

GI SPECIAL 7D12:



March 21 Washington, DC Photo by Bill Perry via Ward Reilly, Veterans for Peace

**“In Resistance We Are
United”**

**“The Hated Invaders Must
Leave Our Country. The
Imperial Designs Will Fail No
Matter What”**

“Our Streets And Alleyways Are Not Made To Throw Flowers At Invaders And War Criminals” “Basra’s Occupiers Depart Defeated” “Good Riddance”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Project, who sent this in.]

18 April 2009 By Hassan Juma’a, The Guardian.

Hassan Juma’a is president of the Iraqi Oil Workers Federation, based in Basra

Six years after US and British tanks rolled into Basra, the scene is one of devastation, with the blood of the innocent spread across the city and Iraq’s tortured land.

Not even schools and hospitals were spared.

On a pretext of lies, history’s greatest empire launched the 2003 war to occupy Mesopotamia, inflicting untold damage on the cradle of civilisation.

It was an aggression instigated by a small minority of warmongers.

It is my firm conviction that the chaotic conditions endured today were caused by the occupying powers, who pulverised the innocent with half-ton bombs, depleted uranium and white phosphorus. The US-led intervention extended to the political process, saddling Iraq with divisive laws enacted by the appointed ruler Paul Bremer.

Despite propaganda to the contrary, the American and British forces have done nothing positive.

Aside from bombing the people, they have enabled the looting of Iraqi resources, the theft of people’s possessions under the guise of search operations, the entrenchment of corruption, the destruction of museums and libraries, and the re-enactment of Saddam’s anti trade union decrees.

That is why Basrawis and all Iraqis will regard the departure in defeat of the invaders as their greatest festival.

They will celebrate in the knowledge that their willpower is stronger than the mightiest military forces on earth, and that our streets and alleyways are not made to throw flowers at invaders and war criminals.

Amid the pain and suffering, there is also the indelible memory of the brave souls who resisted the aggressors at Um Qasr, the southern gate of Basra and Iraq.

Despite being very lightly armed they challenged overwhelming firepower for seven days.

They were the new martyrs of a city that had legions of its sons and daughters martyred during Saddam's tyranny.

Their resistance was the unmistakable signal that the Iraqi people would not lie down and accept occupation.

They reminded the "shock and awe" aggressors that Iraq was not the cakewalk they dreamed of.

It was only natural for the Iraqi people, who had long fought against Saddam's oppression, to echo the Basrawis' stand - a stand that forced British forces to abandon Basra city and take cover in their bases.

The war on Iraq has been lost, because it tried the impossible: to control and stifle a people's longing for liberty.

It has utterly failed - despite its firepower and nurturing of terrorism - to sow division and destroy Iraq's unity. The occupation's divisive plans were thwarted by deeper roots of unity.

I am convinced that expelling the occupiers is the desire of the people - whatever their religion, sect or ethnicity.

Let the US and its allies be in no doubt that Iraqis will reject injustice and hold accountable those who smashed their country and robbed it of its resources.

The imperial designs will fail no matter what.

The hated invaders must leave our country. We are fully capable of its reconstruction and development.

History will not look kindly at the British government for supporting the US war on Iraq, and yet the US will treat its junior ally with contempt - the master will no doubt seek to establish sole control of Iraq and its resources.

I call on supporters of freedom across the world to stand by the Iraqi people.

And to the British anti-war movement I say thank you, but my final message to the British warmongers is: "good riddance".

The curse of your Iraqi victims will always be with you, for you killed innocent people and you tortured captives.

Go to the dustbin of history, and never forget heroic Basra and the great struggle of the Iraqi people.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Sadness Comes To San Lorenzo By Puerto Rican Soldier Killed In Iraq



April 9, 2009 Francisco Rodríguez-Burns, First Time [Crappy internet translation.]

