

GI SPECIAL 7C1:



Which Side Are You On?

#1: The Soldier?

“We Don’t Need To Be Here”

“Let Soldiers Go Home”

“We don’t need to be here,” said Sgt. Jimmy Johnson, 40, from Radcliff, Ky. He deployed from Fort Benning, Ga., and is in his second tour since 2006.

“The job is done. Let soldiers go home. Let soldiers be with their families, loved ones.”

[Feb 27 CAMP SPEICHER, Iraq, Quoted by LARA JAKES, Associated Press Writer]

#2: Or The Cold Blooded Killer In The White House Vomiting Out Stupid Old Bush Lies About The Iraq War?

**“We Sent Our Troops To Iraq To
Do Away With Saddam Hussein’s
Regime”**

**“We Kept Our Troops In Iraq To Help
Establish A Sovereign Government”
One Senior Military Commander Told
NBC’s Pentagon Correspondent “That
He Expects Large Numbers Of American
Troops To Be In Iraq For The Next 15 To
20 Years”**

The contradiction between President Obama’s speech at Camp Lejeune and his rhetoric before he was elected should serve as a warning to those who take his words at face value. [C]ombined with his plan to escalate the war in Afghanistan, Obama’s adoption of key lies from Bush’s Iraq narrative should be seen as a dangerous indicator of things to come.

February 28, 2009 By Jeremy Scahill, AlterNet [Excerpts]

Some anti-war analysts find hope in President Barack Obama’s address at Camp LeJeune in North Carolina on Friday, in which he appeared to spell out a clear date for withdrawal from Iraq.

“I intend to remove all U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of 2011,” Obama said in a speech that quickly generated headlines announcing that an end to the occupation is on the horizon.

As far as rhetoric goes, Obama's statement seems very clear.

But in reality, it is far more complicated.

Obama's plan, as his advisors have often said, is subject to "conditions on the ground," meaning it can be altered at any point between now and 2011.

Despite Obama's declarations Friday and the celebrations they have sparked on the liberal blogosphere, the Pentagon certainly seems to believe its forces may well be in Iraq after 2011.

NBC's Pentagon correspondent Jim Miklaszeswki reported on Friday that "military commanders, despite this Status of Forces Agreement with the Iraqi government that all U.S. forces would be out by the end of 2011, are already making plans for a significant number of American troops to remain in Iraq beyond that 2011 deadline, assuming that Status of Forces Agreement would be renegotiated.

"And one senior military commander told us that he expects large numbers of American troops to be in Iraq for the next 15 to 20 years."

Finally, the Status of Forces Agreement, which supposedly lays out a timetable for U.S. withdrawal, contains a gaping loophole that leaves open the possibility of a continuation of the occupation and a sustained presence of U.S. forces well beyond 2011, "upon request by the government of Iraq."

Article 27 of the SOFA allows the U.S. to undertake military action, "or any other measure," inside Iraq's borders "In the event of any external or internal threat or aggression against Iraq."

Earlier in the week, when details of Obama's official Iraq plan began to emerge, expressions of surprise poured from the offices of the congressional Democratic leadership over his intention to keep a force of 35,000 to 50,000 troops in the country beyond 2010.

"When they talk about 50,000, that's a little higher number than I anticipated," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., was "particularly upset" according to the New York Times and did not understand "the justification."

Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., exclaimed, "Fifty thousand is more than I would have thought."

The response from the Democratic power brokers was embarrassingly disingenuous.

Obama said early on in his presidential campaign that he intended to keep behind a "residual force" of the scope he laid out.

Those who have long protested this aspect of his plan were marginalized and ignored in both the corporate media and the Obama campaign.

The same Democratic leaders expressing their disappointment ignored the credible voices of dissent for years while supporting the occupation through votes and funding.

If Pelosi, Reid, et al., really had a problem with a 50,000 troop residual force, they certainly had ample time to say so when Obama was running for president.

Following Obama's speech at Camp Lejeune, key Senate Republicans praised Obama's plan as well, while reminding everyone that it was an outgrowth of the Bush administration.

"It is encouraging to see the Obama administration embrace the plan of Gen. David Petraeus that began with the successful surge in 2007, and continues shifting combat responsibilities to our Iraqi allies," said Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

Beyond the headline-generating news, Obama's speech at Camp Lejeune delivered a number of lines -- wrapped in laudatory rhetoric -- that could have been delivered by Bush himself.

"I want to be very clear," Obama told the military audience.

