drove home just how tough its mission will be.

Most residents refused to discuss the Taliban, an indication of the insurgents' intimidating presence, and several ridiculed the notion of a working local government.

Instead, they emphasized their economic plight, complained that U.S. convoys force traffic off the roads and voiced fears that the increased American presence will mean more civilian casualties.

TROOP NEWS

1000 From Minnesota National Guard Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse

2.23.09 Army Times

Soldiers from the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Infantry Division, known as the "Red Bulls," were scheduled to leave Feb. 12 for a yearlong mobilization and deployment to Iraq.

About 1,000 soldiers will serve in Iraq and provide command and control for a 16,000-person, multinational division in Iraq. The soldiers will operate in eight of Iraq's 18 provinces. The soldiers will undergo pre-deployment training for three months at Fort Lewis, Wash., before being sent to Iraq through next February.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; ALL HOME NOW



A damaged U.S. Humvee armored vehicle after a car bomb attack in Basoud district of Ningarhar province east of Kabul, Afghanistan, Feb. 5, 2009. The blast left no casualties, said Afghan police officials. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Resistance Action

Feb 19 (Reuters) & AFP & Feb 20 (Reuters) & Feb 21 (KUNA) & Reuters

A car bomb killed one policeman and wounded two police, in southern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

An off-duty Iraqi soldier was shot dead in central Mosul, police said.

A policeman was killed when a roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A policeman was wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in western Mosul, police said.

Four Iraqi soldiers were killed and two were injured when a roadside bomb exploded in the restive province of Diyala on Thursday, a senior police officer said. The attack took place in Balad Ruz, a town 70 kilometres northeast of Baghdad, said the officer, who asked not to be named.

A roadside bomb near a police station killed a policeman and wounded one person in the town of Garma, 30 km (20 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

An Iraqi soldier was shot and wounded by sniper fire in Baghdad's western district of Mansour, police said.

Insurgents today shot and killed an Iraqi police officer in front of his house in the area of Diwaniya, the largest city in Al-Qadsiya south of Baghdad and then ran away after that.

A roadside bomb wounded an Iraqi soldier when it struck a patrol southwest of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded an Iraqi soldier on patrol in southeastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

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

**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/)

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.

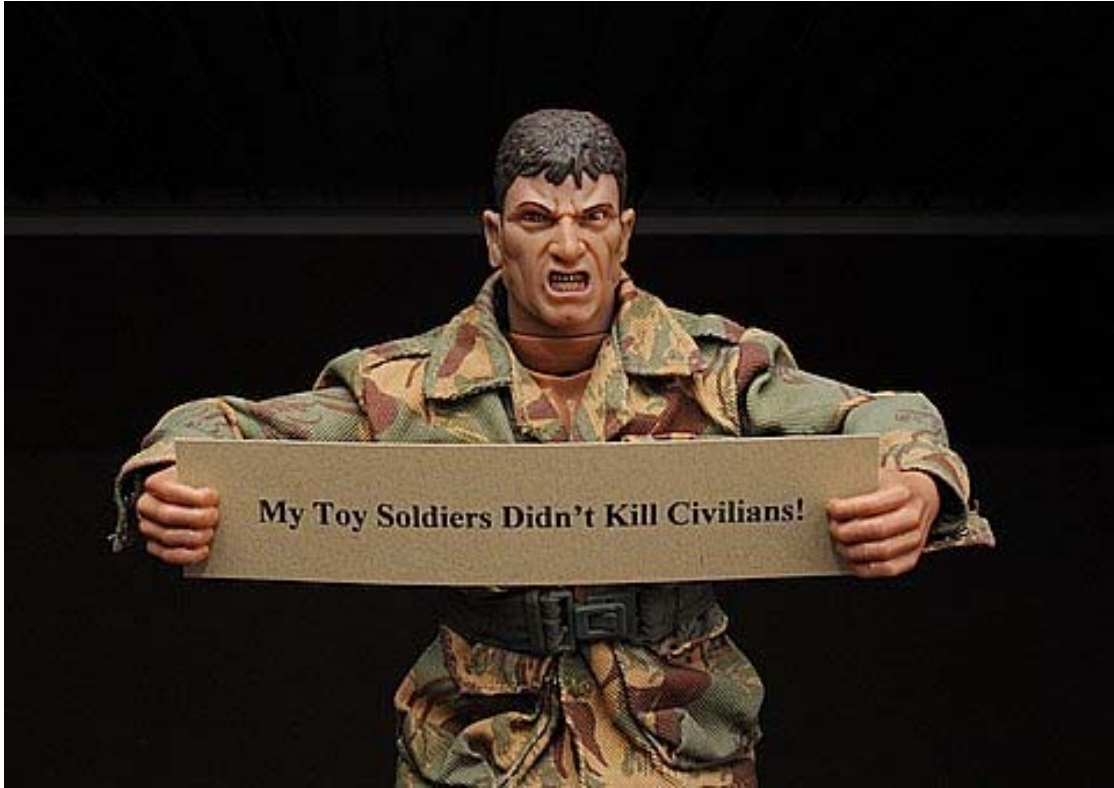
“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“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.

