

GI SPECIAL 3C43B:



NOTICE:

The reason for this GI Special B issue for 9.5 is that the article below is too long for a news issue of GI Special, and too important to miss.

THE CASE AGAINST POST-OCCUPATION CIVIL WAR IN IRAQ: DEBUNKING FEARS AND FALLACIES

Introductory Comment: T

The second part of this article, starting with a map of the oil fields, is the first serious military-strategic analysis of what the fighting in Iraq is about by an opponent of the war. Whatever else you read in the next six months, it may be useful to be informed about this dimension of reality.

Goff is no armchair speculator. He has the credentials to discuss Iraq from a military vantage point, based on several decades of first hand military experience.

Hopefully, he will write much more, again, soon, about the war itself, as events unfold.

The media give no useful information, only fragmented reports about a battle here, some soldiers killed near this or that city, bombs dropped someplace else, leaving incoherence in their wake.

For example, so far nobody but Goff, below, connects the importance of Ramadi, and Tal Afar, where a U.S. offensive is now underway, to their locations on key pipelines. The question of whether oil flows out of Iraq or not is no small matter, either to the occupation or the resistance.

The U.S. left is endlessly long-winded about everything but the military course of the war, specializing instead in superficial moralizing.

But the military course of the war is a decisive area for the troops, who are given no explanations for anything by command, and no perspective on what their day to day actions mean.

This is a war. Without understanding the military dimension; we're left stumbling around in a dark room, understanding nothing, unable to see events in motion on the ground, and what they mean.

Thanks to Goff, here, we have a least a flashlight.

As for the first part, Goff gives an appropriate ass-whipping to the social nationalists who hate Bush because they believe they can maintain the Empire more efficiently, and hope to get the movement against the Iraq war to help them accomplish that objective. They're just doing their job, of course.

The betrayal comes from those "leaders" in the movement against the war who try to drag us along with them into the Imperial swamp. An old-time anti-Imperial war activist once politely asked such people to "let go of our hands." Why be so nice? Snapping their political arms, legs and necks like carrots is long overdue.

T



Here is how an exit happens.

8/30/2005 By Stan Goff, [Master Sgt., U.S. Army Special Forces (ret'd)], stangoff.com.
[Excerpt]

It is time, it seems, to debunk the notion that the American occupation of Iraq is somehow required to prevent a civil war.

This bullshit keeps resurfacing, and not just on the Right. At the very point when public opinion is decisively turning against the war, for a variety of reasons, center-left spokespersons – mesmerized by the direct and indirect repetition of this assumption – are presenting all sorts of sly political strategies designed NOT to refute this assumption, but pandering to it.

I really like what Amilcar Cabral and Harry Numa had to say about this kind of maneuvering. Amilcar Cabral was a revolutionary from Guinea-Bissau, who warned against being overly clever by telling his comrades:

“Tell no lies. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories.”

Harry Numa is my friend. He is also a revolutionary, from Haiti. In 1997, when we were having a discussion about the maneuvers of some Lavalas people who thought they could beat the system “from within,” he stated:

“Some people think we can make the revolution while the bourgeoisie is asleep. But the bourgeoisie never sleeps. So we have to make the revolution right in front of them.”

In Haiti, they still call the bourgeoisie the bourgeoisie.

Frank language in political discourse here in the US of A, of course, especially if it dares suggest that such a thing as class exists, will get you treated like someone's weird uncle.

That's partly the reason progressives keep repeating the pluralist-liberal cycle of failure... get the shit kicked out of us, gain a measure of public sympathy for our civility, demonstrate our moral superiority to the Right, attempt to mobilize people around some symbolic single-issue campaign, build an NGO to do it, fight for a tidbit of legislation, get it co-opted and watered down, cry about the capitalist media being, well, the capitalist media, take a self-absorbed sabbatical, get the shit kicked out of us.

One of the shibollets of this mindset is that "we have to learn to fight the system from the inside."

Audre Lourde, who grew up in Grenada, made a good point about this, when she said that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." There are a lot of smart people out there in pan-Africa. They don't have that white-blind-spot.

