

GI SPECIAL 7C17:



“What Was Once Guantanamo Is Now Bagram, And What Was Once A Strategy In Iraq Is Now A Strategy In Afghanistan”



03/18/2009 by Peter Sullivan [Iraq Veterans Against The War]

Branch of service: Army National Guard of the United States (ARNG)

Unit: D 1/131 INF, A 2/106 CAV

Rank: SSG

Home: Chicago, Illinois

Served in: Ft. McCoy, WI - Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Germany - Ft. Polk, LA (JRTC)

March 19 is an interesting date, because it represents so many things to so many people. It is as good a date as any to find a reason somewhere for celebration or grief. March 19, like every other date on our calendars, represents weddings and break-ups, promotions and layoffs, deaths and births.

To an unfortunately large number of people, it represents the start of the occupation of Iraq by the United States-led coalition.

It's not about the \$700 billion wasted, that might have been better spent on, among other things, sending our young people through six years of college to earn master's degrees.

It's not about the lives spent in the dubious pursuit of "WMD," "liberation," or "stability" for the people of Iraq or "protection" of the people of America.

Not only does the date represent the U.S. invasion of Iraq, but it also serves as a hash mark for every year since that the U.S. has occupied that country.

The significance of this, and at least the preceding five March 19ths, is time.

The common understanding of time generally involves the past, the present, and the future.

Many of us, come March 19, will choose to focus on the past. We will remember the tragedies. Some will use them as reasons to continue the war, while others cite them as justification for ending the occupation. We will remember the Bush administration, the events at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, the actions of Saddam Hussein, the "surge," Haditha and Blackwater.

The thing about the past, though, is that it no longer exists. It is gone forever. The past will affect us, and we should remember it, but only long enough to be reminded of its lessons.

Others among us will choose to focus on the future. We all want to know where we're going, so we look ahead in an effort to determine the least arduous path to take us there.

The problem with focusing on the future is that, like the past, it doesn't exist. If it does exist, it does so only as a function of what is happening right now. We, individually and collectively, create our future.

Since the past and future are nonexistent, the only moment in time that really exists, and that which we would be best-served to focus on, is right now.

As I reflect on March 19, 2009, I see that right now we are in a moment of transitions. Some of these transitions are taking place over the course of years, while others are happening moment-to-moment. Some impact all of us; others impact just one of us.

In the six years since the first largely significant March 19, what was once first grade is now middle school.

What was once a bachelor pad is now a single-family home. What was once military life is now civilian life. What was once Republican is now Democrat. What was once Election Day is now the first 100 days.

What was once Guantanamo is now Bagram, and what was once a strategy in Iraq is now a strategy in Afghanistan.

As we consider these transitions and whether they represent a future we're interested in seeing, we should also be thinking about this moment of right now, because the future is right now.

Let's create our own transition. Let's not allow hope to transition back to disappointment, worry, or fear. If we are to stop such a reverse transition, we must stand up, we must engage, and we must take action.

As the March 19 of right now passes into oblivion, and we move on toward the March 19 of 2010, we have a choice. We can choose to spend the everlasting moment of right now, the only moment in time that does or has ever existed, we can choose to spend this moment hoping or helping.

It's March 19, and it's about time.



Peter Sullivan

MORE:

**“Obama’s Plan Will Result In More
Casualties And Suffering For U.S.
Troops, Their Families And Iraqis”
OUR TROOPS AND IRAQIS ARE
STILL DYING**

**“For Our Troops On The Ground, Their
Families And The Iraqi People, The
Nightmare Continues”**

[The absence of the word “Afghanistan” from this statement is not an error in copying. It does not appear. Not once. Anywhere. T]

3.19.09 Iraq Veterans Against The War E- Newsletter

An Open Letter to the Peace/Anti-War Movement from Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, and Veterans For Peace [Excerpts]

After six years of war and the historic election of a new President, we as veterans, military and Gold Star families felt an urgent need to reach out to the larger peace/anti-war movements to make our position on Iraq clear during this time of political and economic uncertainty.

Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out and Veterans For Peace continue to stand together in our demand to Bring the Troops Home Now!

We ask all those who have stood with us in the past to stay faithful to the cause.

President Obama has announced a plan to gradually reduce troop levels in Iraq.

Many in the peace/anti-war movements are breathing a sigh of relief, and suggesting that it is time for us to scale back our efforts to bring an end to the occupation of Iraq.

But for our troops on the ground, their families and the Iraqi people, the nightmare continues.

They need all of us to stay in the struggle. IVAW, MFSO and VFP have been long united in our call for an immediate and complete end to the occupation of Iraq and will not shift our stance under any circumstances.