Classified By The U.S. Government



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: February 20, 2009 1:33 PM
Subject: Classified By The U.S. Government

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
February 20, 2009

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

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

To Members Of The U.S. Armed Forces:

**“You Are The Most Important
Person In The Fight To Bring
Our Military Back Home”**

**The Military Project Is Ready To Offer
Any Assistance That You Deem
Necessary In Resisting Your Role In
The Current Occupations**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Arms,

For seven years our armed forces have been engaged in the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

In that time, tens of thousands of service members have found ways to resist participation in these conflicts. Many have outright refused to deploy.

And those who have served in theater have found many ways to show their dissent, or even refuse orders that they have found illegal and immoral.

Every form of resistance to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan has served to weaken our government's ability to carry out these conflicts.

With that weakening, the ranks of veterans' advocacy groups such as Iraq Veterans Against the War have grown rapidly, and an end to the occupations can be seen.

A clear sign for a change of course in the “War on Terror” came with the election of Barack Obama as our 44th President and Commander-in-Chief. President Obama, who has pledged to bring the Iraq conflict to an end, received more

campaign money contributions from members of the military than his opponent, Senator John McCain.

This statistic is a clear sign that our troops want out of Iraq, and Afghanistan as well.

There is much hope in America right now that President Obama will keep his promise and bring the occupation of Iraq to a quick end. And if President Obama does indeed live up to his word, billions of dollars can be saved, but more importantly, countless lives will be spared as well.

In this time of hope, however, we should not sit back and assume that politicians will bring an end to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Instead, the need to reach out to members of the military willing to show their dissent to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan has never been greater.

You have the unique power to disrupt our operations, and to bring the true nature of our occupations to the American people.

If you have thought about resisting your part in the occupation of Iraq or Afghanistan, or have already made the choice to resist, there is great support for you back home from anti-war veterans support groups.

Consider this letter an official offer of support from one such group, The Military Project.

The Military Project is ready to offer any assistance that you deem necessary in resisting your role in the current occupations.

If you need an outlet to have your feelings and observations published, The Military Project can facilitate that.

If you would like help organizing with other service members that share your dissent towards the occupations, The Military Project can help facilitate that as well.

We can send publications like *Traveling Soldier*, DVDs like *Sir No Sir* that may be useful, information about *Iraq Veterans Against The War*, and whatever other material you may need and not have access to where you are.

The form of your resistance is up to you. The Military Project stands ready to follow your guidance.

You are the most important person in the fight to bring our military back home.

The Military Project respects your service. Some members are recent veterans themselves.

We hope that you will feel comfortable making any request you feel necessary in the fight to save lives on both sides of the conflicts.

Solidarity and respect,

Fabian Bouthillette, Lieutenant, U.S. Navy Reserve
Member, Iraq Veterans Against the War
Member, The Military Project

The Military Project:
contact@militaryproject.org

Or:

Lillian:
Box 126,
2576 Broadway,
New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