Here's my slightly less aphoristic analogy for this inside-strategy business.

I weigh maybe 175 pounds. I'm 68 inches tall, and will turn 54 in a couple of months. A varsity football player from North Carolina State University - 74 inches tall and an anabolic 250 pounds - beats the hell out of me outside a bar on Hillsborough Street. So I challenge him to settle this on the football field, where he and his team-mates line up against me and another bunch of football players. The players on my team all reassure me that they will block and perform all sorts of maneuvers (sorry, I don't really know shit about football), but when the play starts, I am still a football neophyte who weighs 175 pounds and can't run very fast... and I still get the shit beat out of me.

Our team-mates in the political world version of this are Democratic elected officials.

Okay, it's not perfect as a metaphor, and I'm sure there will be plenty of refining comments on it, but my basic point is that politics "in the system" is a fixed game, dominated throughout by a ruling class.

I am frequently amazed that this is even controversial, but it is, and that should be a testament to the efficacy of ruling-class propaganda and the power of a social system to reproduce itself through our basic ideas (which, naturally, are the ideas that prop up the power of that dominant class).

System... ideas... system... ideas... another self-perpetuating cycle.

It only seems logical, then, that breaking the cycle means somehow getting outside the system, and outside the supporting ideas. No?

Let's look at a classic piece of inside-strategy propaganda used by some people who oppose the war. "Peace is Patriotic."

Well, no... it isn't actually.

Flip this declaration to “patriotism is peaceful,” and you can see that it is a perfectly idiotic declaration.

The whole notion of patriotism is fundamentally based on conflict rooted in nationalism. And everyone knows that, even if they don't articulate it that way. That's why bumper stickers that say this don't succeed in convincing a single soul of the merits of an antiwar position.

This slogan is so transparently manipulative that the best it can hope to do is piss people off for having their intelligence insulted.

The people who sport this slogan are not those who have been turned around by it, but those who believe they will turn someone ELSE around with it.

But people in the US who are emotionally invested in patriotism and who supported the war in the first place will remain completely unmoved. The people who are not yet convinced of our position, but who are open to be convinced with the right arguments are the very people who are willing to question the notion of patriotism in an imperial nation – and that is precisely the question we should be posing to them.

Have you closely examined the history and implications of patriotism in the United States?

Mask no difficulties!

The war in Iraq and Afghanistan is a real thing with real consequences. I shouldn't feel compelled to say anything so obvious, but I do.

When people start talking about proposing “exit strategies” as part of an insider-politics maneuver – based on the mistaken notion that we can make the revolution while the bourgeoisie is asleep – and these same liberals talk about phasing withdrawals and so forth, what occurs to me is that neither they nor anyone they love is likely to be one of those who will die or be maimed between the time an “exit strategy” is announced and implemented.

The ruling class in the United States – not the Republicans – is committed to this war, for reasons that are enumerated on this blog and elsewhere (related not to terrorism but to a crisis of accumulation that threatens the power of the ruling class).

Most Democrats voted for the invasion, and there were no voices raised against the war when it was Clinton's serial air strikes and the deadly sanctions. Most Democrats also voted for the first invasion, and that one was sanctioned by the United Nations – which except in rare conjunctures acts as a puppet of the US.

The “Out of Iraq” caucus in Congress is not a principled formation. It is a practical formation that anticipates the domestic political consequences of an

American public that is increasingly turning against the war. They are not, by and large, positioning to support us, but to manipulate us for their own political ends.

I am pleased that this caucus exists, because it is a reflection of mass sentiment that is moving dramatically away from the war.

But we cannot afford to delude ourselves that this is somehow a proactive formation.

It is not providing leadership, and it should never be allowed to provide leadership within the larger movement against the war. It is a reactive formation, and the way to keep it in motion is to continue with the actions that forced it to react in the first place... that is, building popular opposition to the war.

That is why rumors that major antiwar coalitions are proposing “exit strategies” as a maneuver to “empower” the Out of Iraq Caucus are alarming to some of us. That “empowerment” is a surrender of popular power. It is taking the game onto THEIR field, where we rely on them to plan the plays and conduct the blocks and run the ball.

