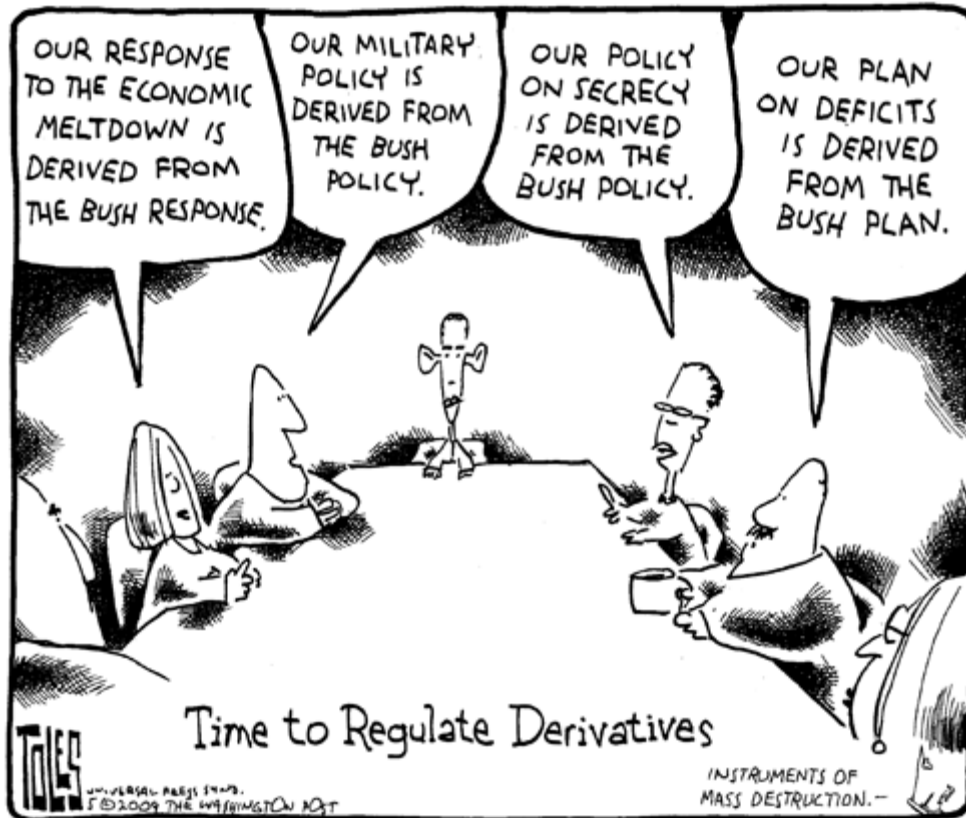


GI SPECIAL 7F7:



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

**“You Wouldn’t Believe
How Low Morale Has
Sunk”**

**US Army’s Human Terrain
System Like Swine Flu:
Get Near it and You’re Infected**

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

June 8th, 2009 By John Stanton, The Intelligence Daily [Excerpts] John Stanton is a Virginia based writer specializing in national security and political matters.

The US Army's Human Terrain System (HTS) it is arguably the most poorly managed and misguided US Army program since the early design and testing years of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

A year and 17 articles later it is clear that not much has changed in HTS. It is still the same troublesome program it was in June 2008 and, perhaps, has gotten worse. "It's really reached absurd new levels", said a source.

More commentary recently received from the field in Iraq indicates that it's SNAFU.

One can only imagine the situation in Afghanistan.

A source said that waste and mismanagement is still the norm program-wide.

"It will never get worse than HTS. Those of us who resigned look pretty smart but worry about the safety of our colleagues.

"HTS is crashing and it's only a matter of time before US Army G-2 pulls the plug, but only after their names are firmly linked to the downfall. It has gone far beyond Steve Fondacaro (program manager) and Montgomery McFate (senior social scientist) now. "

Another source had much more to say.

"You wouldn't believe how low morale has sunk.

"Everyone (here) maybe with the exception of (one true believer is on the verge of quitting. It's surreal.

"I mean, we start off our daily meetings with shit like, 'And so I talked to Building 48 (HTS headquarters) and they're going to send us DA civilian name tags. And we should have an RM by August. And, oh, by the way, enjoy your Saturdays and Sundays on the FOB since you won't get paid for them, or for air travel on weekends, or for 2/3 of your time on missions.

"Does anyone in this (HTS) program think that there is going to be anyone here by August or July? It's like they want to shut it down. It really feels like they just waited until everyone transitioned (from private contractors) and then went full-throttle into fucking us over."

Proofreaders Wanted in Kabul: \$15K a Month:

"People who until a week ago were really dedicated to this program and its mission - including some who had already weathered several previous pay cuts...now spend all

their free time (of which we now have a lot) sending out their resumes and looking for other jobs. And by this I don't just mean career contractors and retired military---folks who have gotten used to high salaries---but mostly social scientists who stuck it out because they wanted to be here doing the job.

"But you can only kick a dog so many times before it turns mean and turns on you.

"I would be hard pressed to think of any other employer so loathed by its employees.

"True, there are a handful of people who are sitting around with their eyes closed and their hands over their ears, still hopeful that, in the whimsical words of one unnamed social scientist: 'They obviously do not want the program to go under so I'm sure they will get their shit together by the end of June. I think they will get it done but they will continue to stumble for a bit.'

"I wish I lived in that universe. Anyway, assuming the people who were smart enough to jump ship earlier on haven't taken all the other jobs--and perhaps even then--you are going to see a massive exodus. This time, unless (there are) bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, financially-unconcerned masses, I doubt the program can weather it."

With no qualified personnel in the marketplace, perhaps one person—with a computer and communications link--can handle the workload of an entire Human Terrain Team (HTT).