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

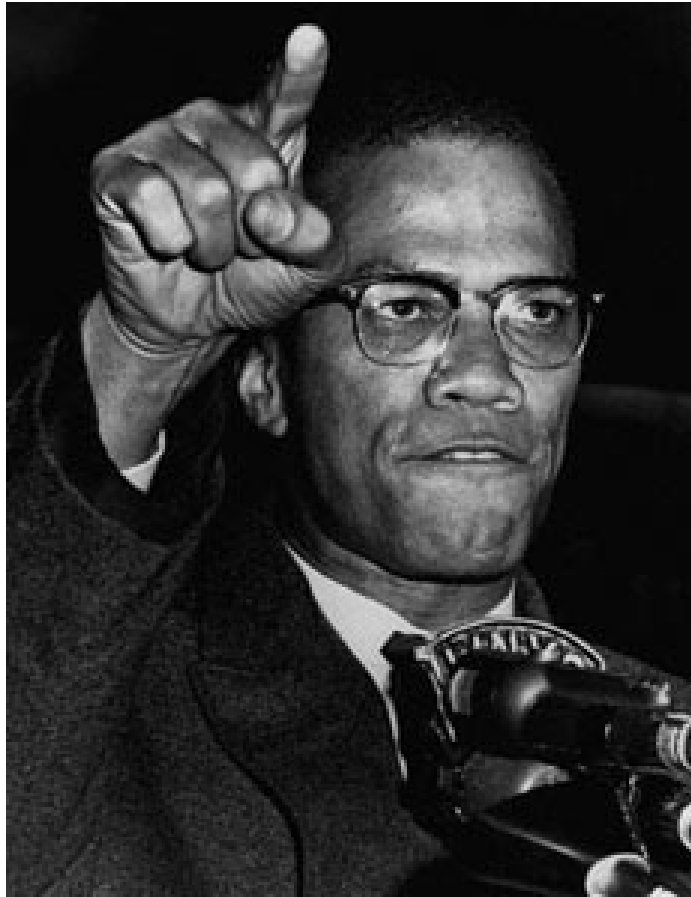
“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

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

February 21, 1965:

A Brilliant And Courageous Soldier For The Cause Killed In Action



Carl Bunin Peace History Peace History February 18-24

Malcolm X was shot and killed by rival Black Muslims in New York City, as he was about to address his Organization of Afro-American Unity at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City's Washington Heights. He was 39. **[He was killed not long after announcing his new politics: that working class whites and African-Americans can join together to fight those who own and control the society for their own wealth and privilege. T]**

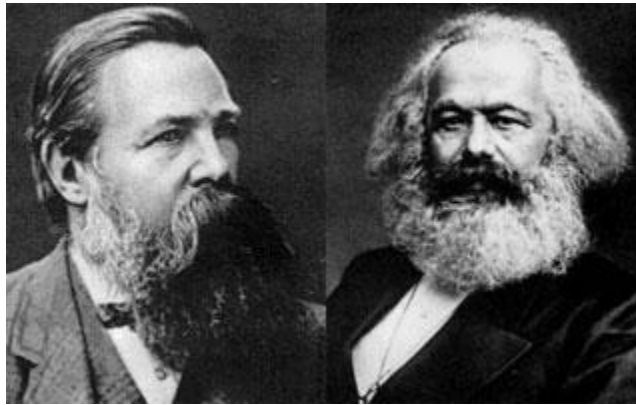
GI SPECIALS BY MAIL FREE FOR ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE A SELECTION OF GI SPECIALS MAILED TO YOU, EMAIL YOUR ADDRESS TO: CONTACT@MILITARYPROJECT.ORG OR DROP A LINE TO: BOX 126, 2576 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10025-5657 USA. 917.677.8057

Please say how many you wish sent.

NOTE WELL: They will all be different issues of GI Special to satisfy DOD regs that you may possess copies, *provided you don't have more than one of the same issue.*

February 21, 1848: A Small Book Appears, And Shakes The World



Friedrich Engels And Karl Marx

Carl Bunin Peace History Peace History February 18-24

“The Communist Manifesto,” written by 29-year-old Karl Marx with the assistance of Friedrich Engels, was published in London (in German) by a group of German-born revolutionary socialists known as the Communist League.

The political pamphlet—arguably the most influential in history—proclaimed that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” and the inevitable victory of the proletariat, or working class, would put an end to class society forever.

“It Seems That The Spirit Of 1968 Has Returned To The Campus”

**“There Is Genuine Fury At What
Israel Did”**

**“Action On This Scale Among
Students Hasn't Been Seen Since The
Sixties And Seventies”**

**“Students From Across The Country Will
Gather For A National Demonstration
Calling For The Abolition Of Tuition
Fees, An Event That Organisers Say Has
Rocketed In Size Following The Success
Of The Occupations Over Gaza”**

Technology has set these actions apart from those of previous generations, allowing a national momentum to grow with incredible speed. Through the linking up of internet blogs, news of successes spread quickly and protests grew nationwide.