"We sent our troops to Iraq to do away with Saddam Hussein's regime -- and you got the job done."

Perhaps it bears remembering that "removing Saddam" was justification two or three offered by the Bush administration after the WMD fraud was exposed.

"We kept our troops in Iraq to help establish a sovereign government," Obama went on, "and you got the job done."

(The idea that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki regime is either sovereign or a government is hotly debated in Iraq.)

"And we will leave the Iraqi people with a hard-earned opportunity to live a better life -- that is your achievement; that is the prospect that you have made possible."

Regardless of what happens down the line, the world knows the truth about the lies that both Democrats and Republicans promoted in support of Bush's war against Iraq.

Obama, the candidate, used to riff on these truths on the campaign trail.

The contradiction between President Obama's speech at Camp Lejeune and his rhetoric before he was elected should serve as a warning to those who take his words at face value.

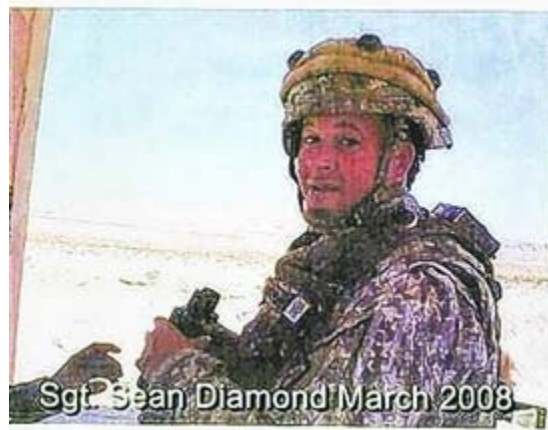
But more important, combined with his plan to escalate the war in Afghanistan, Obama's adoption of key lies from Bush's Iraq narrative should be seen as a dangerous indicator of things to come.



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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Gardnerville Mother Mourns Loss Of Her Son, Killed In Iraq



Army Sgt. Sean Diamond, 41, the son of a Gardnerville woman, Sally Wiley, was killed in action in As-Salam on Sunday. Diamond was serving with the 610th ESC 14th Engineering Battalion, Fort Lewis, Wash. This was his third tour of combat duty. Provided to the Reno Gazette-Journal

February 20, 2009 Reno Gazette-Journal

The son of a Gardnerville woman was killed in action in As-Salam, Iraq on Sunday.

Army Sgt. Sean Diamond, 41, was on a patrol when his vehicle was hit by two improvised explosive devices, said Sally Wiley from Fort Lewis, Wash., where family members had gathered Tuesday morning.

"We're all a mess right now. He was scheduled to come home pretty soon for R & R, but this isn't the way we thought it would be," Wiley said, her voice strained with emotion. "It must be God's plan, because it wasn't mine."

As a member of the Blue Star Mothers, she said, "We try to prepare ourselves for this, but it's different when it really happens to you. He loved his country and he loved his family."

Diamond was serving with the 610th ESC 14th Engineering Battalion, Fort Lewis, Wash. This was his third tour of combat duty.

"He was with engineering and we thought he wouldn't get hurt," Wiley said.

The battalion was building a rifle range in southern Iraq, and traveled daily along a road which was checked every day for IEDs, she said.

"He was in the second Humvee, and their third day on the road, they hit one (IED) that blew up right under his feet. He was the only one hit. Everyone else just got scratches. You always ask, 'Why him?'" Wiley said.

"He loved his family more than anything in the world. He wrote letters to each of his children individually and he called them regularly

Diamond was born in Oakland, Calif., and graduated from high school in Parker, Colo. He attended two years of college in Colorado before enlisting, Wiley said.

He is survived by his mother and stepfather, Michael; wife Loramay and their four children, Taylor, 5; Madison, 8; Sean Riley, 9; and Athena, 13; his twin brother Michael; brother Jason and father Jerry.

Wiley has been an active member of the Sierra Nevada Blue Star Mothers for a number of years.

Barbara Clark, another member from Gardnerville, said Wiley called her when she was notified by the Army that personnel were coming by to talk to her, so a handful of Blue Star Mothers went to Wiley's house to offer support.

“It was very painful for all of us,” Clark said. “We’ve done a number of ceremonies, but this is the first time we’ve lost from the inside. There is a lot of numbness in the group right now.”

Diamond would have celebrated his 42nd birthday on Saint Patrick’s Day, Wiley said.

The body is en route to Livermore, Calif., where most of the wife’s family lives, for services.