To hell with that. If they want to play, they need to come out to the street and play by our rules... and for many of us, this is no game.

When insider maneuvering begins, the goal becomes to cobble together majorities (that's what Congress responds to out of self-interest). Once majoritarianism becomes the goal, there is a powerful temptation to pander to popular beliefs no matter how misinformed or backward. Trickery takes over. We start trying to mask difficulties. We convince ourselves that the bourgeoisie is sleeping.

One of the principle problems in this regard at this moment when “exit strategies” are being composed in NGO chatrooms is that we are buying into the notions that (1) a unilateral immediate withdrawal of US troops from Iraq will result in an unspeakable orgy of bloodshed, and that (2) it is “our” responsibility to prevent that.

1. While no one can predict what will happen in Iraq after the US occupation forces leave, there are certain concrete developments that have to be understood before jumping to these cataclysmic (and racist) conclusions.

2. This whole construction is based on the bizarre idea that an invading military under the same leadership that oversaw the invasion can play some benevolent role, even temporarily.

3. “Exit strategy” is an Orwellian term generated by politicians.

An actual withdrawal does not require a strategy. It is not a strategic exercise. It is a technical problem, that can only be solved after a decision has been taken, and only based on the practical conditions that exist when the order is given.

Withdrawal is in NO WAY based on the development of an “exit strategy.”

It is based on a command. I know this is so starkly obvious that it will confuse some people, accustomed as we have become to listening to policy talking-heads say shit like “exit strategy,” but think about it for a moment in the same practical terms you use in your everyday lives. Making up “exit strategies” is a masturbatory exercise. It feels good while one is doing it, but it doesn’t generate anything.

Now, to the specifics.

August 23-24 - Armed confrontations between the former Badr Brigades and the Mahdi militias of Muqtada la Sadr.

This is a Shia-Shia Arab-Arab fight. Fable of ethno-religious fault lines undermined.

Former Badr Brgiades: A militia serving as the extralegal armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).

On January 12: Michael Schwartz writes for Asia Times, “The taming of Sadr City.” Thesis – US failure to establish civil control leads Iraqis to locally self-govern.

Self-government in Fallujah in 2003 meets with violent suppression by the Americans, but must continue across Iraq. Americans confront the Iraqis with a no-win situation – that is, no provision of basic services and governance combined with violent suppression of any genuinely organic remedies. Emerging Iraqi structures take on a political and military character largely opposed to the American occupation.

Sadr City, 3,000,000 people. 20% of Iraq’s Shia population. Iraq’s Shia population around 60% of Iraq’s total population.

Two questions: If official narratives are simplistic and mostly false, (1) How can Iraq’s social dynamics be more accurately described? (2) Why does the administration insist on creating false narrative?

Schwartz writes:

“The Sadrists have developed an effective political-military strategy aimed at converting Sadr City into a ‘liberated area’, in the classic guerrilla warfare model.

“• Their main military strategy is to expel the US from their domain; only when they are under attack themselves do they venture outside Sadr City to attack US bases or supply routes.

“• The al-Sadr organization is attempting to construct a coherent “dual” government that replaces the central government and which administers the usual set of public services - from traffic control to apprehending street criminals - within limits set by their inability to coordinate with a national government. This proto-government has been particularly assiduous in addressing the number one problem of public order, street crime, and has actually cooperated with the local police in this campaign.

“• Mehdi soldiers - the guerrilla forces led by the Sadrists - though prone to thuggery, are largely under the control of this dual government, which is led by civilians - tribal leaders and Muslim clerics. The Mehdi soldiers act as the police force within the community.

“• The Sadrists have been surprisingly successful in co-opting the Iraqi police, by rewarding them for working on community issues and fighting them when they participate in efforts to suppress the rebel political-military structure. American military complaints about the unreliability of their Iraqi trainees is actually a reflection of successfully applied guerrilla policy.

