

GI SPECIAL 3A49:

**THIS IS HOW RUMSFELD BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THE ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE!**



US Army Pfc. Jesus Fonseca's wife Marlene Zaragoza, 18, fits the Mexican flag on her husband's coffin Feb. 1 2005, in Degollado, Mexico. Jesus Fonseca, 19, of Marietta, Ga., died in Iraq. (AP Photo/Guillermo Arias)

RUMSFELD TELLS THE TRUTH!

February 17, 2005 By Dana Milbank, Washington Post Staff Writer

When the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Ike Skelton (Mo.), asked about the number of insurgents in Iraq, the secretary said, "I am not going to give you a number for it because it's not my business to do intelligent work."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

ONE TASK FORCE FREEDOM SOLDIER KILLED, THREE WOUNDED DURING MOSUL ATTACK

February 17, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-02-23C

MOSUL, Iraq -- One Task Force Freedom Soldier was killed and three were wounded by a car bomb while on patrol in Mosul on Feb. 16 at approximately 11:45 a.m.

The name of the Soldier killed is being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

Four Louisiana Guardsmen Wounded In Blast

February 17, 2005 Alain A. de la Villesbret, Louisiana Gannett News

Four members of the Louisiana National Guard, three known to be from St. Landry Parish, were wounded when a roadside bomb detonated near their Humvee in Baghdad on Monday.

Cpl. Shane Reed of Port Barre, Spc. Randy Thibodeaux of Opelousas, Spc. Brandon Richard of Port Barre and another unidentified soldier all were injured in the blast, but none of the injuries were life threatening. Thibodeaux, who has been awarded a Purple Heart, faces surgery because of his injuries.

Reed's wife, Ashley Reed, learned the news Monday while attending a nursing class at T.H. Harris in Opelousas. Ashley, who rarely takes her cell phone to class, said she just had a gut feeling to not only bring it but to check it that day.

"When I checked the phone, I saw that I had missed two calls, and then it lit up again, and it was him," she said. Her husband told her he had been hit but that he was OK.

Shane Reed is serving in Iraq with the Louisiana National Guard 1088th Alpha Company Engineering Battalion of the 256th Infantry Enhanced Brigade. The Reeds will celebrate their one-year wedding anniversary in April. They have a two-year old son, Landon.

Ashley Reed said she has always had fears of her husband's safety since he's been gone.

"It's a dangerous place," she said, "but when I heard his voice I knew he was OK, and I was thankful he was alive. The National Guard notifies the families quickly, so we don't

have to hear any rumors, but Shane wanted to call me and tell me. He sounded good. He always does."

Reed's friend, Thibodeaux, has been in the National Guard for six years and he was deployed to Iraq in October. He and his wife, Shelly, are parents of 16-month old twin girls, Gracie and Madison.

Like Ashley Reed, Shelly Thibodeaux said she faces phone calls with anxiety.

"The military notified me as soon as it happened," she said. "I talked to him right away, and I talked to him again (Wednesday)."

Shelly said her husband had 13 stitches in his face and six broken teeth.

"He said his face looks like he was dragged over cement," she said, "but that's OK. We can live with a few scars."

She said she last saw her husband around Christmas and hopes that he will be coming home for good in October or November.

"But, like everyone else, we really don't know when," she said.

Thibodeaux added that she and her girls are doing fine holding down the homefront.

Ashley Reed said she deals with being a military wife day by day.

"We're very lonesome. A lot of soldiers have come home but Shane hasn't. My son misses him. When he hears his voice on the phone his whole face lights up," Reed said.

Two Mississippi Guardsmen Die In Iraq Accident: "You Could Tell That Night That He Was Worried."

Feb. 17, 2005 RON HARRIST, Associated Press, JACKSON, Miss.

Two state guardsmen died in Iraq when their vehicle rolled over into a canal after the roadway collapsed, the Mississippi National Guard said Thursday.

The guard identified the two killed Wednesday as Spc. Joseph A. Rahaim, 22, of Laurel, and Sgt. Timothy Osbey, 29, of Magnolia.

Rahaim was assigned to Detachment 1, Company A, 155th Infantry in Mendenhall, while Osbey was assigned to Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry in McComb.

Dorothy Osbey of Magnolia, the soldier's aunt, said Thursday that Timothy Osbey had married shortly before leaving for Iraq.

"This is hard," Dorothy Osbey said. "He was loved. He was the type of person that was upbeat and happy."

She said that when her nephew was asked about why he was willing to go to Iraq "with all this stuff going on, he'd say, 'Don't worry about me because I'm coming back.'"

"He kept a smile on his face regardless of what was going on," Dorothy Osbey said.

Authorities said Osbey also is survived by a 9-year-old daughter who lives in Baton Rouge, La., but had no other details.