A month before the expiration of the contract that it had signed with the Army, the soldier Israel Mejías Candelaria, age 28, received the instructions for a second mobilization to Iraq in less than two years. Had a "feeling" about his return, said yesterday as one of his brothers, but did not know the origin of their concern.

Over the weekend, the specialist was killed due to the explosion of a mine, apparently placed by the insurgent forces that maintain an uncompromising war against U.S. troops. His mother was visiting her sister in a military installation in Germany where the biggest of his three sons, the athlete and martial arts enthusiast, lost his life about three months of their mobilization in Iraq.

On behalf of United States, a group of officers are grateful to the mother and the widow sacrifice offered by the infantero, instructor melee.

"We feel he is a hero because he fought for what they believed to the end, only to leave the war itself is misery. There are many mothers who are losing their children and these deaths occur every day.

Both Puerto Rican soldiers, Iraqis and Americans dying in combat, "said the younger brother of Israel, Joshua Candelaria Mejias, 24.

The college student yesterday to various media outlets in the house where he lives with his mother and brother in the neighborhood of San Lorenzo Espino. All the brothers grew up together, sharing their passion for sports and martial arts. "We, the brothers were inseparable. That's why we hurt a lot when he went to war. "

However, the family of the fallen soldier acknowledges that he was always interested in a military career. He studied at the Universidad del Turabo, but abandoned studies enlist in the Army. After six years in the military when, like many other soldiers, they ordered him to return to the scene of conflict.

Relatives still unknown details about his wake and burial, as all decisions need to consult with the widow.

The body of the military arrived on Tuesday at the military base in Delaware, the second time in 18 years that allowed the media to witness the event by U.S. Department of Defense

"He did not return because he had a bad feeling, but I had to do," said Joshua, the designated spokesman for the family.

Iraq Blast Wounds 4 Stryker Soldiers

April 17, 2009 BY BARBARA MILLER, The Patriot-News

Four Stryker brigade soldiers from the 56th Brigade combat team were wounded Sunday when their vehicle was caught in the blast of a roadside bomb during a patrol north of Baghdad.

Lt. Col. Chris Cleaver, Pennsylvania National Guard spokesman, confirmed that Pfc. Mitchell Baldwin of Chambersburg has been transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Baldwin, 19, is a 2007 graduate of Chambersburg Area Senior High School, according to published reports.

The Chambersburg Public Opinion reported that another soldier wounded by the bomb was awaiting transfer to Walter Reed from a medical facility in Germany.

"The good news is everyone survived the attack," Cleaver said, adding that none of the injuries is life-threatening.

All four -- whose names had not been released by the military -- were members of C Troop 2nd of the 104th Cavalry, based in Chambersburg, Cleaver said.

Baldwin, 19, had burns on his face and injuries to his left shoulder and left side and minor injuries to his right arm, said his mother, Kim McCray, the Public Opinion reported.

Cleaver said the only other information that he had about the incident was that the soldiers were on routine patrol south of Camp Taji, 12 miles north of Baghdad along the Tigris River.

The 56th Stryker Brigade combat team mobilized in September and arrived in Iraq in January. It is to return home in September, Cleaver said.

FUTILE EXERCISE: LETHAL LOCATION ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. troops take position on a major street after a gunfight in Baghdad, Iraq, March 29, 2009. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

“We Must Continue To Treat All Iraqi Citizens With The Utmost Dignity And Honor”

Gen. Ray Odierno, U.S. Commanding General, Multi-National Force—Iraq

[Quoted By Robert H. Reid, The Associated Press, Dec 5, 2008]



An Iraqi citizen's body is searched by a foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. before she is allowed to meet her husband, who has been released from a U.S. occupation prison at Camp Bucca in Tarmiyah, 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of Baghdad, Iraq, April 12, 2009. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people.]

How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by Barrack Obama. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "And all the bankers that got rich off the war."]]