8 February 2009 By Emily Dugan, The Independent [UK]

They are the iPod generation of students: politically apathetic, absorbed by selfish consumerism, dedicated to a few years of hedonism before they land a lucrative job in the City.

Not any more.

A seismic change is taking place in British universities.

Around the UK, thousands of students have occupied lecture theatres, offices and other buildings at more than 20 universities in sit-down protests.

It seems that the spirit of 1968 has returned to the campus.

While it was the situation in Gaza that triggered this mass protest, the beginnings of political enthusiasm have already spread to other issues.

John Rose, one of the original London School of Economics (LSE) students to mount the barricades alongside Tariq Ali in 1968, spent last week giving lectures on the situation in Gaza at 12 of the occupations.

“This is something different to anything we've seen for a long time,” he said.

“There is genuine fury at what Israel did.

“I think it's highly likely that this year will see more student action.

“What's interesting is the nervousness of vice chancellors and their willingness to concede demands; it indicates this is something that could well turn into '68.”

Beginning with a 24-hour occupation at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) on 13 January, the sit-ins spread across the country. Now occupations have been held at the LSE, Essex, King's College London, Birmingham, Sussex, Warwick, Manchester Metropolitan, Oxford, Leeds, Cambridge, Sheffield Hallam, Bradford, Nottingham, Queen Mary, Manchester, Strathclyde, Newcastle, Kingston, Goldsmiths and Glasgow.

Among the demands of students are disinvestment in the arms trade; the promise to provide scholarships for Palestinian students; a pledge to send books and unused computers to Palestine; and to condemn Israeli attacks on Gaza.

Technology has set these actions apart from those of previous generations, allowing a national momentum to grow with incredible speed. Through the linking up of internet blogs, news of successes spread quickly and protests grew nationwide.

Just three weeks after the first sit-in at SOAS, students gathered yesterday at Birkbeck College to draw up a national strategy. The meeting featured speeches from leaders in the Stop the War movement, such as Tony Benn, George Galloway MP and Jeremy Corbyn MP. There has also been an Early Day Motion tabled in Parliament in support of campus activism.

At the end of the month students from across the country will gather for a national demonstration calling for the abolition of tuition fees, an event that organisers say has rocketed in size following the success of the occupations over Gaza.

Vice chancellors and principals have been brought to the negotiating table and – in the majority of universities – bowed to at least one of the demands.

The students' success means that now there is a new round of protests.

On Wednesday two new occupations began at Strathclyde and Manchester universities, and on Friday night students at the University of Glasgow also launched a sit-in.

Emily Dreyfus, a 21-year-old political activist in her third year of reading classics at Oxford, was one of around 80 students to occupy the historic Bodleian library building in the city and demand that the university issue a statement condemning the Gaza attacks and disinvest from the arms trade.

She said: “I found Oxford politically very dead when I arrived, but it's completely different now. There seem to be more and more people talking about politics, which is so

exciting. It's really been aided by the communication tools we've got, things like Facebook.”

Wes Streeting, the president of the National Union of Students, said: “What we've seen over the Gaza issue is a resurgence of a particular type of protest: the occupation.

“It's a long time since we've seen student occupations on such a scale. It's about time we got the student movement going again and had an impact.”

Establishments that have not previously been known for their activism have also become involved. Fran Legg was one of several students to set up the first Stop the War Coalition at Queen Mary, a research-focused university in London, a month ago. Now they are inundated with interest.

“Action on this scale among students hasn't been seen since the Sixties and Seventies,” she said.

“This is going to go down in history as a new round of student mobilisation and it will set a precedent.

“Gaza is the main issue at the moment, but we're looking beyond the occupation; we're viewing it as a springboard for other protests and to set up a committee to make sure the university only invests ethically.”

As the first generation of students to pay substantial direct fees to universities, their negotiating power has also been strengthened. Their concern over their college's investments have been given new legitimacy because it is partly their money.

Ms Legg said: “For the first time, you've got students getting principals to the negotiation table, saying they don't want their tuition fees funding war. Everybody wants to know where their money is going.”

The Activist: 'Students Will See They Can Take Action'

Katan Alder, 22, student leader speaking from the occupation at Manchester University:

“We've been occupying the university since Wednesday. More than 500 people came to an emergency Students' Union meeting and we took the vice chancellor's administration block that afternoon. Israel's assault on Gaza made people angry, and we heard about the occupations at other universities through blogs.