A memorial service is also planned in Gardnerville March 17, on what would have been Diamond’s birthday, she said.

Wiley asks that any donations in her son’s memory be sent to : Sierra Nevada Chapter of Blue Star Mothers, P.O. Box 714, Minden, NV 89423.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Murderous Idiots In Command: U.S. Occupation Air Attack Slaughters Civilians And Sheep

February 26, 2009 By Jean MacKenzie in Kabul, Institute for War & Peace Reporting [Excerpts]

The US-led Coalition forces in Afghanistan have acknowledged that a number of civilians were killed in an airstrike early last week that targeted a local rebel commander.

The commander, Ghulam Yahya Akbari, was unhurt, but he confirmed that two of his men and a local mechanic were killed in the raid on the Gozara district village of Karez Sultan.

Shortly after the operation, Coalition force representatives insisted that “up to 15 militants suspected of associating with Yahya” had been killed.

On February 17, Coalition forces targeted Yahya, who had been waging his own private war against the government of Afghanistan and foreign forces for close to two years. (see: Rebel Chief Defies Coalition Forces, Afghan Recovery Report 313, 18 February 2009).

Thirteen nomads, included six women and two children, reportedly died in the attack, along with up to 400 animals.

Yahya escaped injury, and vows to carry on his fight.

“They think I will be afraid after their airstrike, but that it not true,” he told IWPR, speaking by telephone days after the attack. “I will fight against them even if I have only one man left.”

Yahya claims to have 200 fighters under his command.

According to the rebel commander, his driver, twenty-year-old Khalil Ahmad, and one of his gunmen, Sayed Karim, 32, were killed in the Coalition raid.

Also among the dead was Gulbuddin, 22, a mechanic who had come out to Gozara district to fix one of Yahya’s vehicles.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



U.S. soldiers are seen near a damaged police vehicle following an attack by militants on Jalalabad-Kabul highway, east of Kabul, Afghanistan, Feb. 7, 2009. In nearby Laghman province, another attack on a police convoy killed two police, including the police chief of Qarghayi district. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

Attacks On U.S. Company Kills Three Guards

March 1 (Xinhua)

Taliban insurgents’ attack against a U.S. security services company USPI in Taliban’s former stronghold Kandahar Sunday claimed two lives including a Taliban fighter, a local official said.

“Taliban insurgents this morning in Maiwand district attacked a vehicle of USPI and the local guards returned fire. As a result, a guard and an insurgent were killed,” Mullah Masoud Khan the district chief of Maiwand told Xinhua.

Moreover, a mine planted by insurgents struck a vehicle of the company Saturday evening leaving two local guards dead, he added.

TROOP NEWS

Soldier Mom Plans To Report For Duty With Kids: Four Years After She Was Honorably Discharged From The Army, Recalled From IRR; “I Have To Bring Them With Me,” She Said. “I Don’t Have A Choice”



Lisa Pagan with her husband, Travis, and her children Elizabeth, 4, and Eric, 3, at their home in Davidson, N.C., on Friday. The mom has spent more than a year fighting her recall to active duty. Chuck Burton / AP

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project & James Starowicz, Vietnam Veteran.]

Feb. 28, 2009 The Associated Press

DAVIDSON, N.C. - When Lisa Pagan reports for duty Sunday, four long years after she was honorably discharged from the Army, she will arrive with more than her old uniform. She is bringing her kids, too.

"I have to bring them with me," she said. "I don't have a choice."

Pagan is among thousands of former service members who have left active duty since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, only to later receive orders to return to service.

They are not in training, they are not getting a Defense Department salary, but as long as they have time left on their original enlistment contracts, they are on "individual ready reserve" status — eligible to be recalled at any time.

Soldiers can appeal, and some have won permission to remain in civilian life. Pagan filed several appeals, arguing that because her husband travels for business, no one else can take care of her kids.

All were rejected, leaving Pagan with what she says is a choice between deploying to Iraq and abandoning her family, or refusing her orders and potentially facing charges. **[There are not and can be no military "charges" for "refusing her orders" because no military orders may be given to a civilian. However, the individual may be stripped of service-connected benefits for refusing to report to base and by so reporting, thereby return to active duty status. See more below.]**

Then she hit on the idea of showing up Sunday at Fort Benning, Georgia, with her children in tow.

"I guess they'll have to contact the highest person at the base, and they'll have to decide from there what to do," Pagan said.

"I either report and bring the children with me or don't report and face dishonorable discharge and possibly being arrested. I guess I'll just have to make my case while I'm there."