Ed Ritchey, Rahaim's uncle, said Thursday that his nephew had chosen the military life. He said that after serving three years with the Army at Ft. Hood in Texas, his nephew had returned to Mississippi and joined a National Guard unit in Mendenhall.

"The night before they left, we all got together and you could tell that night that he was worried. He wouldn't say so, but you could look at him and tell."

Ritchey said Rahaim's older sister told the family Thursday morning she recalled that as she drove her brother to Camp Shelby for training, "he was trying to hide his tears. She said she was worried and scared but he told her he was coming back."

"She said that as she drove away, he held a hand up in a sign, you know, that means 'I love you.'"

Funeral arrangements were incomplete.

TROOP NEWS

**More Outrageous Bullshit!
Medical Staff Have To Buy Clothes
For The Wounded;**

Civilians Have To Go Begging For Help

Feb. 17, 2005 BY JOE RODRIGUEZ, The Wichita Eagle

When Derby resident Barbara Bulger learned that soldiers who have been wounded in Iraq needed some personal items after being hospitalized, she decided to help.

Bulger, a U.S. Air Force reservist, started a collection drive at Derby VFW Post 7253. She plans to collect donations --such as men and women's toiletries, sweats, tennis shoes, underwear, DVDs, videotapes and money -- through March.

Bulger came up with the idea after her husband, Mike, learned that soldiers often arrived at Landstuhl with only the clothes they were wearing.

He had learned that a friend's niece, who is a pastoral aide at Landstuhl, and other staff members there often buy clothes and other items for the wounded.

[No change here. This has been going on since the war started. Tens of billions for the profiteering friends of the criminals running the government, and not even a few lousy dollars from Washington so wounded troops can have what they need. The enemy is in Washington DC running the government. There is no enemy in Iraq, other than the politicians infesting the U.S. headquarters in the Green Zone. The whole war is a lie for Empire.]

MORE OF THE SAME:

February 17, 2005 By Amy Quesinberry, THE WEST ORANGE TIMES

At 20, Army Sgt. Jose Lopez is facing a future drastically different than he imagined when he first went to Iraq in March 2003. During his second tour of duty - he was deployed last December - his Humvee was struck in a car-bomb attack near Mosul prior to the Iraqi elections.

The Winter Garden resident was sent to a hospital in Germany with a deep leg wound and without his right eye.

Now his dreams of having a career in the military are gone, and he must adapt to his altered appearance.

But for one day - this Saturday, Feb. 19 - Lopez can try to put all that aside and enjoy the welcome-home celebration that is planned just for him.

A ceremony will take place at 7 p.m. at the gazebo in downtown Winter Garden. The public is being invited to this special event to show support for our military and, especially, someone who to many exemplifies a "hometown hero."

West Orange VFW Post 4305 and American Legion Post 63 will make presentations of awards and medals, and a Blue Star Banner will be given to his mother, Maria Vargas. A singer will perform a number of patriotic songs.

Afterward, Tiger's Eye Karate will host a reception for Lopez at 139 W. Plant St.

The city's Recreation Department is placing a "welcome home" banner downtown this week.

The mayor of Winter Garden, Jack Quesinberry, has also proclaimed Feb. 19, 2005, Sgt. Jose Lopez Day.

In addition, the City Commission voted last week to donate at least \$3,000 to purchase toiletries and high-energy snacks for Lopez's 82nd Airborne Division.

[What next? Donations to buy gas for the Humvees? Collection plates for BDUs? Thanks to D, who sent this one in.]

"Not Only Was He Paralyzed In A Wheelchair, He Was Financially Wiped Out"

February 17, 2005 By Diane Baltozer, CNC

At the Pvt. Charles Shutt Marine Detachment in Watertown, civilian and military volunteers from Watertown and surrounding communities help veterans of all ages.

In the past year, a group of former Marine members of the Detachment teamed up with a car dealer and others to support a young Saugus Marine injured severely in the war to get back on the road to greater mobility.

The Shutt Detachment Marine veterans heard about then-Cpl. James Crosby, 19, after he was wounded by shrapnel in a rocket attack March 18 in Iraq. Crosby had spent just "a few days shy of a month there" in the combat zone before being injured.

Flown out of Iraq to U.S. military hospitals in Germany and from there to Bethesda Hospital near Washington, Crosby eventually returned to West Roxbury Veterans Administration Hospital for treatment near where he then lived in Winthrop.

Along the way, Boston Herald columnist Jules Crittenden, "a reporter embedded with a division in Iraq, was given my name as a contact for local former Marines in the Boston area," said Marine veteran and Newton Police Det. William Byrne.

Crittenden told Byrne, a former Commandant of the Shutt Detachment, "that James could really use some fellow Marine company and also filled me in on his disastrous financial condition," Byrne related.