“This is the biggest student campaign we've had and it's also the most wide-reaching. We'll stay until the university lets us meet with the vice chancellor.

“I think students will see they can take action on more issues, such as the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the education system; the Government's refusal to stop the marketisation of education has provoked a lot of anger.”

The '68 Veteran: 'It Changed Our Lives'

John Rose, 63, former student organiser at the London School of Economics in 1968; now a lecturer and author on the Middle East

"I arrived at the LSE in '66 as an extremely naive liberal student and I left in '69 as a revolutionary socialist. It changed our lives. I was one of the student organisers with Tariq Ali and attended all the demonstrations and occupations. We did think a revolution was coming; we thought mass action of students might overthrow capitalism and bring genuine equality.

It took us some time to realise that wasn't going to happen.

"It wasn't just about rioting and having fun, it was political argument that probed all the assumptions about the world. It was a highly intense period and the memory stays powerfully with anyone involved; it's the memory of those times that has kept me going.

"It was a feeling of fantastic elation: we began to realise that mass action could change things.

"Once it started, we developed a taste for it and began to consider mass activity as a way of doing politics, which is what's happening now.

"People are fed up with bankers, politicians and elite institutions.

"Hundreds of us thought the revolution was coming in '69, but maybe the revolution is coming now."

CLASS WAR REPORTS

"Whether It Takes Months, Or Just Weeks, The World Is Going To Discover That Europe's Financial System Is Sunk"

“Protesters Have Smashed The Treasury And Stormed Parliament”

“If Deutsche Bank Is Correct, The Economy Will Have Shrunk By Nearly 9% Before The End Of This Year”

“This Is The Sort Of Level That Stokes Popular Revolt”

15 Feb 2009 By Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, Telegraph.co.uk

If mishandled by the world policy establishment, this debacle is big enough to shatter the fragile banking systems of Western Europe and set off round two of our financial Götterdämmerung.

Austria's finance minister Josef Pröll made frantic efforts last week to put together a €150bn rescue for the ex-Soviet bloc.

Well he might. His banks have lent €230bn to the region, equal to 70% of Austria's GDP.

“A failure rate of 10% would lead to the collapse of the Austrian financial sector,” reported Der Standard in Vienna. Unfortunately, that is about to happen.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) says bad debts will top 10% and may reach 20%.

The Vienna press said Bank Austria and its Italian owner Unicredit face a “monetary Stalingrad” in the East.

Mr Pröll tried to drum up support for his rescue package from EU finance ministers in Brussels last week. The idea was scotched by Germany's Peer Steinbrück. Not our problem, he said. We'll see about that.

Stephen Jen, currency chief at Morgan Stanley, said Eastern Europe has borrowed \$1.7 trillion abroad, much on short-term maturities. It must repay – or roll over – \$400bn this year, equal to a third of the region's GDP.

Good luck. The credit window has slammed shut.

Not even Russia can easily cover the \$500bn dollar debts of its oligarchs while oil remains near \$33 a barrel. The budget is based on Urals crude at \$95. Russia has bled 36% of its foreign reserves since August defending the ruble.

“This is the largest run on a currency in history,” said Mr Jen.

In Poland, 60% of mortgages are in Swiss francs. The zloty has just halved against the franc.

Hungary, the Balkans, the Baltics, and Ukraine are all suffering variants of this story. As an act of collective folly – by lenders and borrowers – it matches America's sub-prime debacle.

There is a crucial difference, however. European banks are on the hook for both. US banks are not.

Almost all East bloc debts are owed to West Europe, especially Austrian, Swedish, Greek, Italian, and Belgian banks.

En plus, Europeans account for an astonishing 74% of the entire \$4.9 trillion portfolio of loans to emerging markets.

They are five times more exposed to this latest bust than American or Japanese banks, and they are 50% more leveraged (IMF data).

Spain is up to its neck in Latin America, which has belatedly joined the slump (Mexico's car output fell 51% in January, and Brazil lost 650,000 jobs in one month).

Britain and Switzerland are up to their necks in Asia.

Whether it takes months, or just weeks, the world is going to discover that Europe's financial system is sunk, and that there is no EU Federal Reserve yet ready to act as a lender of last resort or to flood the markets with emergency stimulus.