Master Sgt. Keith O'Donnell, an Army spokesman in St. Louis, said the commander at Fort Benning will decide how to handle the situation.

"The Army tries to look at the whole picture and they definitely don't want to do anything that jeopardizes the family or jeopardizes the children," O'Donnell said. "At the same time, these are individuals who made obligations and commitments to the country."

Of the 25,000 individual ready reserve troops recalled since September 2001, more than 7,500 have been granted deferments or exemptions, O'Donnell said.

About 1,000 have failed to report. O'Donnell said most of those cases are still under investigation, while 360 soldiers have been separated from the Army either through "other than honorable" discharges or general discharges.

He said Pagan is not likely to face charges, since none of the individual ready reserve soldiers who have failed to report faced a court-martial. [Since they're civilians, not on active duty, unless they report to base and then refuse to deploy, they can't be court-martialed. Duh.]

Pagan, who grew up near Camden, N.J., was working in a department store when she made her commitment in September 2002. She learned how to drive a truck, and met Travis while stationed in Hawaii. She had her first child while in uniform, and they left the service in 2005 when their enlistments were up.

She always knew there was a chance she could be recalled, so she buried the thought in the back of her mind.

“When I enlisted, they said almost nobody gets called back when you're in the IRR,” she said.

The young family settled outside of Charlotte in the college town of Davidson, where Travis landed a job as a salesman. It required lots of travel, but that was OK — Pagan enjoyed her life as a stay-at-home mom to their son Eric and second child, a daughter named Elizabeth.

She opened a child-care center in her home, and started taking classes at nearby Fayetteville State.

The orders to return to active duty arrived in December 2007. She told the Army there was no one to take care of her children:

Her husband spent most of his time on the road, and they believe quitting his job is a sure path to bankruptcy and foreclosure. Her parents live in New Jersey and her husband's parents live in Texas. Neither are able to help out. The Army was not persuaded.

Pagan hired attorney Mark Waple, who filed another appeal, which included a letter from Travis Pagan's employer that said bluntly: “In order for Travis to remain an employee, he will be required to travel.”

In December 2008, her appeal was again rejected.

“It's the obligation of commanders to make certain that service members have a valid family care plan and that clearly has not happened in Lisa's case,” Waple said.

Tom Tarantino, a policy associate with the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a nonprofit group that helps veterans, said the Army has taken a hard line on many of these cases.

“Usually the only way that someone can get out of the deployment or get out of the military due to a family hardship is if they get into a situation where the kids will be put into foster care,” Tarantino said.

“That’s how serious it has to be, and I’m sure what the military is telling her — and I’m not saying that this is exactly the right answer — but the fact that it is inconvenient for her husband’s job is not the military’s problem. It’s very harsh.”

MORE:

Ft. Hood IAW Chapter Members Mysteriously Receive Simultaneous Honorable Discharges: “I Told Them (Commanding Officers) I Would Go To Jail Before I Would Go Back To Iraq”



February 18, 2009 Iraq Veterans Against the War E-Newsletter [Excerpt]

“I told them (commanding officers) I would go to jail before I would go back to Iraq,” said Ronn Cantu, former Staff Sergeant and president of the IAW Ft. Hood chapter, who had already served two tours in Iraq.

While such a statement would normally be grounds for court martial, instead Ronn was given an honorable discharge.

Four other chapter members, all who wanted out of the Army, also received discharges within weeks of each other.

While it served to dismantle the Ft. Hood chapter, it also released the members from the difficult choices confronting them as GI resisters. Ronn is now active in the Austin, TX chapter which considers Ft. Hood its satellite chapter and reaches out to the remaining active duty members there.

An important lesson can be drawn from this experience: IAW remains a palpable threat to the active duty military.

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

West Virginia National Guard Soldiers Exposed To Deadly Toxin In Iraq:

**“They Knew Back In 2003 That This
Stuff Was Dangerous And They Told
Us It Wasn't”**

**“KBR Officials On Site Told Him It Was
Only Slightly More Dangerous Than
Baby Powder”**

“I knew that there was an issue when they sought to protect themselves and didn't bother to tell us on the way out there, ‘You might want to have chemical masks and suits,’ “ said Kimberling, who intends to join a group of soldiers who are suing KBR.

February 28, 2009 By Farah Stockman, Boston Globe Staff

WASHINGTON - The West Virginia National Guard is trying to track down 130 reservists who were probably exposed to a cancer-causing chemical in 2003 while guarding a water facility in southern Iraq.