President Obama's plan will result in more casualties and suffering for U.S. troops, their families and Iraqis.

To the American public facing hard times here at home, two and a half more years of occupation may not sound like that long -- but for our troops and their families it means two and a half more years of fear, pain, and separation in a war and occupation based on lies.

Hundreds of the troops deployed in the next two and a half years will not come home alive. Many more will return forever scarred by deep wounds to their bodies, minds, and spirits.

Well over a million Iraqis have died as a result of this war -- many more will be killed as the occupation continues.

We cannot afford the cost of empire.

Today we are in the midst of the worst economic crisis most of us have seen in our lifetimes.

Yet our government continues to allow the occupation to drain \$10 billion a month from our nation's coffers.

Meanwhile, veterans and military families struggle to put food on the table and get decent housing and adequate medical care. Women and men who risked their lives for this country are often forced to fight tooth and nail to get health care from an underfunded and overburdened Veterans Administration. Hundreds of thousands of veterans are homeless.

Living under occupation the people of Iraq are held back from taking control of their own lives to determine their destiny.

IVAW, MFSO and VFP will continue to keep pressure on Congress and the President to bring all our troops home from Iraq NOW, ensure that veterans receive the care they need and deserve, and that the U.S. provides resources to rebuild a country we destroyed.

But we cannot do that alone.

We need your help to reach out to the vast majority of the American people who are completely isolated from the realities of this war.

Please don't abandon this struggle or shift your position before the occupation is over and our veterans and the Iraqi people are on the path to healing.

MORE:

“Iraq Veterans Against The War Calls For The Immediate And Unconditional Withdrawal Of All Occupying Forces In Afghanistan”

“The Afghanistan War Dehumanizes The Afghan People And Denies Them Their Right To Self-Determination”



Feb 5 2009 IVAW Website: IVAW.org

Whereas, Iraq Veterans Against the War is an organization that has opened its membership to veterans of the war in Afghanistan;

Whereas, the war in Afghanistan is continuing into its seventh year with rising casualties among the Afghan people, and with U.S. and Coalition forces facing their deadliest year since the invasion;

Whereas a primary motivation for the prolonged occupation of Afghanistan is competition between the U.S., Russia and China for control of oil and natural gas resources in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea;

Whereas, the military occupation is creating tension and resentment among the Afghan people, to include Afghan women, many of whom are calling for the removal of all foreign occupying troops;

Whereas, the Afghanistan war dehumanizes the Afghan people and denies them their right to self-determination;

Whereas, our military is being exhausted by involuntary extensions, and activations of the Reserve, National Guard and Individual Ready Reserve, and by repeated deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan;

Whereas, service members are facing serious health consequences due to our government's negligence in Iraq and Afghanistan and mismanagement of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas, there is no battlefield solution to terrorism, and any escalation of the war in Afghanistan will only serve to exacerbate the plight of the Afghan people, destabilize the region, and further the breakdown of our military;

Therefore, be it resolved that Iraq Veterans Against the War calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all occupying forces in Afghanistan and reparations for the Afghan people, and supports all troops and veterans working towards those ends.

MORE:

Obama's War

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: February 08, 2009
Subject: Obama's War

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

Obama's War

**The heart of darkness
goes drones
away from the killing
on a computer screen
eye teeth upon key pads
digital DEATH all capital
letters and the password
is called KILL so war**

tortures the people below
like McCain dropping
the bombs on Vietnam
no observation no remorse
no for christ sake
I killed children old men
families that are gone
with the click of a button
like a trigger no what
have I done steering
the unmanned drones
not one of us gets killed
that way no Special Ops
no Navy Seals dead just
Soldiers without fancy
names wearing caps
stateside like the
Green Berets
as a woman who has
lost all of her family
is rigged up and blows
up and kills two Army
Soldiers four policemen
are wounded she has
fought back the only way
she knows how by
sacrificing her own life
as the war switches over
to Afghanistan Pakistan
in an air war
except for the grunts.

MORE:

**A World Class Gathering Of
Blood-Sucking Parasites
Scheduled For Washington DC:
April 1-2 Meeting Of War
Profiteers, Pentagon Procurement**

**Officials, And Iraq Government
Thieves Will Focus On
“Contracting And Subcontracting
Opportunities”
“Hundreds Of Companies Expected
To Attend The Two-Day Event”
“Scheduled One-To-One Meetings With
Iraqi Officials And Panel Presentations
Will Provide You Insights And Analysis”**



IADS confirmed speakers ready for an exciting meeting

[Here's some insight: Shrink rapped bundles of \$100 bills preferred, but certified checks will be accepted. On request, checks can be made payable to distant relatives, to avoid embarrassment. If you need assistance in opening a bank account in a third country, please do not hesitate to ask. T]

March 13 & March 20, 2009 Iraq Aviation, Security and Defense

IADS officials confirmed today that General Anwer Ahmed to deliver a keynote address during the April 1-2 event at the Ritz Carlton in McLean, Virginia. The Iraqi Air Force Commander will be also be available for the one-to-one meetings through the 2-day conference.