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Rome Marine Killed In Afghanistan



April 17, 2009 By Jim Gibbons, News Channel of Syracuse

ROME, N.Y. -- It was clear that Lance Corporal Daniel Geary loved serving his country. He was in the middle of his second term overseas and had planned to go back for a third before he was killed Friday in Afghanistan. His family says it wasn't until after he graduated from Rome Free Academy that he decided to join the military.

"There's a lot of staff members that adored him, said that he was a young, great man. He wanted to better himself by going to the military," said his sister Elise.

Geary loved his family deeply, even helping his parents buy their house in Rome. He also cared for his girlfriend, whom he planned to marry upon his return in May.

"It was a surprise, she didn't know about it at all," Elise said.

Elise described her brother as an outgoing individual who loved having a good time. And one of his favorite activities was hanging out at the bowling alley.

"He used to bowl there all the time. Everybody in there loved him. He bowled his first 300 before going into the service," Elise said.

"His mom and dad are good friends and good customers and we all know him and our hearts are broken for them," said Craig Vogel, owner of King Pin Lanes.

For his family, these are understandably tough times. But they can always find comfort knowing their son died a hero.

"He deserves to go out as the hero that he said he was. He is a hero in everybody's eyes," said Elise.

At this time, funeral arrangements have not been made for Lance Corporal Geary. He is the second serviceman from Rome to be killed overseas during the ongoing conflict.

Marine Killed In Afghanistan



March 26, 2009 By MADDIE HANNA, Monitor staff, Concord Monitor

A Manchester man was killed Sunday while serving with the Marines in southwestern Afghanistan, officials said.

Cpl. Michael Ouellette, 28, was deployed with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. He was killed while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, according to the Department of Defense.

Ouellette, who was on his third deployment since joining the Marines in 2005, graduated from Manchester's Memorial High School in 1999. His mother, Donna Ouellette, lives in Manchester. She said yesterday that the family wanted to grieve in private.

"It's a private tragedy," she said.

Ouellette is the first person from New Hampshire killed in Afghanistan or Iraq this year. Another Marine in the 3rd Battalion, 8th Regiment - Cpl. Anthony Williams, 21, of Oxford, Pa. - was also killed this weekend.

The principal at Memorial High, Arthur Adamakos, said yesterday that Ouellette had gone to culinary school in California after graduating. He became a chef, Adamakos said, but had a hard time finding work.

Ouellette was a "very nice, easygoing guy," Adamakos said. "He got along with almost everybody. . . . He was one of the few kids that would actually come and talk to us and have a conversation with us. Most kids don't."

The flags were at half-staff at Memorial High yesterday. Ouellette is the school's ninth graduate to be killed in combat, Adamakos said. The first eight were killed in Vietnam.

"So it's going to be tough," Adamakos said. "We're going to be mentioning him every year now."

Ouellette joined the Marines in June 2005 and was trained as an infantryman. He deployed twice to Iraq: first from March 2006 to September of that year and then from July 2007 to January 2008.

Both deployments were to Anbar province, said 1st Lt. Philip Klay, a spokesman for the 2nd Marine Division. But he didn't know what Ouellette's role had been.

In Afghanistan, where he deployed in November, Ouellette was involved in conducting counterinsurgency operations and working with Afghan security forces, Klay said.

During his time with the Marines, Ouellette was awarded the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, the Iraq Campaign Medal and the National Defense Silver Medal.

Calling hours for Ouellette will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. Sunday at Lambert Funeral Home in Manchester. He will be buried with full military honors at 10 a.m. Monday at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen, according to the funeral home. Flags in the state will fly at half-staff Monday at Gov. John Lynch's order.

Ouellette's friends and family have created a Facebook group in honor of "a loving son and brother and a lasting friend to many more." They've posted dozens of pictures of Ouellette, some straight-faced, others, a broad smile beaming.

One message to the group is posted on behalf of Ouellette's mother. She wrote to thank the hundreds of people for their sympathy and support.

Her message ends like this: "Take care of each other and love your children, if you have them, and hug them every day."