The move follows similar efforts by the Indiana and Oregon National Guards, whose soldiers were also believed to have been exposed to sodium dichromate. The soldiers were guarding civilians who were repairing the Qarmat Ali plant under the supervision of Houston-based defense contractor KBR.

Hundreds of soldiers and civilians are believed to have worked near the chemical, which is used to prevent pipes from rusting but which also greatly increases the risk of cancer and other health problems.

The Pentagon and KBR were aware in 2003 that the chemical was piled around the looted facility, and took blood samples from some soldiers and civilians in Iraq to try to determine their level of exposure.

But six years later, little effort has been made to systematically alert all those who worked at the plant.

“They knew back in 2003 that this stuff was dangerous and they told us it wasn’t,” said one former West Virginia reservist who asked that his name not be used because he feared it would be detrimental to his military career.

He said battalion medics questioned a group of West Virginia soldiers in August 2003 to ask whether they had come into contact with the orange dust, but they never told him what it was and never tested him.

“They asked us if we had seen this stuff, breathed it, gotten it on our clothes or our bodies,” he said, adding that KBR officials on site told him it was only slightly more dangerous than baby powder.

Russell Kimberling who now works for a pharmaceutical company in Louisville, Ky., had been guarding the plant for more than two months when his superiors asked him to escort senior KBR officials there because there were rumors of an orange chemical on the ground that they wanted to see.

He said he got out of his vehicle at the site, kicked the dirt, stirring an orange cloud, and said, “This is what you are talking about.”

But when Kimberling, dressed in battle fatigues, turned around, he was stunned to see that the KBR officials who were getting out of their vehicles were all dressed in full chemical suits.

“I knew that there was an issue when they sought to protect themselves and didn’t bother to tell us on the way out there, ‘You might want to have chemical masks and suits,’ “ said Kimberling, who intends to join a group of soldiers who are suing KBR.

Sodium dichromate is the same substance that poisoned residents in Hinkley, Calif., an incident made famous by the movie “Erin Brockovich.” Specialists say that even short-term exposure can increase the risk of cancer, depress the immune system, and cause other problems.

Kimberling said he was airlifted out of Iraq to repair a hole in the cartilage of his nose - a common symptom of sodium dichromate exposure - and that he now suffers from frequent sinus headaches and unexplained spots on his skin.

The West Virginia soldier who asked not to be identified said he has frequent bloody noses and tumor-like knots in his thyroid glands.

He said he saw a doctor, but a battery of tests did not turn up any cause. He realized only in recent weeks, after receiving a letter from the West Virginia National Guard, that he had been exposed to a substance that could have triggered the problems, he said.

In February, the West Virginia National Guard began tracking down the soldiers who spent time at Qarmat Ali to tell them to get a health assessment.

“We feel, since the issue has been raised, that it is important enough to contact the soldiers and advise them of what they need to do to get checked out,” said Michael Cadle, a spokesman for the West Virginia Guard.

There is no effective way to undo the health risks caused by exposure, specialists say, but records can be kept in soldiers’ medical files so that if health problems arise, they might be covered as service-related.

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

**“Christians” In Command
Punish Fighter Pilot For
Refusing To Eat Their Shit:
“500 Complaints Of Religious Bias
A Month From Members Of The
Military”
Former Fighter Pilot In The Air Force
Reserves Complained About “The
‘Unconstitutional’ Intrusion Of
Religion In Military Life”**

“He Received A Negative Evaluation — After Years Of Positive Appraisals — And Ultimately Lost His Flying Certification And His Post”



“Christian” Officers Meet To Plan Retaliation Against Pilot David Horn

March 1, 2009 By ERIC LICHTBLAU, New York Times [Excerpts]

Military officials have worked to enforce tougher restrictions on proselytizing and religious bias since a flare-up over religious discrimination in 2005 at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, where the football coach posted a locker room banner for “Team Jesus.”

Officials said they had made great strides in the last few years, with training for officers and a concerted effort at the inclusion of all faiths.

Still, some military personnel and activists opposed to what they see as “forced religion” in the military said they believed the problem had continued largely unabated, and they said private groups like the Officers’ Christian Fellowship and the Campus Crusade for Christ’s Military Ministry maintained an outsized influence on many bases.

Leaders of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a nonprofit group that brought the lawsuit against the Pentagon, point to episodes that they said represented a pattern of improper religious influence: official military retreats at off-base churches, the appearance of uniformed officers at religious events, displays of crucifixes at military chapels in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the practice of “dipping” the American flag at the altar of the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., among others.