Young servicemen and women, Byrne explained, "typically can only get about \$500 of a credit line on a credit card (because their pay is low)."

And for the same reason, they end up using their credit cards for some everyday living expenses.

"When James left for Iraq, he knew that his monthly pay would double (to combat pay levels)," said Byrne.

With Crosby's pay doubling he expected that his cards could be paid off. But only one month later, he was wounded and undergoing major medical treatment at various hospitals. And his pay dropped back in half to \$1,200 a month regular pay.

His credit card and other bills piled up. In addition, injured servicemen also sometimes have some medical treatment expenses deducted from their pay.

"Not only was he paralyzed in a wheelchair, he was financially wiped out," Byrne said.

"I contacted nine other former Marine friends of mine," said Byrne. "I asked them to meet me the next day at the VA hospital and to each bring \$100.

"We met James, shared some common talk and gave him \$1,000 to help bail out his credit cards," said Byrne.

"They helped by always visiting me when I was in the hospital. They brought me food every day. They took me out to go places. They really were there for me!" said Crosby about the Marine veterans.

When Byrne and his nine former Marine friends first visited Crosby at the VA Hospital, it was clear that the young veteran would need more help than they could provide financially on their own, especially once he was ready to be released from the hospital. He would have the usual expenses, just disability to live on, and he had no car and was in a wheelchair.

So Crosby returned to Massachusetts to find Marines were ready to help him.

"On Aug. 19, we had a huge bash at The Rack in Faneuil Hall, Boston. We raised about \$40,000 with the help of lots of people who turned out," said Byrne.

The fund-raiser helped bail out Crosby from many pressing financial problems and a start in his new life.

Along the way, Crosby had been improving health-wise and was eventually released from the Veterans Hospital.

However, he still needed to make several day-long visits back to the VA hospital each week for physical therapy and other treatments, was still recovering, without a car and expecting for the foreseeable future to be in a wheelchair and heavily

reliant on others. His father, Kevin Crosby - a Marine veteran himself - and brother, Jarred, a high school student, helped get him to medical visits.

But Crosby needed adapted living quarters and was eager to be independent. Eventually, he moved into a Saugus wheelchair-accessible apartment open to veterans and others. Since then, Crosby's regular hospital visits have decreased to two or three days a week and additional healing and pain treatments as needed.

Recently, he tried out leg braces and crutches.

Among other severe injuries caused by the rocket attack, Byrne explained, Crosby's spinal cord was severely damaged, but not severed. Although it's not clear if that damage will improve with more treatments, he is learning to slowly maneuver his legs while most of his weight relies on the arm crutches.

However, for now Crosby needs his wheelchair and has been navigating, with the help of his new mentors, some other major hurdles on the road to becoming more independent and mobile.

Meanwhile, Crosby wasn't just eagerly awaiting his car. He was in Washington, D.C. for Veterans Day, honoring other veterans and working to help others severely wounded, like himself, avoid the financial problems he had faced

"My father and I and Congressman (Ed) Markey put together a bill to change the way wounded veterans are paid," explained Crosby. "When your quality of life is worse than when you went over. It (the pay cut he suffered) just seemed wrong."

If OK'd by Congress, the Crosby-Puller Combat Wounds Compensation Act (co-named after the most decorated Marine of all time, the late Lt. Gen. Chesty Puller) would keep the pay level of seriously injured military at the same rate they received while in combat, until they are healed, discharged and receive VA benefits, or die, said Byrne.

"James and his father," said Byrne. "Put a great deal of time into this bill, knowing that James was not going to benefit from it because he had already been discharged. They did it to help future wounded service personnel."

That legislation was introduced to Congress this week.

And today, Crosby said, with his new car, "I can go anywhere I want to go."

One place he goes is to the Veterans Services office in Boston - not to get help, but to give it. He works there two days a week helping do whatever I can to make the transition from active duty to veteran easier for other guys coming home.

"It kind of gets me going again with life. And sometime in the near future I'm thinking of going to college," he said.

DIA Chief Says Resistance Growing Stronger

February 17, 2005 By Dana Priest and Josh White, The Washington Post

Vice Adm. Lowell E. Jacoby, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told the Senate panel the Iraq insurgency has grown "in size and complexity over the past year" and is now mounting an average of 60 attacks per day, up from 25 last year.

Attacks on Iraq's election day last month reached 300, he said, double the previous one-day high of 150, even though transportation was virtually locked down.

Chairborne General Calls 60+ Strikes Daily "A Limited Capacity."

Feb 17, 2005 By Vicki Allen, WASHINGTON (Reuters)

The Pentagon has found that Iraqi insurgents can conduct up to 60 strikes a day and occasionally more, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Richard Myers said on Thursday.