IADS officials confirmed today that Shirwan Al-Waili, Minister of State for National Security, Akram Hakim, Minister of State for National Dialogue and Burhan Sofi, KRG Minister of Transport to speak at the 3rd IADS to be held April 1-2 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in McLean, VA just outside Washington, DC area.

In addition to featuring speakers from Iraqi Air Force, Iraqi Army, Iraqi Navy and Security Forces, the 3rd Iraq Aviation & Defense Summit will also be featuring addresses from key experts who have served as advisors in the Multi-National Security Transition Command (MNSTC-I), and who were responsible for developing, organizing, training, equipping, and sustaining the Iraqi Security Ministries namely the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior and their associated Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), i.e. the military of Iraq and the Iraqi Police.

IADS confirmed speakers include:

*** Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, Commanding General for Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq and NATO-Iraq.**

IADS confirmed speakers include:

- * Saad Al Muttalibi, Political Advisor, National Security Council
- * Lt. Gen. Taleb Al-Kenani, Director General, Iraq Counter Terrorism Bureau
- * Lt. Gen. Abdullah Khames, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Iraqi Joint HQ
- * Col. Timothy Strawther, Director, 19th Air Force Operations, Iraq
- * Major General Jamal Baker, Commanding General, Kirkuk Provincial HQ
- * Abdulameer Alsaad, Airport Director, Basrah International Airport
- * General Farook Al Arajy, Director-Office of the Commander-in-Chief, Security Adviser to the Prime Minister
- * Brigadier General Shahab Ali, Commander, Iraqi Air Bases, Security Surveillances

The 3rd annual IADS 2009 will welcome tens of experts and cover a wide range of subjects.

Agenda topics include giving first-hand insight on the following important organizations:

- * Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT), which organizes, trains, and equips the Iraqi Army.
- * Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT), which organizes, trains, and equips the Iraqi Police.
- * Coalition Army Advisory Training Team (CAATT) responsible for building the Iraqi Army.

- * Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT) responsible for building the Iraqi Air Force.
- * Maritime Strategic Transition Team (MaSTT) responsible for supporting the Iraqi Navy, Marines and Coast Guard.
- * Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) building the various Iraqi police agencies.
- * Intelligence Transition Team (ITT) responsible for building the military and police information organizations.
- * Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism Task Force (INCTF) assisting Iraqi major operations.
- * Security Assistance Office (SAO) assisting in the acquisition of equipment and overseas training.
- * Joint Headquarters Assistance Team (JHQ-AT) responsible for advising the Iraqi Joint Headquarters.
- * Ministry of Defense Transition Team (MOD-TT) responsible for advising the MOD staff.
- * Ministry of Interior Transition Team (MOI-TT) responsible for advising the MOI staff.

With hundreds of companies expected to attend the two-day event, expanded agenda will cover a range of topics related to the Iraqi aviation, security and defense challenges.

Event organizers hopes that this will give greater context to other parts of the conference program which will focus on security issues, contracting and subcontracting opportunities, funding, project management, international cooperation, and cultural training.

One-to-One Meetings:

Scheduled one-to-one meetings with Iraqi officials and panel presentations will provide you insights and analysis of the current challenges facing Iraq Aviation, Security and Defense.

Scheduled meetings are on First-come, first-served basis.

The Iraq Aviation and Defense Summit and Expo (IADS), now on its third year, is the world's largest and most respected event focused on Iraq's aviation, security and defense challenges and opportunities.

IADS is the only event where you hear from those who are responsible for shaping the future of aviation, security and military requirements in Iraq.

For three consecutive years, IADS has featured Iraqi ranking military officers, policy makers and government decision makers.

Not Registered Yet?

You may register in any of the following ways:

Call us at 202-536-5000.

Or download the PDF registration form:

http://www.new-fields.com/iraq_aviation_and_defense_summit/registration.pdf

[Conference fee only \$2895.]

[Can't have the wrong sort of people show up. T]



IRAQ WAR REPORTS

“Despite Repeated Operations In Mosul, It Has Remained Under The Influence Of Insurgents And Rebels” “We Are Not Sure What Will Happen After June 30. That Is For Senior Officials To Decide”

March 20 Arab Times

Several thousand followers of radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr called for an end to US occupation of Iraq after prayers in the capital on Friday, the sixth anniversary of the invasion. “We reject occupation,” the faithful chanted, fists raised, in Sadr City, an impoverished district of northeast Baghdad named after Sadr’s father.