Under a “Taylor Rule” analysis, the European Central Bank already needs to cut rates to zero and then purchase bonds and Pfandbriefe on a huge scale. It is constrained by geopolitics – a German-Dutch veto – and the Maastricht Treaty.

But I digress.

It is East Europe that is blowing up right now. Erik Berglof, EBRD's chief economist, told me the region may need €400bn in help to cover loans and prop up the credit system.

Europe's governments are making matters worse. Some are pressuring their banks to pull back, undercutting subsidiaries in East Europe. Athens has ordered Greek banks to pull out of the Balkans.

The sums needed are beyond the limits of the IMF, which has already bailed out Hungary, Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus, Iceland, and Pakistan – and Turkey next – and is fast exhausting its own \$200bn (€155bn) reserve.

We are nearing the point where the IMF may have to print money for the world, using arcane powers to issue Special Drawing Rights.

Its \$16bn rescue of Ukraine has unravelled. The country – facing a 12% contraction in GDP after the collapse of steel prices – is hurtling towards default, leaving Unicredit, Raffeisen and ING in the lurch.

Pakistan wants another \$7.6bn.

Latvia's central bank governor has declared his economy “clinically dead” after it shrank 10.5% in the fourth quarter.

Protesters have smashed the treasury and stormed parliament.

“This is much worse than the East Asia crisis in the 1990s,” said Lars Christensen, at Danske Bank.

“There are accidents waiting to happen across the region, but the EU institutions don't have any framework for dealing with this. The day they decide not to save one of these one countries will be the trigger for a massive crisis with contagion spreading into the EU.”

Europe is already in deeper trouble than the ECB or EU leaders ever expected. Germany contracted at an annual rate of 8.4% in the fourth quarter.

If Deutsche Bank is correct, the economy will have shrunk by nearly 9% before the end of this year.

This is the sort of level that stokes popular revolt.

The implications are obvious. Berlin is not going to rescue Ireland, Spain, Greece and Portugal as the collapse of their credit bubbles leads to rising defaults, or rescue Italy by accepting plans for EU “union bonds” should the debt markets take fright at the rocketing trajectory of Italy's public debt (hitting 112% of GDP next year, just revised up from 101% – big change), or rescue Austria from its Habsburg adventurism.

So we watch and wait as the lethal brush fires move closer.

If one spark jumps across the eurozone line, we will have global systemic crisis within days. Are the firemen ready?

120,000 In Ireland March Against Politicians Scheme To Take

Thousands Of \$ A Year Out Of Their Wages: Attack Is On “Low To Middle-Income Earners”

“A Harsh And Inequitable Penalty” To Pay For Banking Crisis



Mass protest in the Irish capital, Dublin

2.21.09 DUBLIN (AFP)

Up to 120,000 protesters brought Dublin city centre to a standstill on Saturday over government austerity measures aimed at stabilising the once high-flying economy now wracked by recession.

The demonstration came a day after the global economic crisis led to another political casualty elsewhere in Europe, with Latvia's prime minister quitting as his country grapples with deepening recession.

Organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and featuring teachers, police, civil servants and others, the Irish protest was the "first step in a rolling campaign of action," ICTU general secretary David Begg said.

Marchers are particularly opposed to a pension levy on some 350,000 public servants which is designed to save about 1.4 billion euros (1.8 billion dollars) this year.



Irish demonstrators hold banners as they join a mass protest in central Dublin

According to IMPACT, Ireland's biggest public sector trade union, the levy will cost low to middle-income earners between 1,500 euros and 2,800 euros a year [between \$1800 and \$3400 U.S.].

The union's general secretary Peter McLoone has said his members were angered by the way in which public servants were singled out by the levy for "a harsh and inequitable penalty".

The ICTU describes the government's measures as "lacking in fairness and focussing only on 'stabilising' the public finances at the expense of economic renewal and job protection."

The global economic crisis, which has hit many European countries hard, has led to political instability in several parts of the continent.

More recently, Latvia's Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis quit his position on Friday, amid widespread discontent over belt-tightening and politicians' alleged corruption and nepotism.

Latvia showed the fastest economic growth in the European Union in 2006 but its economy is expected to contract 12 percent this year, with unemployment soaring to 12.7 percent from the current 8.3 percent.



U.S. Public Rates Corporate CEOs Even Lower Than Members Of Congress; [And “By A Two-To-One Margin, Voters Said No Matter How Bad Things Are, Congress Can Make Them Worse”]

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Military Project & Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes:
Surprise - NOT!]