Myers, who testified with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, characterized the insurgency fighting some 150,000 U.S. forces in Iraq as "a limited capacity."

[What the fuck is that supposed to mean? Every capacity is "limited." Technically, 5,000 strikes a day is also limited, to 5,000 strikes a day. If this weasel is trying to imply that the resistance isn't really doing that much, tell that to the families of the dead and maimed troops. And while asshole Myers is at it, maybe he can explain his limited capacity to get from the Green Zone to the Airport alive. The "limited capacity" of the resistance means that the only ground George Bush holds in Iraq is whatever piece of ground the troops are standing on at any given moment. Everybody else in the world knows that. Is Myers that stupid, or is Congress that stupid, or are they both playing a big game of "let's pretend?" Fun for the politicians in Generals' uniforms and the politicians in Congress; deadly for the troops. Bring them all home now!]

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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)

Junior Officers Fault US Command For “Failure To Surprise” In Iraq: “We Just Wait For Them To Come And Blow Us Up”

February 7, 2005 World Tribune.com

BAGHDAD, February 7, 2005 -- U.S. military sources said combat units have failed to develop effective tactics required to defeat the insurgency in Iraq.

The Abu Dhabi-based Gulf News reported that senior officers from the 82nd Airborne Division have criticized leading military planners for their force protection tactics.

"The result has been a lack of mobility and failure to surprise," a military source said. **"By the time, we arrive at an insurgency stronghold, half the city knows about it."**

The failed U.S. military tactics are based on a strategy for force protection that require the use of armored fortresses, heavy vehicles, heavy weapons and large forces to withstand insurgency attacks, Middle East Newsline reported.

The sources said U.S. commanders have overruled junior and mid-level officers who advocate the development of streamlined light combat units to initiate stealthy attacks on insurgents. They said the commanders have also refused to allow troops to enter Iraqi communities without heavy vehicles and weapons.

"The problem is that we all sit around in our bases and just wait for them to come and blow us up," another officer said. "It didn't used to be like that. We used to go out and take the fight to them. I can only think that someone in the Pentagon is scared of what will happen if we start taking casualties."

In many cases, the sources said, U.S. commanders have ordered the withdrawal of troops when confronted by insurgents in an effort to reduce casualties. They said such orders have encouraged insurgency attacks.

The officers cited by the Gulf News said the U.S. military must demonstrate its ability to patrol anywhere in Iraq to ensure that the insurgents remain off balance. The sources

said that despite nearly two years in Iraq, U.S. military commanders still fall back on tactics that surrender the initiative to insurgents..

"Of course it's more dangerous for us, but there's no alternative," a paratrooper from the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division said. "You can't catch an insurgent with a tank or helicopter, and you certainly can't if you're hiding behind a barricade."

"All too often we see Americans riding around in armored vehicles or running away when they get shot at," the paratrooper said. "It sends the wrong message and makes the insurgents think we're scared of them."

Another criticism by junior and mid-level officers was the reliance on military fortresses to house and protect U.S. troops. The sources said this has fostered a siege mentality and enable insurgents to operate freely around U.S. facilities.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

307 Sex Assaults On Military Members In War zone Reported

February 17, 2005 Washington (AP)

A victims support group said members of the military have reported 307 sexual assaults that took place while they were stationed in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan or Bahrain.

A statement from the Connecticut-based Miles Foundation, which first raised concerns about assaults on women serving in Iraq and Kuwait last year, said the alleged assailants included other members of the military, allies and foreigners. Most of the victims were women.

About one-third of the cases reported to the Miles Foundation also have been reported to military officials, the statement said.

Thirty-nine women have reported being assaulted while preparing to go overseas, the foundation said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Allawi Party Official Captured

17 February 2005 (AFP) SAMARRA, Iraq

Armed men captured an official of interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's party.

Seif Abu Meshaal Hassan, in charge of the Iraqi National Accord in Salaheddin, was kidnapped from his house in Dijla near Samarra.

Armed and masked men in four cars snatched Hassan late Wednesday.

Resistance Action

17 February 2005 (AFP) & (AP)

A bomb targeting a police patrol in Samarra killed a policeman and wounded four others Thursday, a police officer said.

And three policemen and an insurgent were killed in an assassination bid on a police captain late Wednesday near Samarra.

"The unknown man opened fire on my convoy, police returned fire and three of them were killed in the ensuing firefight, as well as the attacker," said Captain Muder al-Baldawi.

Insurgents have wounded seven Iraqi soldiers by detonating a bomb as a convoy of U.S. troops and Iraqi National Guardsmen passed by.

Also yesterday, unidentified gunmen attacked two trucks carrying food supplies in a town south of Baghdad, killing six men.