Slogans such as “Occupiers out ... non-believers out,” echoed over the crossroads where Friday prayers are held to accommodate the large turnout. A US flag was set ablaze and stamped on as the prayers ended. “We are expressing our rejection of injustice and shouting ‘occupier out,’” Sheikh Haidar al-Jaberi, a member of Sadr’s politburo, told the gathering. He called for a major demonstration on April 9, the anniversary of the fall of the Sunni regime of president Saddam Hussein.

“March 20 should be a festival, but after what the Americans have done, it’s a sad day,” Jaberi said. “They never kept their promises,” said Qassem Zamel, who came to pray.

“The Americans came to liberate us from a dictator but they have destroyed the country,” said Zamel, who is in his 60s. He said his three sons were arrested in March 2003 and were still in jail, although he did not know why.

A violent insurgency in Iraq’s second city has been weakened but not defeated, posing key questions for Washington as US troops prepare to withdraw soon, an American commander told AFP Friday.

A military pact signed last year between Baghdad and Washington stipulates that American soldiers pull out of Iraqi cities by June 30, a deadline that gives the chief US commander in northern Nineveh province and its capital Mosul little time to finish off the rebels.

“I tell my guys that tomorrow we have one less day than today,” Colonel Gary Volesky told AFP at his quarters in Mosul. “We can’t waste a single day.”

“We are not sure what will happen after June 30. That is for senior officials to decide,” said Volesky, Commander of the 3rd Brigade 1st Cavalry Division, who is in charge of 5,000 troops in northern Iraq.

But despite repeated operations in Mosul, it has remained under the influence of insurgents and rebels partly due to a complex Kurd, Sunni and Christian mix, further complicated by tribal loyalties.

“We have been killing and capturing insurgents in Mosul for five years,” said Volesky. “The insurgents have the ability to regenerate and we can disrupt them, but people have to decide they are not going to support them.”

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT THE PACK OF TRAITORS THAT RUN THE GOVERNMENT IN D.C. WANT YOU THERE TO DEFEND THEIR IMPERIAL DREAMS:
That is not a good enough reason.**



A U.S. soldier near the footwear of a victim after a bomb attack in Baghdad's Sadr City February 15, 2009. REUTERS/Mohammed Ameen

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“In Afghanistan, If You Won Control Of A Provincial Capital, You’ve Really Done Nothing At All”

“Nothing Short Of Troops In Every Village, Which Would Add Up To Hundreds Of Thousands, Could Get Around This”

March 20, 2009 Anand Gopal, the Kabul correspondent for the Monitor, interviewed by David Whitehouse; Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Whitehouse: WHAT WILL the effect of deploying more U.S. troops be on the military situation, and on the attempt to win Afghan support for the war?

Gopal: INJECTING MORE troops will mean two things: more troop casualties and more civilian casualties. Most of the civilian casualties come from aerial strikes, and there is a common misconception that more boots on the ground will mean less reliance on airpower.

In reality, it will most likely be just the opposite.

That is because most of these aerial strikes are associated with so-called “close contact” situations: Troops are engaged in direct combat or have just done so, and they call in air raids. These raids provide a supporting function to the troops on the ground. So more troops on the ground will most likely mean more air raids to support them.

In addition, more troops will mean more casualty-inducing house raids.

These are the reasons why we have seen civilian casualties skyrocket over the last few years. It’s not that the Americans have changed to a more casualty-inducing strategy; it’s merely because there has been a large increase of troops over this period.

The brunt of the fighting has been in the Pashtun areas of the south and east.

In the north, which is dominated by non-Pashtun ethnic minorities, there is much more support for the troops. Again, this is for the simple reason that the troops won’t actually be deployed to these areas, but rather to the volatile south.

In addition, these ethnic groups view the Western forces as a buffer to the Pashtuns and the Taliban.

AFGHAN CITIES have grown significantly during 30 years of war, so that 30 percent of Afghanistan's 27 million people now live in urban centers. What is the impact of this on U.S. strategy?

WHILE THE last few years have certainly seen migration to the cities--Kabul, for example, saw a population boom after the fall of the Taliban--Afghanistan still ranks only 181 out of 199 countries in terms of the percentage of the population living in urban areas. By comparison, Iraq ranks 68th.

Afghan cities are extremely small by modern standards--only Kabul has more than 500,000 people.

Most of the urban centers, especially in the Pashtun areas of the south, are remarkably tiny, and resemble small villages of other countries. The capital of Logar province, for example, consists of a crossroads with a few shops.