The prevalence of religious bias in the military remains in dispute. The Pentagon said last week that it had received 50 complaints of religious discrimination from all of the branches from 2005 to 2007.

But Mikey Weinstein, the head of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation and a retired Air Force officer who has become an outspoken advocate on the issue, said his group now received more than 500 complaints of religious bias a month from members of the military.

David Horn, a former fighter pilot in the Air Force Reserve, is among those who have sought the group's help.

He tells of returning from tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and, like Specialist Chalker, hearing prayers “in Jesus’ name” at homecoming ceremonies.

He was so bothered, he said in an interview, that he wrote a letter to his local newspaper complaining about what he called the “unconstitutional” intrusion of religion in military life.

Four days later, Mr. Horn said, he received a negative evaluation — after years of positive appraisals — and ultimately lost his flying certification and his post. With his flying career in jeopardy, he plans to join the lawsuit against the Pentagon.

No More Court-Martials In Argentina: “Important New Rights For The Rank- And-File” Troops Will Be Tried In Civilian Courts With Lawyers Of Their Choice

[Thanks to Mike Woloshin, Veterans For Peace.

[He writes: “Here is an example of ‘Military Justice’ which should be followed by the United States which will eliminate the abuses of ‘Command Influence’ and provide for the accused to choose his own legal counsel. Note that: ‘The new system places Argentina on a par with international standards for military legal proceedings,’ and also that: ‘The new rules guarantee important new rights for the rank and file.’]

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) -- Members of Argentina’s armed forces will be tried by civil courts rather than military tribunals under a new rule that took effect Friday, part of a government effort to increase control over the military.

Strengthening civilian control over the military has been a priority for President Cristina Fernandez and her husband and predecessor, Nestor Kirchner, as Argentina struggles to heal old wounds from the 1976-83 dictatorship in which thousands were tortured and killed.

“We are still in a period of transition after the return to democracy, trying to advance in terms of our democratic institutions,” said Gaston Chillier, director of the Buenos Aires-based Center for Legal and Social Studies. His center represents families of victims of the military junta’s “dirty war” crackdown on dissent.

The new system places Argentina on par with international standards for military legal proceedings, said Defense Ministry spokesman Jorge Bernetti.

Signed into law last August, the measure brings the army, navy and air force under the same legal system as civilians -- making soldiers accountable to civilian courts and hamstringing the military’s ability to delay trials to protect its own, Chillier said.

Some members of the armed forces are wary of ceding their autonomy, and see the move as a politically motivated push to weaken the military and punish crimes that are more than a generation old.

But Chillier said the new rules also guarantee important new rights for the rank-and-file.

For example, service members can now choose their own lawyer rather than being appointed one by the military.

The measure also means troops are no longer subject to the death penalty and cannot be imprisoned for engaging in homosexual acts.

Dozens of former state security agents and their civilian allies are currently on trial for alleged crimes against humanity during the dirty war.

At least 13,000 dissidents were killed or made to disappear during the crackdown, according to official figures. Human rights groups put that number around 30,000.

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/)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action



A destroyed police patrol car in Zafraniyah in southeastern Baghdad, Iraq, Feb. 28, 2009. The patrol car was hit by a roadside bomb and three police officer were hurt. (AP Photo/Mahmoud Badri)

Feb 28 (Reuters) & March 1 (Reuters)

A senior police officer was killed and nine people wounded when a car bomb exploded near restaurants in the west Baghdad district of Mansour, police said.

Mahmoud Khalaf, the mayor of the city of Samarra, was wounded by a roadside bomb while his convoy was passing by, police captain Mahmoud Anwar said.

A bomber killed the cousin of Ifan al- Issawi, head of a U.S.-backed neighborhood patrol, when he managed to entered Issawi's house in Falluja, police said. Issawi, a winning candidate in the Jan. 31 provincial elections, was not harmed. Falluja is 50 km (35 miles) west of Baghdad.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATIONS

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

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

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglas, 1852

**“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!”

of American jets dropping napalm on a Vietnamese village.

There were over 200 innocent people burned to death.

Or, should I say, Murdered.

I have known many Vietnam veterans who were forced to kill children in combat.

I met a Vietnam vet who witnessed his platoon sergeant take a shotgun and kill an entire Vietnamese family, because he was using them as an example of what he would do to others, if he did not get information.