Resistance Women Vs. Collaborator Women

Women in al-Jazirah village near ar-Ramadi encouraged fighters 11 January 2005. Women in al-Mushahadah in Baghdad area threw stones at US troops in Humvees 9 January 2005. Around the same period, women in ar-Ramadi were seen on rooftops with weapons when it was anticipated that the Americans were coming.

These are the REAL changes, the REAL liberation of the real local women, not wealthy ones who fly to London for manicures, or fly to Washington to meet Bush.

7 February 2005 By Nada Al-Rubaiee, Member of the Central Committee of the Iraqi Patriotic Alliance (IPA), The Plough 2:23

During Bush's campaign to invade Iraq, issues concerning Iraqi women were raised on several occasions. Part of this "feminist" hoopla was carried out by a few Iraqi women who promoted the invasion as a means of "liberating" Iraqi women from male and state repression.

After the desired "liberation" of Iraq was accomplished, some of these same women were appointed to 'prestigious' positions in different occupation institutions of the "New Iraq" like the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) and the Interim Iraqi Government of Iyad Allawi (Prime Minister). Others started operating openly inside Iraq under the banner of foreign-financed so-called NGO's, as well as human rights and women's organisations.

In November 2003, a delegation of Iraqi women visited the White House to personally thank Bush for "helping" Iraq and to ask him not to withdraw his troops allegedly because "Iraq still needs them".

Several months later, on the very special occasion of International Women's Day on the 8th of March 2004, Colin Powell unleashed two initiatives: Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative, and the U.S.-Iraq Women's Network. Powell, henceforth, allocated \$10 million to cover the first initiative, and \$27 million dollars more to cover the second!

Many fundamental questions arise here by default: why is the US administration shedding millions to promote women's democracy in occupied Iraq, while other basic and essential human needs, like water and electricity, are not being minimally satisfied yet?

Why is the issue of women so important for the occupiers? And how can we understand spending money in the name of democracy for the sake of women, while humiliating, torturing, and killing thousands of men and women also in the name of democracy? Finally, what role do those newly-established Iraqi women's organisations play in this scheme?

Many of these organizations if not all of them - have started to raise very controversial issues in a country still reeling under occupation. Their slogans are not limited to calls for more "private and sexual freedom of Iraqi women", but are strongly directed against the Iraqi resistance.

It is true these organisations say the Iraqi people should be rid of the occupation. However, they only do so while calling at the same time for the rejection of "the current terrorist resistance"! Moreover, they have taken upon themselves the additional responsibility of "resisting Islamic terrorism...".

But, aren't these the same lines pushed by Rumsfeld and Bush? There is no doubt the rhetoric of these women's organisations borrows heavily from the terminology of the occupation.

Thus, it is only rational to ask ourselves whether there is a link between such calls 'to liberate Iraqi women', on one hand, and the concomitant anti-resistance slogans, on the other hand? What is the common denominator between the occupation and these women organisations?

Many dishonest and cheap accusations were directed both by the occupation and those organisations against the heroic Iraqi resistance in cities like Fallujah for example. Both accused the resistance of committing heinous crimes, such as kidnapping and killing Iraqi women 'for wearing jeans or walking without a scarf', and even raping girls 'before the occupiers rape them'?

This latest accusation was openly made by the Organisation for Women Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) against the Fallujah's Shura Council, a religious council that served as spokesperson for the heroic resistance against the brutal aggressors during the siege of Fallujah. **Thus, OWFI made the absurd charge that the Shura Council had issued a fatwa (religious decree) stipulating "Mujahideen fighters should rape girls starting at the age of 10 before they are raped by Americans".**

Such bizarre accusations are completely baseless, but they do unveil the real face of organisations that were created merely to blackmail the resistance and lengthen the occupation. While distracting attention away from the real criminals, those organisations do not miss a chance to conjure up hatred for the resistance.

Naturally, we cannot ignore that there are crimes and injustices perpetrated against women in Iraq. But who is behind those crimes?

For example, in the southern provinces of Iraq, whole families have been threatened after their men and women attended pro-resistance solidarity meetings, or what the occupying forces call 'anti-occupation, anti-coalition, or anti-government meetings'. Many families are hence forced to leave their homes to avoid the jailing or killing of mothers and daughters.

But rather than accusing British occupation forces of giving cover to these threats, or accusing the collaborationist Badr Brigades of terrorizing families, 'Iraqi women's organizations' accuse resistance fighters of committing atrocious acts against women! To them, the resistance is always guilty of "killing any creature moving on the ground!"

Iraqi women, furthermore, have taken an active part in the resistance on many occasions.