In Wardak province, where 1,500 new American troops recently landed, only 0.5 percent of the population lives in an urban area.

The American troops and Afghan government control the provincial capital, which is the largest city in the province and has a population of about 3,000.

The vast swathes of countryside, however, are either not under the control of anyone, or are under the control of the Taliban. A similar situation persists in most other Pashtun provinces. The point is that this is a fundamentally rural society, one that is radically different than Iraq.

If you could somehow win control of a provincial capital like Falluja or Basra, you'd be able to exert control on the surrounding countryside, since the population's center of gravity is in the cities.

But in Afghanistan, if you won control of a provincial capital, you've really done nothing at all.

This is the problem the Afghan government and the Americans are facing, and nothing short of troops in every village, which would add up to hundreds of thousands, could get around this.

And hundreds of thousands of troops--in every six-house or eight-house village--would most likely not be acceptable to the villagers, for reasons already mentioned.

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

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

Happy Afghans Preparing To Welcome U.S. Troops



Using plastic replicas for practice in proper weapons handling, happy Afghans in Kabul get ready to welcome the arrival of more U.S. occupation troops March 21, 2009. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

SEVEN YEARS AND BILLIONS OF \$ LATER, HIGHLY MOTIVATED U.S. TRAINED AFGHAN SOLDIERS IN ACTION FOR THE EMPIRE



Afghan soldiers during a mission in the Taliban stronghold of Zhari district in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan March 19, 2009. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

TROOP NEWS

BUT OVERALL, THE PENTAGON SAYS THAT MORE SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTS ARE JUST WHAT IT WANTS TO SEE



03/18/2009 by Jen Hogg [Iraq Veterans Against The War]

Branch of service: Army National Guard of the United States (ARNG)

Unit: 152nd, 42 Inf Div

Rank: E-5

Home: New York, New York

Served in: Buffalo, NY, Initial 9/11 activation

I know the title sounds like a possible misquote but, taken direct from the Army Times, the reality of how the military is mishandling sexual assault in its ranks couldn't be clearer.

[http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/03/military_sexual_assualt_statistics...]

Nor could the detrimental effect this misconduct has on the military and its members be any clearer or the need to address, prevent and treat it be any more timely.

The official DoD SAPRO FY2008 (SAPRO is the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, <http://www.sapr.mil/>) press release does not fare much better.

Statistics are used to misrepresent the situation.

The press release, which can be seen below, uses selective reporting to make it seem as though 38% of reported cases go to court martial (how many are convicted is a statistic that is not tallied by the DoD, oddly enough).

Taken directly from the press release:

“In fiscal 2008, the department received a total of 2,908 reports of sexual assault involving service members, representing an eight percent increase from fiscal 2007. There were 753 restricted reports filed in fiscal 2008. The restricted reporting option allows a military member to obtain care confidentially without initiating an investigation. This year 110 victims converted their report from restricted to unrestricted.

“The report also showed that court-martial actions substantially increased from 30 percent in fiscal 2007 to 38 percent in fiscal 2008, meaning that military commanders referred eight percent more cases to trial.”

If one takes the time to read the numbers, or first find them in the 83 pages of the full report, the number of court martials is 317.

I don't believe the military has mathematicians that are unable to calculate percentages, but 317 is NOT 38% of 2908.

It actually is 38% of the 832 cases that were found to be substantiated.

A similar proportion, 247, received non judicial punishment even though most civilians would certainly feel this was an inappropriate form of punishment.

The military mindset will often say this is so the commander can take appropriate action but in the civilian world an outside body, with no conflict of interest, decides how one is punished.

This is for a reason.

About 1079 cases were unsubstantiated, a large portion of the 1339 cases that were not fully investigated.

Anyone who has listened to the stories of sexually assaulted service members is fully aware of the pressures involved in reporting assault, especially when ones report is publicized in their unit, all too often a source of much secondary harassment, an situation that leads to both underreporting as well as withdrawal of reports.

There is also a strange silence on the report from many veterans service organizations, failing once again to see the importance of understanding, treating and preventing sexual assault for the health and well being of service members and veterans.

I often joke with other female veterans that we are presented with the pap smear as what we need rather than real understanding and justice, but this silence makes the joke not so funny.

Please take the time to read the whole report and see for yourself:

http://www.sapr.mil/contents/ResourcesReports/AnnualReports/DoD_FY08_Ann...

Also, please email any veterans organization that has not covered this issue and request that they live up to their name of VETERANS organization, and not leave any vets behind.