Norway Officer Killed By IED Near Maymana: “We Ask The Norwegian People To Stop Sending Their Sons And Daughters To Afghanistan” “We Will Just Continue To Kill Them”



Car of the Killed Officer: FOTO: Forsvarets

4/17/2009 The Associated Press & Aftenposten [Norway] [Another lame translation.]

A Norwegian intelligence officer serving with the Nordic nation's force was killed by a car bomb attack in northern Afghanistan on Friday against military column on the road from Mazar-i-Sharif to Meymaneh, the military said.

Norwegian Joint Headquarters spokesman Kjetil Eide said the victim was one of four Norwegians in two vehicles on a mission near the northern Afghan city of Maymana when the bomb went off. None of the others suffered serious injury in the attack at about 0530 GMT on Friday.

The officer was flown to a German field hospital in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif by helicopter but was declared dead there at about 0800 GMT, a news release said.

The Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said to TV 2 News

"Today, at 10 Afghan time we attack a column of foreign forces. There was a 25-year-old bomber named Abdul Basit, from the southern Kandahar province, who sacrificed his life in the attack. He blew a Toyota Corolla near the column of the foreign forces," said Mujahid.

Mujahid said the Taliban soldiers did not know that he attacked the Norwegian forces.

"No, but we consider all foreign forces as a goal. All that is here under the U.S. flag are our enemies."

"We ask the Norwegian people to stop sending their sons and daughters to Afghanistan. We will just continue to kill them. Their blood unnecessarily played here," he said.

Two Foreign Occupation Soldiers Wounded In Balkh; Nationality Not Announced

April 17 (Xinhua)

A car bomb attack in the northern Balkh province wounded two soldiers of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

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

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

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

TROOP NEWS

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



At Dover Air Force Base, Del., the remains of Army Staff Sgt. Gary L. Woods, Jr. of Lebanon Junction, Ky., Army Pvt. Second Class Bryce E. Gautier, of Cypress, Ca., Army Cpl. Jason G. Pautsch, of Davenport, Iowa., Army Sgt. Edward W. Forrest, Jr., of St. Louis, Mo., Army Staff Sgt. Bryan E. Hall, Elk Grove, Ca., on April 12, 2009. The five died April 10, 2009 when their military vehicle was struck by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Mosul, Iraq. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

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

**“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”
-- J.D. Englehart Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**“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.**

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

**We stand in a moment of time between the eternal past and the eternal future, content that, for us, all that was before and all that will be cannot exist for us, and yet we exist because all that was before us gave us our moment in time, and we will share the responsibility for all that will exist in the eternal future.
-- Abraham Lincoln**

**Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth.
-- George Washington**

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**

Behind Bars



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: April 12, 2009
Subject: Behind Bars--It's a dirty job, but someone has to say it!

Behind Bars--It's a dirty job, but someone has to say it!

The Pentagon is the most violent, evil piece of real estate that has ever existed on the face of the earth.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
April 12, 2009
Easter Sunday**

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)

Gangs

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

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: April 16, 2009
Subject: Gangs by Dennis

Gangs

**Ofucka motherfucker
you ain't no Brother
you're just another millionaire
who don't care
maybe it's the White in you
that makes you lie
like ending the Iraq War
so you could get elected
because I'm still in Iraq
with a target on my back
You are the biggest
Uncle Tom I have ever seen
with your Big Bank White friends
who want to keep me here
so they can make more money
Ofucka motherfucker
you ain't no Brother
Man said when I enlisted
I would see no action
have a good job with some money
but he is just like you
cause I'm here in Iraq
with a target on my back
and I don't have no Cadillac
like your ride with the Secret Service
to keep my ass safe
Ofucka motherfucker
you ain't no Brother
you just do what the White Man tells you to
To get out of the Ghetto, do you remember that
the only way to get a job
is to join the Army Gangs
or Marine Gangs to make some money
because they said I'm too stupid**

to be in the Airforces' or Navy Gangs
Have you ever heard of Racism
but hey, you don't even talk like us
you just talk all fancy
Ofucka motherfucker
you ain't no Brother
You have no Soul to
make you stop telling lies
cause I'm still in Iraq
with a target on my back.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Are we being sucked into another war in the hood? We need to take care of our neighbors at home."]