How about sending 1,000 one-man HTT's all over Afghanistan? Treat them as a distributed sensor network that gathers tactical intelligence. But isn't that the MO of the CIA and SOCOM?

So it Goes:

"Hi, I'm your one-man HTT, ready to paint the cultural picture for the brigade, M-F, 0900-1745.

"If you are calling outside of normal business hours, please be assured that your pressing need for cultural knowledge will be addressed the following day, unless it is a weekend, in which case you'll have to wait until Monday.

"The ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) is hiring proof-readers in Kabul for \$15,000 a month.

"A legitimate 9 to 5 job and you get to go home at night. Not much of a contribution to the war effort but so it goes..."

ACTION REPORTS

A Sergeant Said “We Want To Serve The Community, We’re Against The Wars” [Outreach To New York Army National Guard]

From: Antonia C
To: GI Special
Subject: Outreach to New York National Guard
Date: 9 Jun 2009

For one weekend a month during every summer new Army National Guard recruits come for training at the armory on [XXXXX] in New York City. I live just a block from the armory, so I can hear the recruits calling out their military chants as they travel on the sidewalk on their morning run.

A couple of summers ago I began to meet the recruits at the armory at the end of their run. I didn't have a formalized plan of action. I just wanted them to know that New Yorkers recognized that they were here and that they would soon be over there” fighting in our name. I wanted them to know that we support them, but do not support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Typically the recruits stood in formation in front of the armory after their run to hear their sergeants call out commands. I took the opportunity during brief pauses to shout my own message of peace and support and my wish that they would get home safe. I would return home feeling sad but satisfied that I had done something other than life as usual as our young people were sent off to war.

Last year I met a member of the group Military Project and learned of their organized resistance and outreach to the military and their families. I learned that the group had been trying to find out the schedule of new recruit training at the [XXXXX] armory for several years so that they could come and offer support and distribute literature. I couldn't let them know of the recruits schedule since I only found out that they were there when I heard them chanting on the Saturday of the weekend training.

(I was not able to get the advance training schedule despite many efforts to do so).

So, I am pleased that I was able to call the Military Project yesterday after hearing the recruits on their Saturday run and that two members of the group arranged to come to the armory on short notice at 8am today (Sunday) to do a bang-up outreach!

We distributed literature to 10 recruits and 6 senior members of the Guard. Every one who passed us took the information and a Sir No Sir DVD. We were able to talk with several of them to let them know of our purpose. And we found out the date that the recruits would be here next month!

A sergeant hurrying to the armory took material and said “we want to serve the community, we’re against the wars but there are those inside (the armory) who disagree.”

I appreciate being able to offer information against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the recruits along with the Military Project and learn from your experience the best way to do that.

Congratulations on your good work. I am glad to join you!

MORE:

MORE ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.

If you’ve carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.

Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.

They don’t have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.

If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don’t leave them out.

If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.

NOTE WELL:

Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the wars.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.

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

GI SPECIAL RAFFLE REPORT

Super big thanks to everybody who sent in contributions to the GI Special fund raising raffle.

The drawing of winning entries has been done, thanks to some disinterested hospital worker volunteers doing it blind, and the winners are being notified in series, first place winner first today, and on down the line. T

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Canadian Soldier Killed By IED In Nakhoney: “The Local Population Tends To Be Hostile To The International Military Presence”

Jun. 8 2009 CTV.ca News Staff & (AFP)

A Canadian soldier on foot patrol in southern Afghanistan was killed Monday at about 9:20 a.m. local time (0450 GMT) while on a foot patrol by an improvised explosive device in the volatile Panjwaili district.

Pte. Alexandre (Pelo) Peloquin, 20, of the 3e Battalion, Royal 22e Regiment, was based at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier near Quebec City.

No other soldiers were injured in the explosion, which occurred around 9:20 a.m. local time in Nakhoney, a village about 15 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city.

He and other troops were on the last leg of a mission to rid the area of improvised explosive devices or IEDs used by the insurgents, Brigadier General Jon Vance told a press conference televised from Kandahar City.

The Canadian Press reporter Colin Perkel said the blast occurred in “a very dangerous area,” which Canadian soldiers have dubbed one corner of Panjwaii’s Taliban triangle.

“It’s a very well-known hub of insurgent activity that goes back at least two or three years,” Perkel told CTV News Channel Monday in a telephone interview from Afghanistan.

“The local population tends to be hostile to the international military presence and the military here believes it is used as a staging area and logistics hub for insurgent attacks on Kandahar city itself.”

Perkel said that because Canadian soldiers patrol the area so frequently, they were the likely target of the attacks.

Three U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Asadabad Grenade Attack



U.S. soldiers at the site of a blast in Asadabad, capital of Kunar province June 9, 2009. A blast near a U.S. troop convoy wounded three U.S. soldiers. REUTERS/Stringer

06/10/09 By Amir Shah and Jason Straziuso, ASSOCIATED PRESS

ASADABAD, Afghanistan — A Russian-made grenade exploded in a crowd milling around a U. S. military vehicle crash in a busy town center in northeastern Afghanistan, killing two Afghans and wounding more than 50 people, including three U. S. soldiers, officials said Tuesday.

The U. S. military and Afghanistan's Interior Ministry blamed the attack in Kunar province on insurgents and said officials had photographic evidence that a Russian grenade left over from decades of war was used.

Before the blast, a U. S. Army vehicle carrying soldiers who help train Afghan troops crashed into a concrete median in Kunar's capital of Asadabad, witnesses said.

One shopkeeper, Rohilla, said five or six soldiers got out of their vehicles and tried to pull the truck out of the median with another vehicle.

"Many people gathered around, then there was a blast," said Rohilla, who like many Afghans goes by one name.