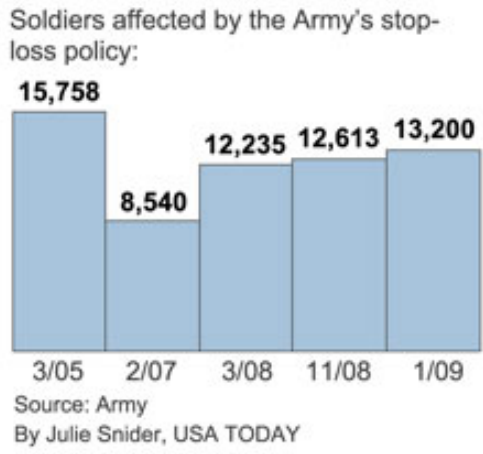
Jen Hogg

Brent Adams, KIA Ramadi



Hayley Andrews of Seattle, Wash., right, and Elliot Fehr, of Brooklyn, Calif., left, help Bill Adams, center, of Lancaster, Pa., carry a mock coffin for his son, Army Sgt.1st Class Brent Adams, killed in Ramadi, Iraq., during a march to the Pentagon, condemning the sixth anniversary of the war in Iraq war, March 21, 2009, in Washington. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

No More Stop-Loss? Heard That One Before: “This Could Be The Same As ‘We Will Bring Our Soldiers Home In The Future’ Rhetoric Lies; “Sounds Like A Buncha Political PR Crap To Me”



[Thanks to Vietnam Veteran Dennis Serdel and SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

[Dennis Serdel writes: This could be the same as “We will bring our Soldiers home in the FUTURE” rhetoric Lies.

[SSG N (ret'd) writes: Does this mean soldiers can't be stop lossed and sent, but once in country, they won't get to leave, just be S-L'd until regular rotation stateside? Sounds like a buncha political PR crap to me.

March 19, 2009 by Ann Scott Tyson, the Washington Post & By THOM SHANKER, New York Times & By Tom Vanden Brook and Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Wednesday that, over two years, he would **all but** eliminate an unpopular practice that has prevented tens of thousands of active-duty soldiers and reservists from leaving military service on time if they were scheduled to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan.

More than two years ago, Gates issued a directive to “minimize the use of stop loss.” Instead, the number rose because of the need for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

After Gates’ January 2007 order to minimize stop loss, that number dropped to a low of 8,540 in May 2007.

Since then, the number of affected soldiers has risen.

The policy has been intensely unpopular with troops and their families, some of whom have denounced it as a back-door draft.

More than 13,000 soldiers remain unable to exit the military under the policy, known as stop-loss, which was put in effect after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and then expanded in 2004 as the Army struggled to sustain two large war efforts.

Currently, the Army has 1,452 Reserve soldiers, 4,458 National Guard troops and 7,000 active-duty soldiers on stop-loss.

Effective this month, the Army will also pay soldiers who are under stop-loss an extra \$500 per month, and those payments will be retroactive to October, when they were authorized by Congress, Gates said.

Mr. Gates announced a timetable that would cut in half by June 2010 the number of troops affected by stop-loss, with the practice **all but** eliminated by March 2011.

Still, Gates said that changes “do carry some risk,” and that the Army retains the authority to use stop-loss under “extraordinary” circumstances.

Mr. Gates cautioned that “scores,” but not thousands, of soldiers might continue to be affected by the policy after March 2011 if they had skills that were particularly important to the war effort.

But he said that should happen only in an “emergency situation.

Such decisions would be made by the secretary of the Army, he said.

Such a renewed use of stop-loss might stem from a sudden demand to deploy a large Army force, said Lt. Gen. Michael Rochelle, the Army’s deputy chief of staff for personnel.

“Stop-loss has been a vital tool,” Rochelle said.

Stop loss can keep a soldier in the service if his or her unit deploys within 90 days of the end of his or her commitment.

<p>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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Under Seattle's Racist Rat
Police Chief Picked By Obama
For National Drug Czar:
Seattle Cop Scum And Reporters
Smear Four Black Kids As Gang
Members:
After "News Story" That Used Their
Photo On Front Page Exposed As A
Fraud, Police Chief Punishes Nobody
At All:**

“How Can They Come To The Conclusion That My Son Is A Gang Member? I Work Hard To Keep My Son Out Of Gangs”

Seattle Post-Intelligencer



MICROSOFT
Software helps firms track their eco-impact
MONDAY
FEBRUARY 9, 2009
BUSINESS B6

WINNING COMBO
5 Grammys for Krauss, Plant



BASKETBALL
Huskies finally win at Stanford
SPORTS B1

Interrupting a violent cycle

Officers patrol front lines of Seattle's deadly gang problem



Seattle Police Officer Adley Shepherd approaches to question a man while on patrol in the South End on Saturday.