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Class War In Pakistan: “This Was A Bloody Revolution In Swat”

**“A Class Revolt Exploits Profound
Fissures Between A Small Group Of
Wealthy Landlords And Their
Landless Tenants”**

**“I Wouldn’t Be Surprised If It Sweeps
The Established Order Of Pakistan”**



[Thanks to Pham Binh, The Military Project and SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

Pakistan remains largely feudal. A narrow landed upper class kept its vast holdings while its workers remained subservient...

“The militants, for their part, are promising more than just proscriptions on music and schooling,” he said. “They are also promising Islamic justice, effective government and economic redistribution.”

April 16, 2009 By JANE PERLEZ and PIR ZUBAIR SHAH, The New York Times
[Excerpts]

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — The Taliban have advanced deeper into Pakistan by engineering a class revolt that exploits profound fissures between a small group

of wealthy landlords and their landless tenants, according to government officials and analysts here.

The strategy cleared a path to power for the Taliban in the Swat Valley, where the government allowed Islamic law to be imposed this week, and it carries broad dangers for the rest of Pakistan, particularly the militants' main goal, the populous heartland of Punjab Province.

In Swat, accounts from those who have fled now make clear that the Taliban seized control by pushing out about four dozen landlords who held the most power.

To do so, the militants organized peasants into armed forces that became their shock troops, the residents, government officials and analysts said.

The approach allowed the Taliban to offer economic spoils to people frustrated with lax and corrupt government.

"This was a bloody revolution in Swat," said a senior Pakistani official who oversees Swat, speaking on the condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation by the Taliban.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it sweeps the established order of Pakistan."

The Taliban's ability to exploit class divisions adds a new dimension to the insurgency and is raising alarm about the risks to Pakistan, which remains largely feudal.

Unlike India after independence in 1947, Pakistan maintained a narrow landed upper class that kept its vast holdings while its workers remained subservient, the officials and analysts said.

Successive Pakistani governments have since failed to provide land reform and even the most basic forms of education and health care. Avenues to advancement for the vast majority of rural poor do not exist.

Analysts and other government officials warn that the strategy executed in Swat is easily transferable to Punjab, saying that the province, where militant groups are already showing strength, is ripe for the same social upheavals that have convulsed Swat and the tribal areas.

Mahboob Mahmood, a Pakistani-American lawyer and former classmate of President Obama's, said, "The people of Pakistan are psychologically ready for a revolution."

Sunni militancy is taking advantage of deep class divisions that have long festered in Pakistan, he said.

"The militants, for their part, are promising more than just proscriptions on music and schooling," he said. "They are also promising Islamic justice, effective government and economic redistribution."

The Taliban strategy in Swat, an area of 1.3 million people with fertile orchards, vast plots of timber and valuable emerald mines, unfolded in stages over five years, analysts said.

The momentum of the insurgency built in the past two years, when the Taliban, reinforced by seasoned fighters from the tribal areas fought the Pakistani Army to a standstill, said a Pakistani intelligence agent who works in the Swat region.

The insurgents struck at any competing point of power: landlords and elected leaders — who were usually the same people — and an underpaid and unmotivated police force, said Khadim Hussain, a linguistics and communications professor at Bahria University in Islamabad, the capital.

At the same time, the Taliban exploited the resentments of the landless tenants, particularly the fact that they had many unresolved cases against their bosses in a slow-moving and corrupt justice system, Mr. Hussain and residents who fled the area said.

Their grievances were stoked by a young militant, Maulana Fazlullah, who set up an FM radio station in 2004 to appeal to the disenfranchised. The broadcasts featured easy-to-understand examples using goats, cows, milk and grass. By 2006, Mr. Fazlullah had formed a force of landless peasants armed by the Taliban, said Mr. Hussain and former residents of Swat.