To cite examples from the early part of January 2005 alone, women fighters were reported in Mosul in northern Iraq on 2 and 3 January 2005. One week later, a religious leader issued a fatwa urging women in the city to carry weapons and fight. And there was a funeral there of a female martyr who was killed in the fighting. Her husband and sons attended (also fighters).

Women in al-Jazirah village near ar-Ramadi encouraged fighters 11 January 2005. Women in al-Mushahadah in Baghdad area threw stones at US troops in Humvees 9 January 2005. Around the same period, women in ar-Ramadi were seen on rooftops with weapons when it was anticipated that the Americans were coming.

These are the REAL changes, the REAL liberation of the real local women, not wealthy ones who fly to London for manicures, or fly to Washington to meet Bush.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“It Gets A Little Bit Worse Every Day”

February 17, 2005 By Tom Engelhardt

Right now, as before the election, American forces find themselves on the horns of a dilemma that our top officer corps, post-Vietnam, never thought we would experience again.

Our troops are mired in a seemingly endless guerrilla war in which, if you withdraw to your reasonably impregnable bases, you instantly surrender significant swathes of territory to your enemy; while, if you venture out armed and en masse to take the offensive, you not only suffer continual casualties but, operating relatively blindly in a strange land, create by your every act yet more enemies out of ordinary citizens.

As Robert H. Reid of the Associated Press reports, **"violence is once again on the rise just as some of the most experienced U.S. military units prepare to leave. Their replacements, some of them part-time soldiers from the National Guard, will need time to learn the situation on the ground."**

As for those National Guard troops, Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, just told the House Armed Services Committee: **"As it pertains to the National Guard, the Army National Guard in particular, we were woefully underequipped before the war started - It's getting -- gets a little bit worse every day."**

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

Noam Chomsky Leaves Planet Earth;

Spouts Nonsense That Draftees Can't Be Used In Imperial Wars

February 4, 2005 By JACOB LEVICH

Noam Chomsky is so rarely wrong about anything that it feels impertinent to correct him. But his recent remarks on the draft (Feb. 2), are in need of scrutiny, especially since they might give false comfort to people who rightly worry that a revival of conscription is in the cards.

Chomsky says the US is unlikely to reinstate the draft because of "the Vietnam experience," which was "the first time in the history of European imperialism (sic; he must have meant to include North America) that an imperial power tried to fight a colonial war with a citizens' army." He continues:

"I mean the British didn't do it, and the French had the Foreign Legion in colonial wars, civilians are just no good at it. Colonial wars are too brutal and vicious and murderous. You just can't take kids off the street and have them fight that kind of war. You need trained killers, like the French Foreign Legion."

Chomsky has been saying this a lot lately, and consequently the notion that conscripts can't fight dirty wars has taken its place among the Top Ten left-of-center myths about the draft, right alongside "the draft is fairer to the poor and minorities" and (don't laugh) "the Establishment wouldn't support wars of aggression if they thought their children might get drafted."

Because Chomsky is usually so reliable, a lot of good people seem to be swallowing his argument uncritically, which is why it calls for correction.

I won't dwell on Chomsky's use of the term "citizens' army," a pleasant-sounding euphemism for forced military service that is gaining popularity among apologists for the draft.

But it's worth noting that the US force now in Iraq is already a citizens' army, consisting mostly of Guardsmen and Reservists who have been wrenched away from their families to spend 24 months in hell. It's probably true that some draftees would shrink from the brutal realities of war against the people of Iraq, but no more than the thoroughly demoralized civilians who are there now. From Washington's point of view, a draft could hardly make things worse.

<p>What really puzzles me is Chomsky's bald assertion that the Vietnam War was the first time a European power tried to fight a colonial war using draftees. That's just not so.</p>

To begin with, it's mysterious why Chomsky limits himself to European powers.

Surely his argument should apply equally to imperialists on other continents, unless he thinks Europeans are especially sensitive about colonial slaughter -- and he can't

possibly think that. **[Why not? He thought Imperial warrior John Kerry should be elected President.]**

At any rate, he's mistaken even in the case of Europe. Just to name one counterexample, the Italian conquest of Ethiopia in 1935-36, a murderous colonial war by any standard, was fought with conscripted troops.

What's significant here is that fascist Italy introduced universal conscription precisely for the purpose of facilitating colonial expansion. So did imperial Japan. And once you let Asia into the equation, Chomsky's argument truly collapses.

The 1930s and 1940s saw several of the most brutal colonial wars in history, including the Rape of Nanking and comparably horrific episodes during Japanese invasions of Southeast Asia and Korea. Throughout WWII numerous sideshow conflicts were conducted across the globe as the big powers vied to pick off colonial assets. All this was accomplished with draft armies.