“• The Sadrists have begun to enforce strict Islamist fundamentalism by suppressing such ‘moral crimes’ as liquor sales and prostitution...

“• The Sadrists, and parallel groups in other cities (notably Fallujah), have publicly denounced the spectacular bombings perpetrated by various terrorists groups, complaining about their negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of Iraqi civilians and calling for an active alliance with the Iraqi police in suppressing foreign jihadis and domestic terrorists.

“• The organization in Sadr City is an echo of similar developments in Sunni cities (with Fallujah as the center), and it may foreshadow similar developments in the all-important Shi'ite south. The American attacks on various Iraqi cities, including the brutal battle of Fallujah, was an attempt to reverse this trend toward self-governed cities into which American forces rarely intrude.

“• The existence of these dual governments in many cities rebuts American claims that US withdrawal would result in chaos. Ironically, just the reverse is true; US success in defeating the guerrillas would result in chaos, whereas a guerrilla victory would bring greater stability (and perhaps too strict an order) to the Iraqi cities.”

Two major points here: (1) The Iraqis are showing again and again that they can not only govern effectively, but that they can do so under very difficult circumstances, and (2) the Iraqis themselves are ready, willing, and able to deal with the handful of foreign “jihadists” if these forces even see a reason to remain after the US occupation (their main target) is gone.

Once we dispense with the racial stereotype of the bloodthirsty and venal Arab (which informs liberal as well as conservative discourse, albeit in different hues), we can begin to ask the kind of real questions we ask about Euro-American politics. Whose interests are served by what actions?

An analysis of the situation for Iraq right now – absent the distortions introduced by the military occupation – reveals little that anyone will gain from a civil war. On the contrary, given the geography, demographics, and future interests of this collection of “city-states” described by Schwartz, some form of cooperation between most or all groups is required for any improvement anywhere.

The elections in January are a distortion, because they are the result of a deal struck between Sistani and the Americans after the US provoked its way into a dual-humiliation

with the Najaf and Fallujah rebellions. Puppet PM Allawi had encouraged the US to conduct these attacks, which backfired into Sadr going from “most wanted” to one of the most respected leaders in Iraq.

Sistani also watching al Sadr. Sistani’s base regionally differentiated from Sadr’s, but also by class (oops, there I said that word again). Sistani and the SCIRI depend on civil society run by petit-bourgeois Shia layer and the clerical bureaucracy. Sadr’s base geographically concentrated, agile, among working class poor in the capital, Baghdad.

Americans, faced with the dual tactical crisis of Najaf and Fallujah, and the specter of generalized Shia rebellion in the South that would render the occupation untenable within months, give in to Sistani (the good Shia to Sadr’s “bad” Shia).

Sistani and the SCIRI get elections in January, though the US engineers a partial defeat for them, checking them with Allawi (and massive vote fraud) as well as the Kurds.

Key point here is that this maneuvering is not inhering in the Iraqi factions, but in their positioning of themselves relative to the occupation. Subtract the Americans, and an entirely new dynamic must emerge!!!

Muqtada al Sadr not only did not face arrest or assassination – yet another humiliation for the US; he went on to establish his own “city-state” in Sadr City that is now effectively a no-go zone for US forces.

US now faced with a BIG dilemma. Fact-on-the-ground today – The occupation hangs by a thin thread of tolerance from a pro-Iranian formation. Iran now silently must support the US occupation. US dependence on the pro-Iranian semi-puppet Iraqi “government” effectively prevents the Americans from attacking Iran.

An attack on Iran right will result in an instant and general anti-American uprising in Iraq that would precipitate American defeat in Iraq. Oops! Don & Dick didn’t anticipate this one, did they?

Three counterweights available to UIA for the US: (1) Kurds, (2) Sunni nationalists (Ba’athists), and (3) Allawi faction.

White House chooses Allawi. Dumb!

Hersh’s New Yorker article says:

“The focus on Allawi, Campbell said, blinded the White House to some of the realities on the ground. ‘The Administration was backing the wrong parties in Iraq,’ he said. ‘We told them, ‘The parties you like are going to get creamed.’ They didn’t believe it.’