Two German Soldiers Wounded In Chardara

June 8 (Xinhua) & AFP

On Sunday, two German soldiers deployed as part of NATO's force in Afghanistan were wounded in a gun battle that followed a roadside bomb explosion in the northeastern part of the country, the force told AFP.

The soldiers suffered gunshot wounds during a firefight that erupted in the province of Kunduz after their vehicle struck an improvised bomb similar to those used by Taliban, a military spokesman said.

"The roadside bomb hit a military vehicle in Chardara district on Sunday injuring two German soldiers."

Ulster Soldier Seriously Injured In Helmand

09 June 2009 Johnston Press

A YOUNG man from Portavogie has become the latest member of the Armed Forces to be seriously injured in Afghanistan.

Cpl Colin Thompson, also known affectionately as “Thomper”, was seriously injured in a bomb blast in Helmand province at the end of last week and flown to the UK on Friday for surgery.

He was a former member of the Royal Irish Regiment who transferred upon its disbandment to 2 Rifles, currently based at Ballykinler. When injured he was on a six-month tour of Afghanistan as part of 19 Light Brigade.

He was injured by a roadside improvised explosive device last Thursday night and was flown to the military hospital outside Birmingham where it is understood his parents Mary and Hubert are currently by his side.

“Attacks Are Increasing All Over The Country”

“Along With The Frequency Of Road Attacks, Military Officers Say The Power Of The Bombs Employed Has Gone ‘Way Up’”

Under cover of darkness, IED teams burrow deep under the tarmac or wheelbarrow bombs into rain culverts, which number into the thousands in some provinces, spread out over hundreds of miles of road.

Jun. 09, 2009 By Jason Motlagh in Ghazni; Time Magazine [Excerpts]

The highway that runs between Kabul and the southeastern city of Kandahar is the most brutal evidence of the Taliban’s IED offensive.

The road is a showcase U.S.-funded project, meant to connect two of the country’s most vital commercial centers. But today it is an automotive graveyard, littered with burned-out carcasses of vehicles and disrupted by crumbled bridges.

One infamous stretch is lined with the wreckage of 40 transport trucks, the remains of a 90-minute enemy ambush dubbed the “jingle-truck massacre.”

(Afghans hang chains and coins from their truck bumpers, which create a jingling sound.)

Every few miles, craters of varying size pock the pavement, interspersed with suspicious patches of dirt that compel patrol convoys to make off-road detours or dismount to investigate before proceeding.

The attacks are increasing all over the country.

Last week a bomb-and-shoot ambush left three soldiers dead near the main U.S. base in Bagram, about an hour's drive north of Kabul, the third such strike in the area in less than a week. Two days earlier, a pair of bombings in eastern Paktika province killed 10 Afghan security guards traveling in a convoy, underscoring the dangers faced by Afghan forces who too often remain underequipped and overexposed.

Along with the frequency of road attacks, military officers say the power of the bombs employed has gone "way up."

Twenty-pound charges have been replaced by oil drums packed with hundreds of pounds of explosives, set off by trip wires and pressure plates, that are capable of reducing up-armored humvees to pieces.

Under cover of darkness, IED teams burrow deep under the tarmac or wheelbarrow bombs into rain culverts, which number into the thousands in some provinces, spread out over hundreds of miles of road.

Faced with high technology and drones, the Taliban has resorted to its own innovations.

When the militants ruled in Afghanistan, it was common to find spools of discarded cassette tape hanging from tree branches as a warning against banned pop music. They've since devised more lethal uses for the recording medium.

After a recent roadside bombing of an American convoy in Ghazni province that killed three Afghan police officers, streams of tape were found ahead of the blast crater. The reflective quality of the tape, soldiers said, had allowed militant spotters to be forewarned of the arrival of enemy forces and to time the explosion from afar. Once the detonation cord was traced back to a village compound, the bombers were long gone.

Even in daylight, it's difficult to identify likely IED emplacers. "Every other guy in Afghanistan has a shovel over his shoulder," says Lieut. Colonel Tony Demartino, commander of the Army 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, referring to the tools carried by day laborers involved in repairs and rural reconstruction projects. "The insurgents are able to exploit this with ease."

One U.S. military officer in Afghanistan explained that, over the summer, coalition convoys transiting through Wardak province were being targeted with unusually powerful bombs.

Some of the explosives recovered from weapons caches in the area bore Chinese markings, identical to those being used by contractors working on a new road through a hostile river valley.

It was later learned that employees had sold ordnance to local insurgents in exchange for security guarantees.

More eyes in the sky are needed to prowl the backcountry, but the military concedes that fancy technology is no substitute for human intelligence-gathering. In one instance, as

another U.S. officer explains, a tower camera relayed live footage of what appeared to be an IED team busy at work after midnight.

Approval was quickly secured for a drone strike. Then, to gain a fuller picture, the camera zoomed out to reveal a brickmaking factory just a few feet away. It was the Islamic fasting holiday of Ramadan, and the energy-depleted laborers were working late to avoid the sun.

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

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

Notes From A Goatfuck:

**The Great Afghan Police And
Soldier Training Fiasco Rolls**

On:

**\$15 Billion Spent On Collaborator
Police Who “Sell Promotions And
Equipment, Skim Subordinates’
Wages, Shake Down Villagers,
Take Bribes Or Participate In The
Opium Trade”**

**“Equipment Has Disappeared In Vast
Quantities”**

**The Pentagon “Provided Substandard
Ammunition”**



Among the Afghans, mass illiteracy, equipment loss, crime and corruption, which is prevalent in the police, have blunted readiness. Illicit drug use persists, and some American officers worry about loyalty and intelligence leaks.

June 8, 2009 By C. J. CHIVERS, The New York Times [Excerpts]

The Afghan foot patrol descended a mountain and slipped through a canyon.