Typically during the modern era, the draft has not hindered but aided imperialist designs. Universal conscription originated in Europe with the French Revolution, but it was Napoleon who first saw how a "citizen's army" could be exploited as an overwhelming military asset -- one which he put to use in conquering most of the European continent. His colonial war in Spain -- the original guerilla war -- was fought, with relentless brutality, by conscripted troops.

Although Napoleon lost his empire to the Russian winter, the advantages of conscription were not lost on the other European powers, which followed suit during the late 19th Century as they sparred over colonial prizes in Africa and Asia. The sole exception was Britain, which didn't need the draft, since it enjoyed use of the Indian Army as a virtually limitless reserve force.

Following WWII, the great powers variously used proxies, mercenaries, volunteers, UN "peacekeepers," and conscripts to fight their colonial wars. Results were mixed. In general, all categories of soldier proved capable of producing the kinds of atrocities required by their masters -- the My Lai massacre, for instance, was perpetrated by draftees. **On the other hand, Chomsky's exemplary "trained killers" -- the French Foreign Legion -- botched both the Algerian and Vietnam Wars, and their supposedly exceptional morale is a myth. (See Bernard Fall on the deserters and defeatists at Dien Bien Phu.)**

In the end, "volunteers vs. draftees" is the wrong way of looking at the problem.

What history actually shows is that imperialist powers will eventually use whatever type and size of force they believe to be necessary from a military point of view, regardless of morale issues and political cost. LBJ was well aware that expanding the draft would be a risky proposition; he did it anyway because he saw no other way of winning the war. There's a good chance Bush will do the same.

If any further example is needed, remember that the most vicious, brutal, murderous, and protracted colonial war in the world today is being fought -- at tremendous cost to military and domestic morale -- by draftees. I'm talking, of

course, about Israel's war on the Palestinian people. Given Chomsky's tireless truth-telling about Palestine, it's an inexplicable oversight. Even Homer nods.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Occupation Tanks Used Against Strikers: Chair Of The Southern Oil Company Trade Union Speaks

Neil, an American who is head of Khurafi, told them that if they did not go back to work US forces would be used to break the strike.

During another Khurafi strike tanks came and put themselves between the company management and strikers.

Feb 8, 2005 Talk by Hassan Juma'a: Iraqi trade unionist at the University of London Union. Transcript by Loukas Tsoulakis, Corporate Watch: I missed half an hour. The transcript begins at 8pm.

The meeting, organised by Iraq Occupation Focus, took place at the University of London Union on Tuesday February 8th and was attended by around 50 people.

Hassan's next public meeting is in Glasgow on Wednesday February 16th where he will be sharing a platform with Rose Gentle, who lost her soldier son in Iraq. Both know profoundly the meaning of blood for oil.

Hassan Juma'a is the Chair of the Southern Oil Company trade union, based in Basra.

Here he talks about the position of the various union federations, including the state-sponsored IFTU, and the prospects for non-party-political trade unionism in Iraq.

NOTE THAT: this is a transcript of a translated talk and therefore most nuances have been lost. This cannot be taken as a definitive account of what Hassan Juma'a or Iraq occupation Focus believe. **NOTE WELL; WHEN THE MATERIAL BELOW REFERS TO "HJ SAYS" THIS OR THAT, IT IS REFERRING TO THE SPEAKER, Hassan Juma'a**

Chair: Ewa Jasiewicz
Translator: Samir Ramadani

HJ: Due to struggle by the Southern Oil Company Union (SOCU) the Iraqi Ministry of Finance has cancelled the two lowest grades of the 11 wage scales.

HJ met UK MPs today (08/02/05), they said they had informed Tony Blair of the SOCU strike on the 10th of August, 2004. I am pleased that there are people in the UK who are informed about our situation.

Dick Cheney is involved in the KPR company. They are involved in running the SOC pumping stations. This is part of the US strategy of economic occupation and privatisation. UK experts agree that this is so, and HJ has also read documents about Alawi's preparations for privatisation. The ministry of Oil has attempted to keep these plans secret from the appointed National Assembly. KPR run most pumping stations, including the biggest, but not all.

Al-Khurafi (Kuwaiti) and Meer (Indian) are two companies brought in by KPR, who then brought in 1,200 Asian workers, who were then protected by US forces. After SOC union negotiation with Khurafi 1,000 Iraqi workers were brought in to work and 1,000 Asians were sent home. Pressure on KPR forced them to give work to Iraqis, but within a few days KPR made needed items (like eye-glasses) very hard to get hold of.

The US plan was for no oil to be exported until four years after the (beginning of the?) occupation, but Iraqi workers have managed to bring the stations on-line within four months to raise money for humanitarian ends; 900,000 barrels sent on a Swedish tanker. The US has therefore revised its policy towards oil. HJ has had four meetings with the SOC head, but they showed no desire to help Iraqis and wanted to obstruct reconstruction.