BY CASEY MCNERTHNEY

The bus stop on Rainier Avenue South isn't well lit, and three of the teens loitering there are suspected members of a violent South Seattle gang. The brother of a girl with them was killed in a recent gang-related shooting at Westfield Southerner Mall.

Officers Adley Shepherd and Jake Brisley see that some of the teens are wearing 74 Hoover Criminals attire, but don't know if any are armed.

If handled wrong, the situation could have turned deadly in seconds.

During their shift that started at 7 p.m. Saturday and ended at 4 a.m. Sunday, the two officers contacted more than two dozen suspected gang members, most with long criminal histories, and found one teen carrying a pellet gun. The South Precinct officers also caught a wanted felon linked to burglaries, and another felon with eight cell phones and money folded like a drug dealer's wallet.

Both officers agreed they had a slow night.

Shepherd and Brisley have pat themselves on the front lines of Seattle's gang problem and they see firsthand a street culture that results in a deadly cycle of violence. Top department officials have praised them. Suspected gang members, such as the ones at the bus stop, know their names, too.

"I told you we don't play that here,"



Shepherd, right, and fellow Officer Jake Brisley look over a confiscated pellet gun after stopping and talking with a young man Saturday night.

"I told you we don't play that here,"

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Food safety net shown to be badly frayed

Kellogg relied on peanut plant for product testing

BY MICHAEL MOSS

The New York Times

BLAKELEY, Ga. — Raw peanuts were stored next to the finished peanut butter. The roaster was not calibrated to kill deadly germs. Dispirited workers on minimum wage, supplied by temp agencies, donated their uniforms at home, potentially dragging contaminants into the plant, which also had rodents.

Even the roof of the Peanut Corp. of America plant here in rural southwest Georgia was an obvious risk, given that salmonella thrives in water and the facility should have been kept bone-dry.

"It looked where it rained," said Frank Harbrick, 40, an assistant manager who described life inside the plant. "Children's crews would come in to work on it, but it would still leak."

Conditions at the plant, more than 1955 than 2009, would have been enough to cause alarm in an industry where sanitation can be a matter of life and death, food experts said. But they were only one element in the salmonella outbreak and subsequent food safety snafu that started here and swept through the country — claiming eight lives, sickening an estimated 19,000 people in 43 states and spurring an array of recalls, including TV dinners, much less labeled organic and ready-made meals for disaster relief.

An examination of the Blakeley case reveals a badly frayed food safety net, from state and federal inspectors who do not require the peanut industry to inform the public — or even the government — of salmonella contamination in its plants; to industry giants like Kellogg, which used processed peanuts in a variety of products but relied on the peanut factory to perform safety testing and divulge any problems, according to interviews and government records. At the same time, processed peanuts have been finding their way into more and more foods as a low-cost yet tasty additive, making tainted products harder to track.

Problems emerged in southwest Georgia's peanut country in 2004, when a whistleblower reported that the food product giant ConAgra Foods found salmonella in peanut butter at its plant in Sylvester, Ga., 75 miles from Blakeley. But when plant offi-

"Our whole family was angry. This could have been avoided."

— Jeff Abner of Sango, Miss., whose 22-year-old son, Shiley Mae, died in December after eating tainted peanut butter

SEATTLEPI.COM: See more photos from the overnight shift on our Web site.

SEE PEANUT.A4

February 18, 2009 by Jonah Spangenthal-Lee, Thestranger.com/seattle [Excerpts]

The Seattle chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is accusing the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer of racial profiling after two SPD officers, accompanied by P-I reporter Casey McNerthney, stopped and frisked a group of four black teenagers earlier this month.

The NAACP says the officers targeted the group to give the P-I a good story and a photo opportunity.

The article, which ran on the front page of the P-I on February 9, featured two Seattle officers, Adley Shepherd and Jake Briskey, who are known for their work with gangs in the South End. Shepherd is black; Briskey is white.

“Shepherd and Briskey have put themselves on the front lines of Seattle’s gang problem, and they see firsthand a street culture that results in a deadly cycle of violence,” McNerthney wrote.

“(The pair) said repeat contacts give them a sixth sense about behaviors and that mutual respect really does work with gang members.”

According to statements by two of the boys who were stopped by Briskey and Shepherd, the group of teens had just left a screening of Taken at the Columbia City Cinema at around 9:30 p.m. and were waiting for a ride from one boy’s grandfather.

As the group stood outside the theater, according to a statement written by one of the boys, 13, a black police cruiser pulled out of a nearby alley. Officer Shepherd rolled down his window and asked the group where they were from.

According to the boys’ written statements, the group told Shepherd they were from the Central District. “You must be in a gang because you’re out so late,” the 13-year-old’s statement says Shepherd shot back.