Then things went wrong.

One Afghan soldier insulted another. And there, exposed on dangerous ground, a scuffle erupted.

The soldiers turned on each other with shoves, punches and kicks. One swung an ammunition can in a slow-motion haymaker.

The patrol had already been hapless: a display of errant marksmanship, dud ammunition and lackluster technique.

“For months I’ve been telling everyone how proud I am of you,” seethed an American captain, yanking the Afghans apart. “Today you embarrassed me.”

American training units have been short-staffed and overstretched.

Essential equipment has at times proved to be in poor condition or mismatched. Accountability for weapons and munitions has been broadly criticized.

Among the Afghans, mass illiteracy, equipment loss, crime and corruption, which is prevalent in the police, have blunted readiness. Immaturity and ill discipline bedevil many units.

Illicit drug use persists, and some American officers worry about loyalty and intelligence leaks.

The United States has spent more than \$15 billion fielding Afghan forces, by the command's tally.

Officers throughout the ranks say Afghan security self-sufficiency is years off, even in the Afghan National Army, or A.N.A.

American officers training the Afghan forces describe two different views. By one view, the security forces, especially the army, represent one of the most promising institutions the Afghan government has yet offered: a large group of men who rejected the Taliban and staked their lives on the faith that the government would prevail.

By another view, the same forces, though most pointedly the police, are minimally skilled, unreliable, prone to crime and little match for an insurgency that has grown since 2006.

Problems are widespread enough that many Western soldiers openly regard the Afghan police with suspicion.

In interviews over three years, American soldiers have complained that police officers and supervisors sell promotions and equipment, skim subordinates' wages, shake down villagers, take bribes or participate in other schemes, including the opium trade.

Journalists for The New York Times have seen officers accused of selling fuel for their American-provided trucks, and of burglarizing a home they had been ordered to search. Officers at one southern post in 2007 were cultivating poppy plants inside their post's walls.

Maj. Vincent G. Heintz, who supervised a police mentoring team last year, said that the district where he worked, Chahar Darreh in Kunduz Province, cycled through several Afghan commanders during the year, including one who was "wholly incompetent" but apparently politically connected.

The next commander, Major Heintz said, was "a professional criminal who brokered a détente with the local Taliban" and who showed up with 10 or 15 of his own bodyguards, fired the police and put his gang into police uniforms. They then set up roadblocks and shook down motorists, he said.

Afghan units have also not eradicated the presence of "chai" boys, who often are uncompensated teenagers who live closely with commanders. Afghans and American officers say some are apprentices, others valets, and some suffer sexual abuse, which a few commanders regard as a perquisite of power.

The training command said that if abuse of these teenagers was reported, it would be acted on. "It is totally unacceptable," General Ierardi said, but added that he had not seen reports of it from the field.

During an insurgent mortar attack late last year, an Afghan lieutenant did not require his soldiers to take cover or put on their protective gear. Instead, he proposed holding a formation in the open to ask which soldiers were collaborating with the Taliban.

Two American Marines present directed the lieutenant to order his soldiers to safety. Minutes later, an incoming round exploded yards from where the soldiers were to stand.

In a recent attack on Korangal Outpost, an Afghan captain ignored his duties. Incoming 30-millimeter rounds landed among his men. He spent the fight in a latrine, while Marines checked for injured Afghans and directed the return fire.

Over the years, as American units have cycled through, they have often been forced to repeat the work of previous units.

Several years ago, for example, the Americans distributed 8,000 donated Czech assault rifles to Afghan units. The weapons fired the same ammunition as existing Afghan rifles, but were otherwise incompatible. The weapons had to be recalled last year, even as the military was trying to rush other weapons to the field.

Other equipment has disappeared in vast quantities, trainers in the field said, including sleeping bags and warm clothing required to operate much of the year, especially at night. The shortages were so acute in 2007 that units in the 82nd Airborne Division canceled overnight missions because Afghan soldiers could not participate.

A year later, the same shortages limited the work of Afghans in Nuristan Province.

One American officer said Afghan soldiers had been issued the gear, often two or three times. They had either sold it or given it to their families, he said.

This year, the American military said it issued storage containers to the army, and cold-weather gear had been locked up. It will be reissued in the fall, the military said.

Events on the patrol that became an intraplatoon brawl also underlined concerns about ammunition. Much of the Afghan government's ammunition is old surplus donated by nations trimming arsenals or sold to the Pentagon by low-bidding contractors. For years, little was independently tested for reliability.

In Nuristan, the captain tried firing five rounds of 40-millimeter high-explosive ammunition at a cave.

All five failed: three skipped off the cave's face without exploding; two did not leave the barrel. The captain, Markus Trouerbach, was disgusted. "Dud!" he said. "Nice dud. Great."

Later, he said that of 20 rounds fired during an exercise, 9 worked. An Afghan sergeant said he fired seven rounds at insurgents. Two did not explode.

The training command held its own test. Of 720 40-millimeter rounds fired, 22 did not work properly, according to two American officers; the command said it heard no other complaints.

The failure rate, 3 percent, was much less alarming than the troops' experiences in Nuristan. But it exceeded by many times the acceptable failure rate of similar ammunition issued to American troops.

In interviews, three arms dealers and a manufacturer said the Pentagon paid less for the 40-millimeter ammunition than the ammunition typically costs to produce.

They said Arcus, the Bulgarian firm manufacturer, provided substandard ammunition.

(The vendors asked not to be identified out of fear of being blocked by the Pentagon from future bids.)

Neither the Pentagon nor Arcus would discuss the ammunition deal in detail, including how the prices were arrived at, saying the information was proprietary.