I saw a young Vietnamese woman flown in by helicopter to my aid station, who eventually died from a severe head injury, because an American soldier took his anger out on her.

I know a Vietnam veteran who saw many POWs executed in the field, shortly after they were interrogated.

In 1994, I stood next to a ditch, where 175 innocent Vietnamese civilians were killed by American troops.

They were ordered to commit this atrocity.

I know a Navy Vietnam veteran, whose ship was ordered to fire countless artillery rounds into a Vietnamese village on the beach.

He could see the shells landing with his binoculars.

He said the entire village was destroyed.

I could go on for a long time, but I'll stop here.

Kids and young adults who play violent video games have no idea who gets killed in war.

There can be body parts everywhere.

There can be teenage soldiers with severe injuries being flown in by helicopter, and they will be crying for their mothers.

I have met very few Vietnam veterans, who do not know at least one Vietnam vet who committed suicide.

I had a Vietnam veteran friend who hanged himself in a motel room.

What the American public knows about the cost of war, you could stick in a thimble.

Ignorance of this truth, just never stops.

When you see the end result of American soldiers who have killed themselves with a gun in a war zone, it changes your life.

Or, watching young soldiers destroy their lives with heroin.

So screwed up, they forget where they are.

Or, so screwed up, they take an M-16 and kill another soldier.

Or, get too close to the recoil of an artillery gun, and it takes half their head off.

Or, a heroin addict who takes a knife and tries to slit the throat of another soldier.

Or, watch another soldier attempt to kill himself, because he got a Dear John letter from his girlfriend.

This is the kind of reality that kids and young adults don't see, when they have a plastic joystick in their hands.

However, someday they may.

Someday, they may have to put a close friend into a body bag.

That's when a man puts away childish things, and wishes he had never played foolish games.

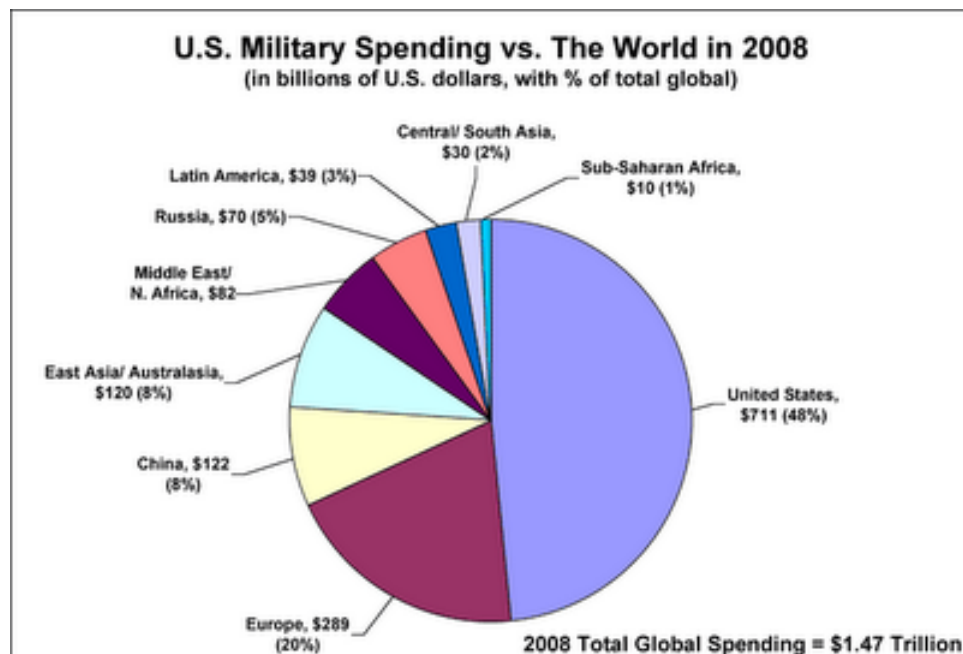
That's when " Post-Traumatic Stress," is born.

That's when you have to live with memories the rest of your life.
That's when you finally realize, that
Lying Is The Most Powerful Weapon In War.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
February 24, 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

**“If We Could Just Get One Of Those
Abrams Tanks We Could Probably
Fund All The Primary Care Clinics
For A Year”**



[Time For Change]

26 February 2009 By Norman Solomon, The San Francisco Chronicle [Excerpts]

Early this winter, the PBS “NewsHour with Jim Lehrer” interviewed the medical director at a community clinic in Northern California. He recalled the sight of military equipment moving along railroad tracks next to his office.