At first, the pressure on the landlords was subtle. One landowner was pressed to take his son out of an English-speaking school offensive to the Taliban. Others were forced to make donations to the Taliban.

Then, in late 2007, Shujaat Ali Khan, the richest of the landowners, his brothers and his son, Jamal Nasir, the mayor of Swat, became targets.

After Shujaat Ali Khan, a senior politician in the Pakistan Muslim League-Q, narrowly missed being killed by a roadside bomb, he fled to London. A brother, Fateh Ali Mohammed, a former senator, left, too, and now lives in Islamabad. Mr. Nasir also fled.

Later, the Taliban published a “most wanted” list of 43 prominent names, said Muhammad Sher Khan, a landlord who is a politician with the Pakistan Peoples Party, and whose name was on the list.

All those named were ordered to present themselves to the Taliban courts or risk being killed, he said. “When you know that they will hang and kill you, how will you dare go back there?” Mr. Khan, hiding in Punjab, said in a telephone interview. “Being on the list meant ‘Don’t come back to Swat.’ ”

One of the main enforcers of the new order was Ibn-e-Amin, a Taliban commander from the same area as the landowners, called Matta. The fact that Mr. Amin came from Matta, and knew who was who there, put even more pressure on the landowners, Mr. Hussain said.

Each time the landlords fled, their tenants were rewarded.

They were encouraged to cut down the orchard trees and sell the wood for their own profit, the former residents said. Or they were told to pay the rent to the Taliban instead of their now absentee bosses.

Two dormant emerald mines have reopened under Taliban control. The militants have announced that they will receive one-third of the revenues.

Since the Taliban fought the military to a truce in Swat in February, the militants have deepened their approach and made clear who is in charge.

When provincial bureaucrats visit Mingora, Swat's capital, they must now follow the Taliban's orders and sit on the floor, surrounded by Taliban bearing weapons.

A landlord who fled with his family last year said he received a chilling message last week.

His tenants called him in Peshawar, the capital of North-West Frontier Province, which includes Swat, to tell him his huge house was being demolished, he said in an interview here.

The most crushing news was about his finances.

He had sold his fruit crop in advance, though at a quarter of last year's price. But even that smaller yield would not be his, his tenants said, relaying the Taliban message.

The buyer had been ordered to give the money to the Taliban instead.

“If Class War Is Being Waged, The Rich Are On The March” Huge Tax Cuts, Huge Income Gains

April 15th, 2009 By Robert Borosage, Ourfuture.org [Excerpts]

In 1980, as "Gilded Age Taxation," a study by the Institute for America's Future shows, the richest 1 percent of Americans captured fully 7.7 percent of the nation's after-tax income. The middle 60 percent captured about 50.9 percent.

By 2006, the latest Congressional Budget Office figures show the opulent 1 percent-making an average \$1.3 million -captured a staggering 16.3 percent of the nation's income after all that tax-code redistribution, while the middle 60 percent garnered only 44.1 percent.

If class war is being waged, the rich are on the march.

The Institute for Policy Studies in a new report details the staggering contrast to the Eisenhower years.

In 1955, the top 400 taxpayers averaged about \$12.3 million in income (2006 dollars) and paid, after exploiting every loophole imaginable, 51.2 percent of that in federal income tax.

A half century later, the richest 400 average a breath-taking \$263.3 million in income each, and pay a mere 17.2 percent of that in federal income taxes-a lower tax rate than paid by most of their secretaries.

If those 400 taxpayers had paid at the same rate in 2006 as a half century earlier, the federal treasury would have collected \$35.9 billion more in revenue, or enough to double the energy and transportation budget combined.