**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.**



April 26, 2009: U.S. soldiers during a search operation in Tangi valley of Wardak province west of Kabul, Afghanistan. There were few villagers waving as the new American forces patrol deep into this valley known for resistance to foreign troops. As the soldiers of the New York-based 10th Mountain Division moved slowly on the road that cuts through high cliffs and fertile land in the central Wardak province, a roadside bomb awaited them instead. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

TROOP NEWS

André Shepherd, Absent Without Leave From The U.S. Army Says “I And Others Have Come To The Conclusion That The War On Terror Is A Fraud”

“Our Nation Has Tortured, Harassed, Lied To And Destroyed Nations”

May 15, 2009 Iraq Veterans Against the War
www.ivaw.org
europe@ivaw.org
+49.152.062.65602 (Germany)

Speaking on the occasion of the International Day of Conscientious Objection on May 15, André Shepherd, absent without leave (AWOL) from the U.S. Army and seeking asylum in Germany, declared: “Many people have suffered and died as a result of the wars of the United States of America. Our nation has tortured, harassed, lied to and destroyed nations.

“I and others have come to the conclusion that the War on Terror is a fraud. We will not rest until the war criminals are brought to justice.”

The 31-year-old AWOL soldier joined the U.S. Army in 2004 and after six month’s training was deployed to Iraq as an Apache helicopter mechanic. When he returned to his unit in Katterbach (Bavaria), he began intensively researching the war in Iraq, trying to come to terms with what the U.S. military was doing to the civilian population there. “In the end,” said Shepherd, “I knew the truth: if I went to Iraq again, I would be responsible for the death and misery of innocent people. The path for me was clear: I had to get out of the Army.”

Six months ago, on November 26, 2008, Shepherd applied for asylum in Germany. The Federal Office for Migration has not yet issued a decision, which could take several more months. Shepherd stated his reasons for pursuing asylum in a hearing before the office in early February.

The foundation of his application points to the October of 2006 Qualification Directive of the European Union, which states that all who refuse participation in wars and conflicts which are contrary to international law must be protected.

Connection e.V. and the Military Counseling Network, organizations which are working to support Shepherd in his asylum proceedings, are emphasizing the importance of his request.

“With his application André Shepherd is fundamentally questioning the American led War in Iraq and the allies involved,” declared Rudi Friedrich of Connection e.V. today. “The Qualification Directive clearly strengthens the position of André Shepherd. Now the question is if Germany and the European Union are courageous enough to protect persons who are opposed to the war.”

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europe@ivaw.org

For further information visit:
www.Connection-eV.de/en_aktion-usa.php
www.mc-network.de

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

I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the utility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.

-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace

War Toys in Easter Baskets



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: June 08, 2009
Subject: War Toys in Easter Baskets

**Kind of like wrapping a baby boy
in a camo blanket
in newborn nursery.**

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran**

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

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

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

1000 Feet From Now

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

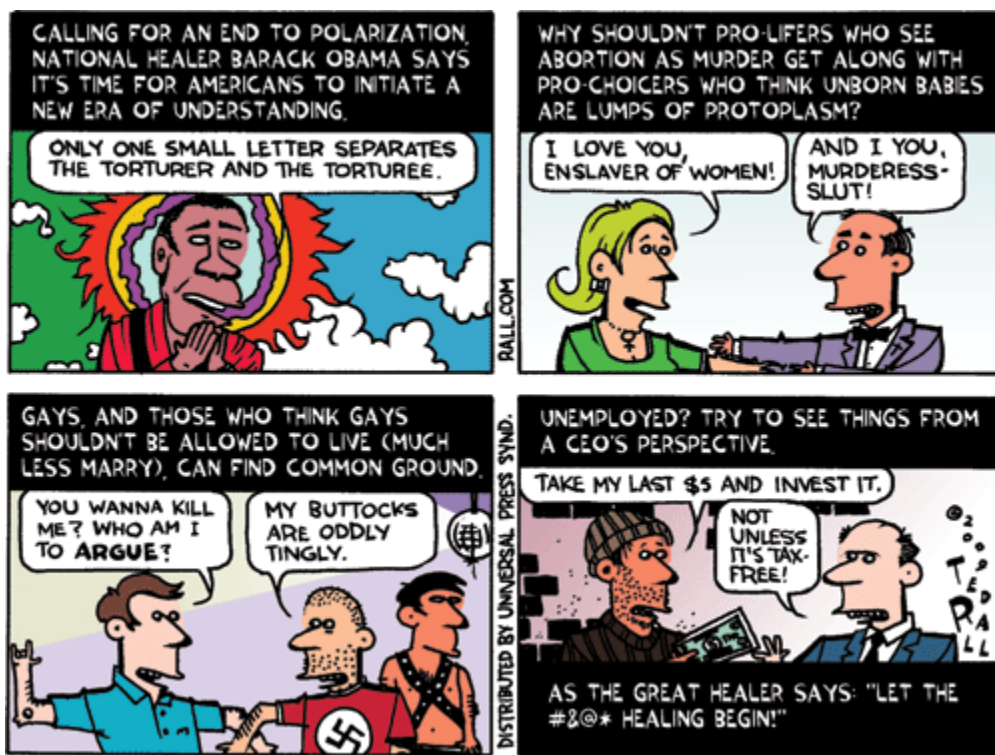
From his book: Peace Speaks From The Mirror

1000 Feet From Now

**Billy, a new replacement, is humping around these big bushes,
not knowing if Charlie is around the other side or not
and he comes around a little clearing
and there is his Captain, with two captured bound young Vietnamese.
He has a small black generator with wires hooked to one
of the Vietnamese men and when he cranks, the prisoner's muscles
quivers and waves across his body like the South China Sea.
Billy stops and looks and a grunt who has been there longer stops next to him.
Billy says, "They are not supposed to do that, are they?"
The other grunt says, "Just stay here with me and check this out."**

The Vietnamese interpreter is on one knee slapping him, screaming at him to answer questions. Billy said, "I've seen enough." The other grunt says, "Wait, here comes the Intelligence helicopter, watch this." Two men from the helicopter, walked over and took the bound Vietnamese and threw them into the helicopter. Billy said, "It looks like they're taking them to the rear, let's go." The other grunt, said, "NO, keep your eyes on the helicopter as it goes up." When it was about a 1000 feet up, they threw out one of the Vietnamese and he fell to earth like a sandbag. Then they turned to the other one in the helicopter and in Vietnamese asked him, "Do you wants to talk now?" The grunt asked Billy, "Did you see them throw out one of them ?" "Yes"

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

At Last! It's Here!! Change For The Muslim World You Can Really Believe In!!!