“‘What Tom Warrick was trying to do was not stupid,’ a senior United Nations official who was directly involved in planning for the Iraqi election told me. ‘He was desperate, because Bremer and the White House had empowered the Iranians. Warrick was trying to see what could be salvaged.’ He added that the answer, as far as the United States

was concerned, was Allawi, who, despite his dubious past, was ‘the nearest thing to an Iraqi with whom the White House could salvage the nation.’”

Big blunder.

In contrast to all polls within days of the election, Allawi’s faction gained 14% of the vote compared to his 2-4% reflected in polling, the Kurds won 26%, and the UIA tallied a mere 48% against much higher polling expectations.

Indeed. Democracy is grand.

Changing outcomes is not the same as controlling outcomes. Election results immediately threw the quasi-elected government into a serial crisis, first with regard to cabinet appointments, and more recently with regard to the draft Constitution – both being rush jobs demanded by the Bush administration as public relations milestones to prop up flagging support for the war back in the US.

From an article soon to be published by From The Wilderness:

“Wrangling over the cabinet was acrimonious, playing out against a background of escalating armed resistance that increasingly targeted Iraqis associated with the new “puppet” regime. It took three months to cobble together a cabinet that had the combined ability to reassure the Americans and provide a modicum of symbolic cover to various constituencies in Iraq.

“In the end, the presidency went to Jalal Talibani, a Kurd, and the Prime Minister position – where the real executive power resides – to Ibrahim al Jafaari of the Da’awa Party. Significantly, the Interior Ministry – with control of future militias and police – went to Bayan Jubur of SCIRI, which accounts for the increased employment of former Badr Brigade militia against potential rivals of the SCIRI, especially Sunnis and Ba’athists.

“Within the ‘government,’ then, the Da’awa now has the most influence over future administrative structures, the SCIRI has established its dominance among future armed forces, and the Kurds are positioned to play both ends against the middle – while holding on to the most powerful actually-existing militia in the country – the 80-100,000-strong Peshmerga in Iraqi Kurdistan.

“Allawi, by the way, who is replaced as the American-appointed Prime Minister by Jafaari, tried to insist on four cabinet ministries as a condition of his continued support for the UIA, and was dismissed out of hand. All that covert operations money, down the toilet.”

Main Point Again: The major conflicts accruing around the issue of post-occupation governance are all related to distortions created by the US occupation force of 140,000 troops and 25,000 mercenaries. No Iraqi armed force in has the capacity (or the motive, given the actual circumstances) to sieze control over the whole country. It is this de facto partition into “city-states” along with an indefinite occupation that allows forces like the former Badr Brigades (with US support) to travel north in search of political enemies.

Contrary to much leftist speculation, the US has no desire to “divide and conquer” Iraq, nor does the American government want a civil war as the pretext for continuing the occupation.

The administration NEVER expresses support for any version of partition.

Administration’s principle preoccupation since April 2004 is the question of Iran.

If Iraq breaks up, the US will be faced with Southern Iraq – including a huge fraction of its oil – becoming a protectorate of Iran.

US has built its bases – primary goal of the invasion – in Ba’athist strongholds. Result of tactical necessity as the Anbar, Nineva, and Saladin provinces were consolidated as centers of nationalist resistance.

US base at Mosul, along the Tigris River, has become almost a city unto itself with a 65-kilometer security perimeter and a giant airfield. Exists in a sea of hostility, surrounded by an increasingly sophisticated guerrilla resistance, adjacent to Kirkuk where the Kurds are attempting to establish their future national capital through a de-Arabization campaign. The headquarters for this base, however, is located in the Green Zone – Baghdad, and the only seaport to the entire country is in Basra Province, which would become part of a post-breakup Iranian protectorate.

Fragmented Iraq impossible for the US to control.

Fragmented Iraq results in Iranian hegemony in the South.

Fragmented Iraq forces condominium between guerrilla-controlled Anbar Province and Syria.

Situation: A pro-Iranian semi-puppet government and a military occupation that has been driven into its dispersed military installations.