Feb 18 Rasmussen Reports [Excerpts]

The chief executive officers of the nation's largest corporations are viewed favorably by just 22% of American adults, lower even than the ratings earned by members of Congress .

The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey shows that 26% now have a favorable opinion of the nation's legislators. Both CEOs and those in Congress are viewed Very Favorably by only three percent (3%) of Americans.

Voters overwhelmingly opposed bonuses for executives at companies that received bailout funds.

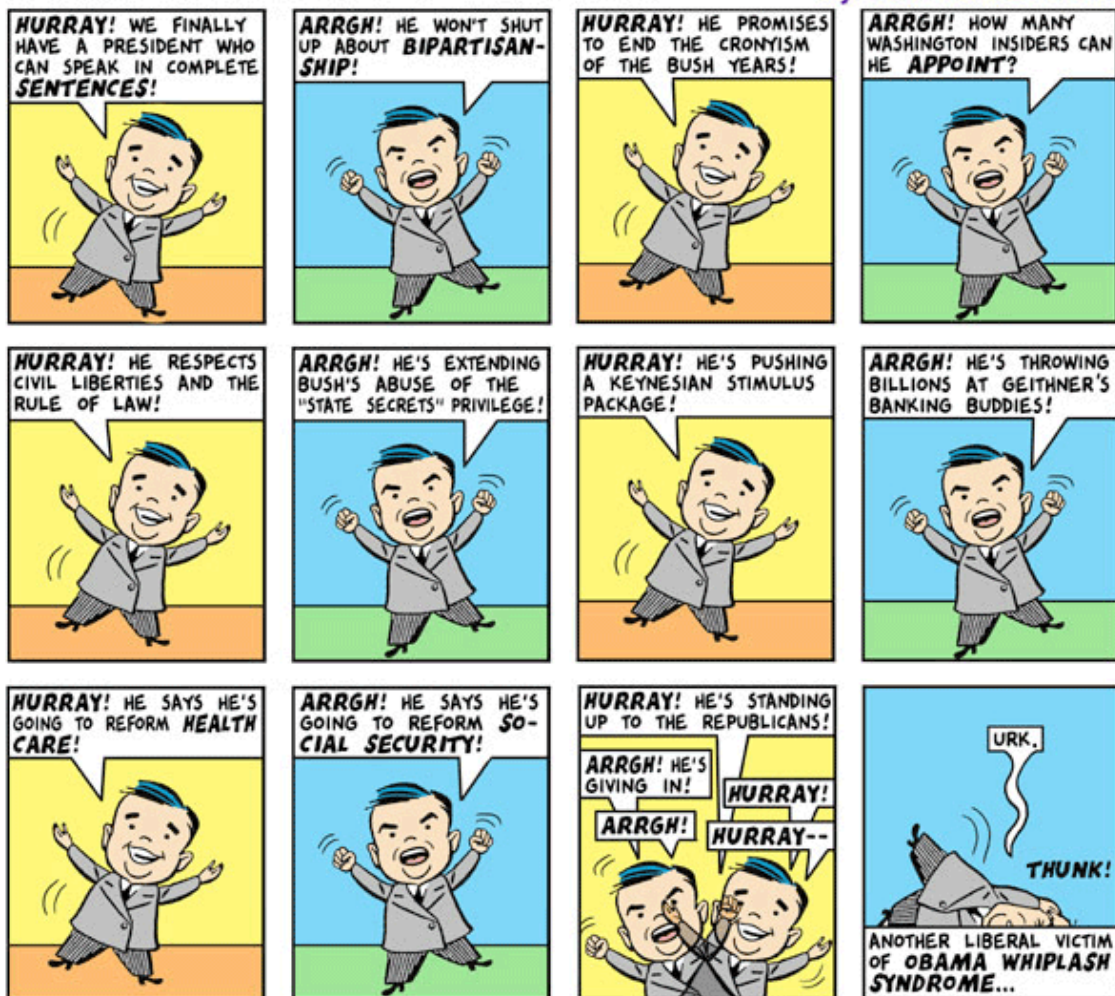
By a two-to-one margin, voters said no matter how bad things are, Congress can make them worse.

An earlier survey found that used car salesmen are more likely to be trusted than members of Congress.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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



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