[Thanks to Linda Olson, who sent this in.]

June 08, 2009 by John Caruso, Distantocean.com

I have an embarrassing admission: I may have been too harsh in my judgment of Barack Obama's speech in Cairo.

Maybe years of reading the words of politicians with a critical eye, always looking for the rotten core of hypocrisy and dissembling, have made me too reflexive in my rejection of the potential for real change; I was dead certain it would just be a shiny new coat of paint on the same decrepit house, and I suppose I saw exactly what I'd convinced myself I was going to see.

Perhaps I've just made too much of a habit of skepticism to let myself believe in the possibility for transformative honesty in our deeply-corrupted system.

Whatever the case, I decided to read Obama's speech again, but this time with a mind cleared of all prejudice and preconceptions — and as much as it pains me to say so given how hard I've been on him in the past, I have to admit I was impressed to hear an American politician (finally) say some of these things.

Let's look at a few excerpts.

First, there was the deference for Muslim culture and traditions:

"We have great respect for the commitment that all Muslims make to faith, family, and education. And Americans of many backgrounds seek to learn more about the rich tradition of Islam. (...) I have asked young Americans to study the language and customs of the broader Middle East.

"And for the first time in our nation's history, we have added a Koran to the White House Library."

That bit about the Koran was particularly bold since it was bound to be red meat for conservatives in this country (especially given his own background), but he

took it even farther later, mentioning “the revelation of God’s word in the holy Koran to the prophet Muhammad” and observing that “today this word inspires faithful Muslims to lead lives of honesty and integrity and compassion.”

The flip side of his respect for Islam was the way he used the secular and inclusive “E Pluribus Unum” to characterize the U.S. rather than the more divisive or religious alternatives favored by some other presidents I could mention:

“Our country’s citizens come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, which has enabled us to realize the vision embodied in our first national motto: ‘E Pluribus Unum,’ meaning ‘Out of many, one.’”

These are all just platitudes, you might say (and I wouldn’t argue with you) — but consider the importance of this respectful approach, given the audience.

And in any case, there were plenty of specifics as well, like his commitment to a state of Palestine and his recognition of the suffering of the Palestinians:

“I’m committed to two democratic states -- Israel and Palestine -- living side-by-side in peace and security. I’m committed to a Palestinian state that has territorial integrity and will live peacefully with the Jewish state of Israel. (...)

“The Palestinian people have suffered from decades of corruption and violence and the daily humiliation of occupation.”

“The Palestinian people have suffered the daily humiliation of occupation”? Now that’s political dynamite. But throughout the speech he refused to kowtow to AIPAC and Israel, as though he was unconcerned with the potential political cost:

“Israel also has a large stake in the success of a democratic Palestine. Permanent occupation threatens Israel’s identity and democracy. A stable, peaceful Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel longs for. So I challenge Israel to take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state.”

“I challenge Israel”? Tough language like that certainly isn’t going to make him more popular in Tel Aviv.

And he refused to back down on his demand that Israel stop all settlement activity, going so far as to cite U.N. resolution 242 (with its incendiary language about “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war”):

“Israeli settlement activity in occupied territories must stop. And the occupation must end through withdrawal to secure and recognize boundaries consistent with United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. (...) Israel should also show a respect, a respect for and concern about the dignity of the Palestinian people who are and will be their neighbors.”

After reading this speech I can almost bring myself to understand how some supporters of Israel might consider him “pro-Palestinian”. He’s still got a long way to go, but this is an important start.

Moving on, there was this detailed declaration of his commitment to a full and unconditional withdrawal from Iraq (one of the very welcome changes from his predecessor):

“This withdrawal will take place in two stages: The first stage will occur (in 2009), when Iraqi forces assume the lead for security operations in all major population centers, while U.S. combat forces move out of Iraqi cities and move into an overwatch role.

“After this transition has occurred, the drawdown of American forces will continue to the second stage, with all U.S. forces returning home from Iraq by the end of 2011.”

And then there were his thoughtful overtures to the people of Iran and his embrace of multilateralism on a host of global issues — worth quoting at length to fully appreciate the depth of the compassion he made a point of showing during this wide-ranging speech:

“Let me speak directly to the citizens of Iran: America respects you, and we respect your country. We respect your right to choose your own future and win your own freedom. And our nation hopes one day to be the closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran.”

“To overcome dangers in our world, we must also take the offensive by encouraging economic progress, and fighting disease, and spreading hope in hopeless lands. Isolationism would not only tie our hands in fighting enemies, it would keep us from helping our friends in desperate need. We show compassion abroad because Americans believe in the God-given dignity and worth of a villager with HIV/AIDS, or an infant with malaria, or a refugee fleeing genocide, or a young girl sold into slavery.

There was also the bold new approach he took on Iran — granting their right to have civilian nuclear power so long as they’ll give up their pursuit of nuclear weapons:

“(The international community has) made the Iranian regime offers that would enable Iran to have a civil nuclear energy program. (...) Iran’s true interests lie in working with the international community to enjoy the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy, not in isolating Iran by continuing to develop the capability to build nuclear weapons.”