**“Last Year, The US Dropped
About \$625 Billion In Taxpayer
Dollars On Its Military, While All
The Rest Of The World Together
Spent \$500 Billion”**

**Not To Worry: Worth The Price:
“A National Healthcare System 37th
From The Top, Worldwide”**

“29th Globally On Infant Mortality”

**“47th In The World In Terms Of Life
Expectancy”**

“39th On Education Spending”

“... the so-called liberal Obama administration is now seeking to spend even more on the American military than the monsters of the last regime did”

April 17, 2009 by David Michael Green, CommonDreams [Excerpts]

According to GlobalSecurity.org, last year, the US dropped about \$625 billion in taxpayer dollars on its military, while all the rest of the world together spent \$500 billion.

(The aggregate global figures come from 2004, but have been steady over the prior decade.) However, if you also add in nuclear weapons costs handled separately by the Energy Department, Veterans Affairs, interest on money borrowed to fund previous wars, and the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the total rises to a jaw-dropping one trillion dollars per year.

Such thoughtful priorities also entitle our lucky population to have a national healthcare system that is ranked 37th from the top, worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

Isn't that special?

Morocco does better than we do. So do Colombia, Chile and Costa Rica.

All those weapons systems don't just purchase for us a lack of security, they also buy a country where 50 million Americans lack health insurance of any kind, and countless others are grossly under-insured (including those who don't know it yet, but will find out fast if they ever get sick).

In part because of this fine health care system, the United States also ranks 29th globally on infant mortality. And the longitudinal trend isn't pretty. We were 12th in the world in 1960, and 23rd in 1990. Now we are tied with Poland and Slovakia.

I guess these figures also partially explain why the richest country in the world, by far, is ranked 47th in the world in terms of life expectancy, below Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jordan and Guam.

Cool. Go USA!

Expenditures on the military also mean dollars not spent on teaching our kids (especially about comparative national statistics!).

The richest country in the world is ranked 39th on education spending as a percent of GDP, below Tunisia, Bolivia, Jamaica and Malawi.

As a result, the US shows up as 18th in mathematical literacy, and 15th in reading literacy.

Spending on rockets and guns does not bode well for economic development, either. Despite being in hock for more national debt than any other country in the world - even before recent events - we rank only 16th in broadband access per capita.

And, we are a dismal 92nd in the world in terms of the equitable distribution of family income within our society. Cameroon does better. So does Russia, Uzbekistan, Laos and Burkina Faso. Along with most of the rest of the world.

In short, in exchange for the privilege of dwarfing the entire rest of the solar system in military spending, in order to defend ourselves against an enemy we don't have, the

United States has purchased a second rate healthcare system, a second rate educational system, and social and economic characteristics within spitting distance of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The United States is no longer very much able to shove around other countries like it used to, and yet, even the so-called liberal Obama administration is now seeking to spend even more on the American military than the monsters of the last regime did.

**Wall St. Financial Writer Says:
“So Far, All The Measures Taken By
Obama’s Economic Team In
Response To The Financial Crisis,
Have Pointed Their Aim At Protecting
The Wealth Of The Wall Street
Aristocrats”**

**“The Federal Reserve Has Responded To
Every Recession In The US Economy By
Slashing Interest Rates, And Funneling
Massive Amounts Of Money Into The
Hands Of Wall Street’s Aristocracy, - The
Ruling Class That Dominates The Two
Political Parties In Washington”**

[This is from a major Wall St. financial analyst, with no connection whatsoever to the U.S. left.

[So, it’s OK to say the USA has a “ruling class,” and that the ruling class “dominates the two political parties in Washington.” If that’s what they’re saying on Wall St., it’s OK for you to say it too. T]

Apr 15 2009 By Gary Dorsch; Sirchartsalot.com [Excerpts]

Since the historic 1987 stock market crash, the Federal Reserve has responded to every recession in the US economy by slashing interest rates, and funneling

massive amounts of money into the hands of Wall Street's aristocracy, - the ruling class that dominates the two political parties in Washington.

The Fed's cash injections have usually found their way into assets, including commodities, stocks, and mortgage-backed securities, and often fueling speculative binges into stratospheric heights.