Then, according to the boy, Shepherd asked one of the boys why he was “wearing so much gray,” implying he was wearing gang colors.

According to the 13-year-old’s statement, Shepherd also asked one of the boys if he had a street name. When the boy said no, the statement says, Shepherd laughed and asked him, “What, you don’t have any street cred?”

Officer Shepherd brought two of the boys back to the car, both statements say, and patted them down while a P-I photographer snapped photos.

One of the other teens, a 16-year-old, told The Stranger that Officer Shepherd walked around the car “making superhero-looking poses.”

The 13-year-old’s statement also says, “It seemed as though it was a photo shoot, because Officer Shepherd was posing for the camera.” None of the boys was arrested.

According to the P-I article, the officers told McNerthney it was “a slow night.”

“They were trying to liven up an article,” says Yolanda Bell, the mother of the 16-year-old boy targeted by Shepherd and Briskey.

“This officer picked four of the squarest kids.” **[So much for Shepherd’s boast about having a “sixth sense” for knowing gang members. Most likely, he can’t even**

sense how cruel and stupid he is, how criminal his behavior is, or the rancid odor of the shit coming out of his mouth from the immense repository of it located where most people have their brains.]

Bell says when her son came home from the movie and told her he'd been the victim of police harassment, "I laughed and said 'go to bed.' I kind of made an excuse for the officers. It's tough times out there."

On Monday, however, Bell saw the article, which included a photo of her son, and hit the roof.

"How can they come to the conclusion that my son is a gang member? I work hard to keep my son out of gangs," she says. "They were profiling my son."

Bell says she contacted the P-I about getting her son's photo removed from the website but says an editor at the paper hung up on her.

Bell then contacted the NAACP for help.

In September, Seattle NAACP president James Bible held a press conference to draw attention to complaints of racial profiling by SPD officers.

This incident, Bible says, is just another example.

P-I managing editor David McCumber did not return an e-mail seeking comment.

McNerthney, the article's author, says he hasn't heard from the families or the NAACP about the story: "One of the first messages I did get was from Officer Shepherd, who liked the article and said it was fair.

[Right. Never mind the kids. Pus-bag Shepherd is so stupid he thinks he gets a career boost for the PR. Wait till he gets hit with the defamation suit and all the other pieces of the legal shitstorm heading his way. Now that everybody knows the whole thing was nothing but a fraud, and the kids were unlawfully stopped without probable cause and interrogated for a faked news story, bye-bye Shepherd. Naturally a coward cop like Shepherd, real brave tormenting kids, will start whining about how all his troubles aren't "fair." T]

MORE:

Under Seattle's Racist Rat Police Chief Picked By Obama For National Drug Czar

“African Americans In Seattle Are Arrested For The Crime Of Obstructing An Officer Eight Times As Often As Whites”

“The Overall Number Of Drug Cases In The City Has Dropped--But, Disturbingly, Only For White People”

March 16, 2009 Leela Yellesetty, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

The same newspaper [the Seattle Post-Intelligencer] that glamorized police profiling published an investigation just last year, which found that the Seattle Police Department takes disciplinary action only in about 1 percent of cases where a complaint of unnecessary force is made.

Another article in the same series reported that African Americans in Seattle are arrested for the crime of obstructing an officer eight times as often as whites.

Despite this history, President Barack Obama's choice of Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske as “drug czar” at the Office of National Drug Control Policy is being touted as a move toward reform.

It is true that Seattle made some positive steps in this direction. In 2003, Seattle voters approved an initiative directing law enforcement to treat personal marijuana possession as its lowest priority.

Since then, the overall number of drug cases in the city has dropped--but, disturbingly, only for white people.

According to a report by the Marijuana Policy Review Panel, between 2003 and 2006 the portion of African American men among marijuana suspects grew from 52 percent to 57 percent--this in a city that is only 8 percent Black.

Another example of why Seattle is hardly charting a different course in the “war on drugs” is the city's plan to construct a new municipal jail, which current figures suggest will be filled primarily with people arrested for drug-related charges.

At the same time, Washington state is considering cutting half of all beds in drug treatment facilities.

Thankfully, activists in Seattle are uniting to oppose construction of the new jail. Seattle can and should set an example for a more humane law enforcement policy. But Kerlikowske's police force clearly does not fit the bill.

Get The Message?



Philippine citizens march on the U.S. embassy in Manila March 21, 2009 to mark the sixth anniversary of the United States invasion of Iraq and to demand the abrogation of the controversial Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) which allows the presence of the U.S. forces in the Philippines and gives them certain special privileges when it comes to criminal prosecution. REUTERS/Romeo Ranoco



THE AMERICAN DREAM

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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*

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

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

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