And finally, the religious and cultural sensitivity he exhibited as he made it clear that he understands how misguided it is to blame Islam — or any religion — for the behavior of a small minority of violent extremists who threaten us all:

“By deliberately murdering the innocent to advance their aims, these extremists defy the fundamental principles of international order. They show contempt for all who respect life and value human dignity. They reject the words of the Bible, the Koran, the Torah, or any standard of conscience or morality.”

Yes, it was quite a speech. After reading it a second time I think I can almost begin to understand the ecstatic praise so many liberals offered Obama after they heard it (which I admit I first thought was not only embarrassing but dangerously naive). After all, who could fail to respond to such an intelligent, thoughtful, nuanced, articulate, compassionate attempt to begin a genuine dialogue with the rest of the world?

Honestly, I think even the most unrepentant leftist reading these words with an open mind would have to admit that they show just how different Barack Obama is in every imaginable way from George W. Bush—and more generally, the huge differences between Democrats and Republicans.

There's just one problem: none of these quotes were actually taken from Barack Obama's speech. Not a single word.

They are quotes from an American president, though.

No points for guessing which one at this point, but if you need a hint I can tell you that he was in office from January of 2001 through January of 2009.

(Observant readers may have noticed that I gave away the game with the Iraq withdrawal quote—since unlike Bush, who as you can see cited the correct date of 2011 that's mandated by the U.S./Iraqi Status of Forces Agreement, Obama apparently feels he has the right to unilaterally change the negotiated terms of that agreement and declare that U.S. troops Iraq won't leave until 2012.)

As these quotes make clear, there's scarcely a sentiment in Obama's Cairo speech that wasn't already spoken by George W. Bush.

And yet when Obama offers the same platitudes — sometimes in the exact same words — credulous liberals are seized by fits of swooning and enraptured praise just shy of glossolalia.

Obama's speech wasn't some epoch-defining moment of transformation from a "transcendent leader"; it was a moment of polished stagecraft from a consummate salesman for American empire and corporate capitalism.

It was the same old wine in a lovely new bottle, from someone who's already shown us repeatedly that his words aren't matched by his actions.

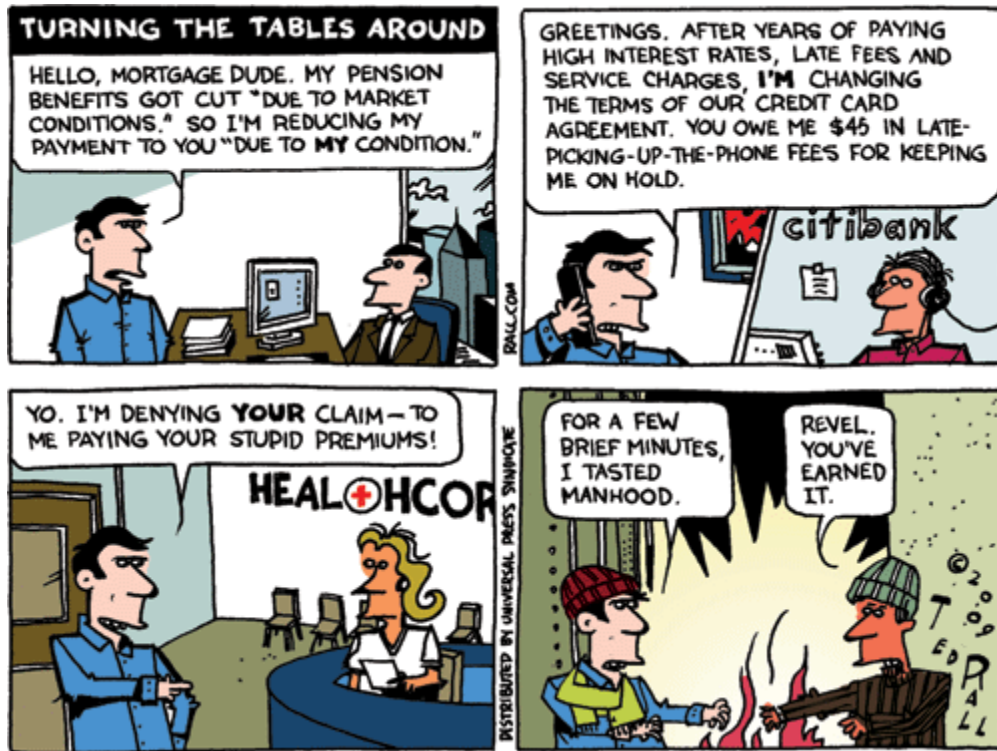
And had it been their arch-nemesis George Bush giving this speech instead of the Anointed One, they'd have had no trouble seeing that.

One can only hope that some day these people will embrace the habit of skepticism for all politicians, not just the ones on the other side, and finally and fully accept that fine words alone mean nothing at all — no matter who speaks them.

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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS



AUTO WORKERS RALLY TO SAVE OUR JOBS!

**“We Demand Solutions Based On
Human Needs”**

TUESDAY, JUNE 16

NOON to 2PM

IN FRONT OF GM

**HEADQUARTERS/RENAISSANCE CENTER,
E. JEFFERSON,
DETROIT**

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran; United Auto Workers GM Retiree, who sent this in.]

Sponsor: www.autoworkercaravan.org

On June 15-17th CEOs of multinational corporations – including American Axle's Dick Dauch, and the CEOs of the former "Big 3," will meet as part of a "Summit" at the Ren Cen to, in their words, "Define America's Future."

The workers and their families who toiled to build these behemoths and the communities which have offered tax break after tax break to support them, have not been asked to speak.