Iraq is not Yugoslavia.

On August 27th, George W. Bush telephones none other than Abdul Aziz Al Hakim (head of SCIRI) to beg for Sunni inclusion. Think about it.

Sistani’s Faustian maneuver temporarily forecloses any real relationship with the rebel provinces to the north. Sunni nationalists and Islamists, now frozen out of the political process but still engaged in an armed resistance to the American occupation. Not to the Shias. To the Americans.

Military Science 101:

Given the terrible firepower from ground and air that can be mustered by the American forces, the nationalist and Islamist armed resistance (these are not clearly delineated categories, but more and more seem to be collaborating as an Islamist-nationalist resistance) has little choice in its own prosecution of the war – barring surrender.

It must employ asymmetric military tactics, the most essential of which is to “blind” the occupation to the resistance’s size, activity, location, composition, and disposition. Without this “blinding,” guerrilla forces cannot effectively employ what is for them the two most important principles of war: Offensive and Surprise.

From U.S. Army, Field Manual 100-5, 1994 (Unclassified):

Offensive

Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.

Offensive action is the most effective and decisive way to attain a clearly defined common objective. Offensive operations are the means by which a military force seizes and holds the initiative while maintaining freedom of action and achieving decisive results. This is fundamentally true across all levels of war. ...

Surprise

Strike the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which he is unprepared.

Surprise can decisively shift the balance of combat power. By seeking surprise, forces can achieve success well out of proportion to the effort expended. Rapid advances in surveillance technology and mass communication make it increasingly difficult to mask or cloak large-scale marshaling or movement of personnel and equipment. The enemy need not be taken completely by surprise but only become aware too late to react effectively. Factors contributing to surprise include speed, effective intelligence, deception, application of unexpected combat power, operations security (OPSEC), and variations in tactics and methods of operation. Surprise can be in tempo, size of force, direction or location of main effort, and timing. Deception can aid the probability of achieving surprise. ...

Everyone got that?

There is not more effective means of blinding the US occupation forces than to attack Iraqi collaborators. As a recent article on the Marine base in Hit pointed out, “American troops find themselves in a house of mirrors in which they don’t speak the language and can’t tell friend from foe.”

Contrary to the vague sense of unease among Americans that the US is required to be in Iraq to prevent civil war, a presumption underwritten by more than a little plain racism, the current civil war between “Sunni” and “Shia” IS CREATED AND SUSTAINED by the occupation.

There IS no basis for rapprochement between these parties UNTIL the American occupation ends.

Partition means the Sunni provinces become an oil-poor rump state.

The problem with a Sunni rump state, for the Americans, is that with it comes a Kurdish state.

People who study politics need to study maps. Here is a map.



Most of the oil fields are east of the Euphrates River.

Richest fields near Basra and Nasiriyah, and east of Kirkuk.

Note the mail pipelines: Iraq-Turkey Pipeline; Iraq-Syria-Lebanon Pipeline; Iraq-Saudi Arabia Pipeline; Iraq Strategic Pipeline.

The refineries are located in Mosul, Bayji, Haditha, Samawah, Nasiriyah, and Basra.

North and south connected solely by the Iraq Strategic Pipeline which runs from Haditha in the heart of the so-called Sunni region (and the site of repeated guerrilla engagements with the US Marines) down through Ramadi (also a guerrilla stronghold) and eventually into Basra.

This means that the oil harvested in Iraqi Kurdistan has two options for export: the Iraqi Strategic Pipeline or the Iraq-Turkey Pipeline. The latter runs through the Sunni guerrilla strongholds east of Mosul, including Tal Afar.

Partition of Iraq means that oil from Southern Iraq can get out through the port at Um Qasr. But the rich fields of Iraqi Kurdistan, east of Kirkuk, would be landlocked if the Iraqi Strategic Pipeline were severed. This has proven a fairly easy task for the resistance. The only way out for Kurdish oil, then, is through Turkey or Syria, with the Syrian pipeline stretching through Sunni guerrilla country.