But on March 12th, US President Barack Obama warned a group of chief executive officers of the Business Roundtable, that the Fed "can't continue with its policies of endless cycles of bubble and bust, and instead, must build a new foundation for future economic growth."

Obama blamed the lingering banking crisis on "reckless speculation and spending beyond our means, on bad credit, inflated home prices, and over-leveraged banks. Such activity isn't the creation of lasting wealth. It's the illusion of prosperity, and it hurts us all in the end," Obama warned.

"We cannot settle for a return to the status quo. We must put an end to the reckless speculation, spending beyond our means; bad credit, over-leveraged banks, and the absence of oversight that condemns us to bubbles that inevitably bust," Obama added.

Yet only a few days earlier, Obama exerted maximum pressure on the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) to let Wall Street bankers set their own prices for toxic assets in earnings reports, regardless of market prices.

By suspending the so-called "mark to market" accounting rules, concerning the value of toxic securities they hold, FASB's new guidance would allow American banks to value assets using their own internal "mark-to-myth" models.

This is, in fact, is the creation of a loophole allowing bankers to conceal their true losses and cook their financial books.

By allowing the banks to claim their assets as fundamentally sound, the ruling elite expect the panic selling in the stock market will subside, banks will start lending again, and the US-economy will gradually recover.

So far, all the measures taken by Obama's economic team in response to the financial crisis, have pointed their aim at protecting the wealth of the Wall Street aristocrats.

Treasury Secretary Geithner announced a scheme to enable the banks to offload their toxic assets by subsidizing hedge-funds and private-equity firms to purchase them at inflated prices, using hundreds of billions of taxpayer money to cover any losses, and insure double-digit profits for the speculators.

The masters of Wall Street erupted into great euphoria and jubilation over the death of FASB #157, and Geithner's scheme to loot taxpayer funds and offload the toxic assets of the financial oligarchs, - creating illusions of new found wealth.

Obama himself went a step further to reassure the Wall Street titans, by quietly killing a bill passed by the House of Representatives that would have taxed 90% of the bonuses of wealthy executives and traders at AIG and other bailed-out firms.

By obscuring the accuracy of bank balance sheets, mixed with the Fed's zero-percent interest rate policy, and the hallucinogenic "Quantitative Easing" drug, traders are taking collective leave of their senses, succumbing to delusions of ever-expanding wealth, and actively participating in the creation of new bubbles. And by definition, market bubbles can expand much farther than most traders can imagine.

Nobody bothered to ask how Wells Fargo (WFC) could post a record \$3-billion profit in the first quarter, at a time when one in eight US-homeowners with mortgages, are behind on their loan payments, or in the foreclosure process as job losses intensifies, and California home prices are 40% below their peak levels.

Instead, operating under the illusions of "mark-to-myth" accounting, and the hallucinogenic "QE-drug," administered by the Fed, hedge-fund traders accepted the WFC earnings report at face value, bidding its share price 30% higher.

Former Fed chief "Easy" Al Greenspan and his prototype, Ben "Bubbles" Bernanke, hold the view that deliberate bubble-bursting is something between impossible and dangerous, and thus, is best avoided.

The Fed is inherently opposed to hiking interest rates, to prevent bubbles from arising in the first place. Instead, the Fed allows stock market bubbles to inflate into the stratosphere, and patiently waits for the bubbles to burst under their own weight.

Afterwards, the Fed moves to cushion the meltdown, by slashing interest rates and flooding the banking system with liquidity, - the infamous Bernanke / Greenspan Put.

The Fed operates under the belief that wealth in an asset-based economy is created by massively inflating the money supply and pumping-up the value of financial or tangible assets.

Today, the Fed has joined the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan in printing trillions of British pounds, yen, and US-dollars in part, under the radical "Quantitative Easing" framework, designed to monetize their respective government's debt, which in part, is used to bail-out the financial aristocracy.

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