They are not asking us for our views of their "bankruptcy restructurings" of GM and Chrysler, which is all about bailing out the companies at our expense.

We will therefore express an alternative view of "America's Future," – putting people's needs ahead of corporate profits - by joining a People's Summit and Tent City' on June 14-17th at Grand Circus Park.

As part of the "People's Summit," autoworkers and retirees will gather at the Ren Cen at 12 Noon, Tuesday, June 16th to say "enough is enough!" to the plant closings, layoffs, gutted contracts, cuts in health care, and home foreclosures.

Contrary to the banks' and corporations' quest for profits on the backs of an increasingly impoverished and whipsawed global workforce, we demand solutions based on human needs.

The Wall Street financial crisis, the glut of global car production, and the climate crisis marks the beginning of the end of what we have known as the "Motor City." Detroit can and must become the world center for new technologies, reducing our carbon footprint by employing our skilled workforce to convert our factories and build mass transit systems and components for clean energy.

Despite corporate resistance, and faced with a different threat at the beginning of WW II, the auto plants were converted for an entirely different use in just eight months!

Today we face an even bigger challenge as we join in a global effort to cool the planet down. We can take our rightful place as the "Beacon for a Green Economy" but only if we fight for it!

TUESDAY, JUNE 16 DEMONSTRATE FOR JOBS

While AAM CEO Dick Dauch and ex-governor of Michigan, John Engler address the Business Summit

IN FRONT OF GM HEADQUARTERS/RENAISSANCE CENTER, E. JEFFERSON,
DETROIT - NOON to 2PM

**BRING SIGNS CALLING FOR
JOBS AT GOOD WAGES, STOP PLANT CLOSINGS, CONVERT PLANTS TO NEW
TECHNOLOGY,
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY TO REPEAL NAFTA,**

**NO RIGHT TO WORK FOR LESS IN MICHIGAN,
SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE—PASS HR676,
MORATORIUM ON FORECLOSURES,
PASS EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT**

FOLLOWING THE PICKET WE WILL MARCH TO HART PLAZA WHERE WE WILL HAVE A SHORT RALLY.

THERE WILL BE WORKSHOPS AT GRAND CIRCUS PARK FOLLOWING THE RALLY.

Free parking at Central Methodist Church on E. Adams & Woodward (walk or ride the People Mover to the Ren Cen). Paid parking beneath Hart Plaza.

[For a full listing of June 14-17 People's Summit activities, June 14-17, go to www.peoplessummit.org.]

Sponsor: www.autoworkercaravan.org labor donated

labor donated

MORE:

A Letter To Fidel From UAW President Getfingered

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran; United Auto Workers GM Retiree, who sent this in.]

6.9.09 By Gregg Shotwell, United Auto Workers Soldiers Of Solidarity; from Factoryrats Unite! Forum

Dear Fidel:

I read the transcript of your twenty million word speech to the Cuban people denouncing the multi-trillion dollar transfer of wealth from the working class to the capitalists and the capitulation of labor union leaders.

Basically, I agree with you,
but before I ingratiate myself further
I'd like to suggest that you invest
in an Answering Machine.
I mean, twenty million words without a teleprompter?

An Answering Machine like I have
would quadruple your cigar time.

Union members call, the Press calls, whoever,
the Machine says, "No Comment" and I'm off the hook.
The only time I answer is when the president
of some company calls and then I just say, "Yes, sir."
In either case, two words, not twenty million. You see?

But believe me, Fidel, I'm in totalitarian agreement with you
about the extravagance of the latest capitalist crime.
They are draining the treasury dry and
there's really not much for a labor leader to do anymore except
help keep the workers orderly
while the companies eliminate jobs, slash wages, and ship
the pension fund to a Swiss bank account. I mean,
a comrade has to eat and provide for his retirement
which brings me to my next point.

I need a place to stay.
I think they call it sanctuary.
I have body guards to protect me
from homicidal union members
but even the B.G.s are acting suspicious
and I pay them.
You, on the other hand,
can afford to snub your nose at Del Monte,
you have an army, a police force, a secret service,
an underground network of snitches.
You can throw gadflies in jail,
pull out their fingernails so they can't type anymore,
and erase their names from public record.
But what do I have?
I have to build a corral of pomp with piecards
every four years and drum roll delegates
into applauding everything I want.
— \$75 million here, \$200 million there —.

I'm not complaining, it's easy work,
but the fact is, unlike you, I have to retire next year
and I don't have anywhere to go.
You have an island, an army. What do I have?
A country club in northern Michigan
that laid off autoworkers can't afford
which only serves to piss them off.
How can I concentrate on my putt knowing
how many autoworkers with scopes on their rifles
are in deer blinds overlooking the greens?

Sure, I'm rolling in payoffs, just like you, but
it's not like I can blow my wad at the crap tables in Vegas.
I need some cover which is where you come in.
Here's the deal. I make inflammatory remarks about
nationalizing the auto industry at the next convention

and that blowhard Corker from Tennessee
comes apart at the seams
and accuses me of being a communist.
I flee to Cuba and you give me asylum and
my legacy as a tough cigar smoking union leader is secure.

What do you get?

Beside me and my millions which I will be blowing
at the crap tables in Havana, I will teach you
the perfect Ponzi scheme.

You see, Ponzi schemes always fail at some point because
more investors demand returns than there are new investors
forking over their bucks. But here's how I run it.

I convince workers that all they have to do to save their jobs
is make concessions. It's the gift that keeps on giving.

The trough has no bottom. I'll fill you in on the details but
first I need to answer my Answering Machine.

It's Allan Mulally, the head honcho at Ford.

I'll get right back to you.

Viva la Revolution,
Comrade Ron.

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

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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/)**

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