If Kurdistan pushes for independence, there can be little doubt that it will be militarily attacked by Turkey, to whom a Kurdish state is anathema, and for whom

an external enemy could well serve the Turkish ruling class in these times of neoliberal hardship. While Turkey's military is formidable in the region, there is also little doubt that the Peshmerga has gained enough strength and experience to fight them to a standstill on their own terrain – creating another war of attrition in the region that would damage any enthusiasm for investment there and further disrupt tight oil markets.

Iraq is an oil nation. The future well-being of all of Iraq is tied to the ability to peacefully exploit oil revenues.

Given the regionality of the various militias, concentrated into these “city-states,” no one armed faction has the capacity to topple the others. More importantly, these militias are armed expressions of political forces, all of whom have much more to gain from mutual accords than they do from internecine warfare. The popular bases are not clamoring for war (except against Americans). They are clamoring for water and electricity!

The primary forces remaining in the Iraqi “government” are semi-puppets. On the one hand, they are dependent on American military power for the time being to maintain the current balance of forces in their favor. On the other hand, they clearly have an agenda that is designed to consolidate that long-term power through a pact of some sort with Iran.

This has created a polarization between current direct participants in the Iraqi government and the minority – strategically located and well-armed – Sunnis/nationalists in the north. That is not a cultural polarization but a political one that further entrenches the Faustian alliance between the government and the US occupiers each day, though there is no inhering reason among the general populations – who have for years seen inter-ethnic and inter-denominational marriage, etc. – for any pressure to partition the country.

The so-called Iraqi government does not in fact exercise real governance over any but a fraction of Iraq, and the “city-state” phenomenon throughout the country is setting the stage for a universally unacceptable Balkanization of Iraq, at the same time that it is developing the probable (and yet largely unknown) future local leadership of Iraq.

At some point in the future, most of these actors will have to deal with one another politically.

The greatest impediment to a political solution to post-invasion Iraq is not some cauldron of inter-ethnic rivalry. It is the politico-military distortion produced by the American occupation.

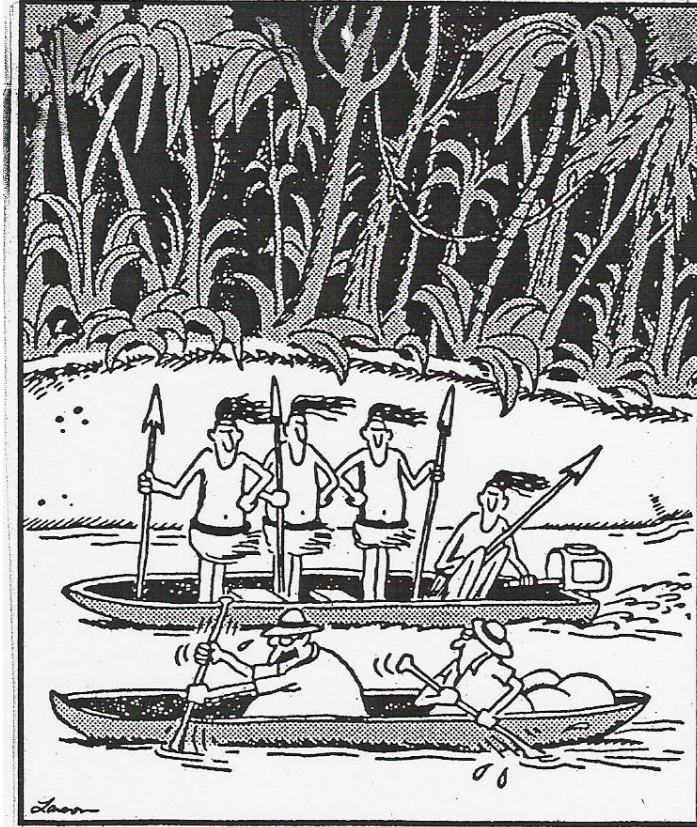
NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize

resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

PROBLEMS OF ASYMMETRIC WARFARE



“Are they gaining, Huxley?”

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL 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 war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

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The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>,

www.williambowles.info/gispecial,

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