“I’ve joked with my colleagues,” Dr. David Katz said, “if we could just get one of those Abrams tanks we could probably fund all the primary care clinics for a year.”

As medical providers and patients struggle with low funding and high barriers to adequate health care, the nation’s largesse for war continues to soar. Every day, the U.S. Treasury spends close to \$2 billion on the military. Such big numbers are hard to fathom, but it’s worth doing the math.

In Yolo County, for instance, where Dr. Katz watches Abrams tanks roll by his beleaguered clinic, taxpayers have already provided the IRS with \$449.8 million to fund the Iraq war. That’s enough to provide health care to 168,154 children for a full year.

Those figures come from the National Priorities Project, a nonpartisan group with a nifty - and often chilling - online calculator (www.nationalpriorities.org). Type in the name of your locality, and huge military costs suddenly hit close to home.

More than 40 percent of federal tax dollars go to military spending. The outlays buy a mighty war machine while depleting our own communities.

Meanwhile, along the railroad tracks near Katz’s clinic in Yolo County, the Abrams tanks are likely to keep rolling.

Each one has a price tag of \$4.3 million. And we’re paying for it.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE



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

[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.”]

OCCUPATION HAITI

Mwen Pa Lamez Ca



Supporters of Haiti’s Former President Jean Bertrand Aristide during a demonstration demanding his return from exile in Port-au-Prince, Feb. 28, 2009. Aristide was ousted in Feb. 29, 2004, after a U.S. government-backed military coup that forced him to exile in South Africa. (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

This Is Marvelous. Next Time, Maybe SWAT Teams. Or Special Forces.

[Thanks to SSG N (ret’d) who sent this in. She writes: “I noticed there isn’t any video or photos with this story, no one wants to see the SWAT team in their kid’s school. The kids have to be shuttered (and quiet!!) in their classrooms, because the cops in the halls would scare the crap out of them. Just like in Iraqistan. What do the cops do if they find an “Intruder?”]]

Feb. 27, 2009 TheOmahaChannel

OMAHA, Neb. - Area schools are teaching students how to prepare for the possibility of violence on campus by holding lockdown drills so they'll know what to do.

Students at Dundee Elementary went through one of those drills, announcing a mock emergency and giving people three minutes to secure the building.

Omaha police officers form a response plan and then move in, closing off every entrance, checking every door and walking every hallway.

"Generally, we go ahead and check that the students and staff are secure, out of sight and quiet," said Omaha police Sgt. Mike Hearty. Eventually, school officials give the students an all-clear message.

Principal Kaye Goetzinger said she wants to make sure her students know why they hold the drills.

"If there was ever an intruder in our building or outside, we need to keep our kids safe and secure," said Goetzinger. "If I have to make that announcement over the intercom, (I hope) they aren't questioning, 'Where do I go?' They know immediately." She said she wanted students to know that they are safe any time they're in the building.



CLASS WAR REPORTS



RECEIVED

“What Is Happening In Pakistan And Afghanistan Is Wrong”

From: M
To: GI Special
Sent: February 27, 2009
Subject: Obama, war and Zionism

I was wrong about Obama.

What is happening in Pakistan and Afghanistan is wrong.

My misgivings have been growing steadily and today has capped everything.

First the announcement that the U. S. intends to stay in Iraq for at least another year and then the following support for Zionism.

I also note that in all the publicity, about America's financial problems, no one stands up and says they are due to the excessive cost of fighting illegal wars:

Associated Press Writer -- UNITED NATIONS (AP)

The United States has decided not to participate in a U.N. conference on racism in April unless the final document is changed to drop all references to Israel and its criticism of religion, a senior U.S. official said Friday.

The conference is a follow-up to the contentious 2001 conference in the South African city of Durban which was dominated by clashes over the Middle East and the legacy of slavery. The U.S. and Israel walked out midway through that eight-day meeting over a draft resolution that singled out Israel for criticism and likened Zionism, the movement to establish and maintain a Jewish state, to racism.

Israel and Canada have already announced that they will boycott the upcoming World Conference Against Racism in Geneva from April 20-25, known as Durban II, but President Barack Obama's administration decided to assess the negotiations before making a decision on U.S. participation.

REPLY:

Millions of people hoped for better. Seeing reality, and saying so, requires courage and commitment to the cause. Limitless respect to you. T.

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

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

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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

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

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

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to**

facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice. Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

GI Special www.militaryproject.org

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



GI Special is a near-daily news bulletin for service members
www.militaryproject.org

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.