Employees' rights continue to be violated. The US, via Paul Bremmer, etc obstructs the work of the Iraqi national oil companies. The Oil Ministry's role is to aid the two companies involved in oil prospecting and transportation, since the South region is intended to be a flagship for beginning oil exports. However these companies' activities have been frozen and hence sabotaged by the USA.

Let me make it very clear: the SOCU is opposed to privatisation. The reasons are clear. The servants of the former regime took much money with them. If the oil institutions are sold, these people will be the buyers.

To conclude: we know you have stood by us and we stand by you.

Question and Answer Session:

Q: In the recent Iraqi elections, did any political party stand on an anti-privatisation platform?

A: None have; all should. Oil is the only remaining national resource; all infrastructure has been destroyed (agriculture, etc).

Q: How do you see the future of Iraq after two years of violence? Will the situation continue?

A: Firstly let me make it clear that I am neither for or against the elections. From the start of the occupation to today we still have the same laws as the old regime. Hopefully a new government, though not fully legitimate, will take us from one condition to another.

The new government does not have a magic wand to stop the violence. However, there will be some change and we hope the new government will provide protection for the citizens. There is a confusion between the resistance and those whose actions, such as suicide bombings, hurt Iraqis more than the hurt the Americans. We know of the recent broadcast in which Bin Laden appointed Zarkawi the 'Prince of Iraq'; these people and their agents do not want to see a stable Iraq.

Q: Even if the oil industry is not privatised, the profits can still be used to service Iraq' debt. Is the Trade union movement strong enough to resist privatisation?

A: There are various meanings of 'privatisation'. What is under the ground cannot be privatised, but the US does not recognise this -- they may give concessions to extract oil to US companies. HJ met with representatives of political parties before the election; they all stated their opposition to privatisation -- only god knows what they will do when they get into power! As trade unionists live in the situation themselves we shall -- with god willing -- stop privatisation, even if we must give blood in the process.

Q: You said that workers were brought in from outside. Was there any attempt to organise with these Asian workers, in order to resist the bosses at an international level?

A: When Khurafi came to Iraq they renamed themselves 'Iraq National Company', but they were never an Iraqi company (not registered with the Ministry of Planning). In Basra and the surrounding area unemployment is very high.

The Asian workers were in a special situation, under strict control and unable to organise. Maybe the mechanical workers could affect their situation, but in general not. This is a new situation, previous laws have not allowed workers to be brought in except high-level experts. The Khurafi employees also left for security reasons -- a manager and (doctor?) were assassinated.

Q: What kind of links do you have with other Iraqi workers?

A: The aim is for one oil union. We are currently the biggest, in terms of numbers and in terms of production. We have links with workers in Nasarea, Kirkuk (and many other areas I did not get).

Q: How much agreement is there between the Iraqi unions on, for example, the question of independence from the state.

A: Let me be frank. There are three trade union federations in Iraq.

The first is officially recognised by the state and therefore illegitimate by international rules (ILO regulations?). This is the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). It is formed by the principle of coalition -- 5 representatives from Alawi's party, 5 from the Communist Party, 5 from the Arab Socialist Movement. Rasim Alawadi is the president -- he is a deputy for Alawi's party.

The second claims to be independent and has representatives from the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution and the Dawa party (both major Shi'a religious parties).

The third is led by Falah Awan and the Worker-Communist Party owns it.

Therefore the SOC union wants to remain independent and get to the beach of safety.

For 35 years we have lived under one-party rule and these were the political groups that organised. Old labels should be left outside the union, we should serve the union independent of party politics. Unfortunately this approach is not followed. HJ knows and deals with individuals from all parties. The Arab Labour organisation invites delegates from all three federations. We are co-ordinating on common purposes -- to gain workers' rights and to plan how to expel the occupation.

Q: Ba'athist trade unions were part of the state. Are their old leadership still around/are they organising?

A: At the last Arab Labour meeting in Aman with representatives from the three federations, HJ did not go himself but sent the General Secretary of the SOC union.

He reported that three men and a woman came to the meeting, people who had been part of the Saddam Hussein regime, and they claimed that they also were 'representing workers'. The Arab Labour League leader is an Algerian, and the Arab Labour league's headquarters is in Damascus. He tried to expel the Ba'athists from the meeting, asking them 'Do you want to have your cake and eat it?' These people change their colour according to circumstances. If the water is blue, they go blue. If the water is green, they go green.

Q: If the trade unions are independent from politics, do they still have an impact on the process. For example I have heard about a strike that was organised during the US attack on Najaf.

A: Our work ranges from Shipping in Basra to operations north of Baghdad, and it was the workers at the BS3 plant within the Najaf area who stopped work. Trade unions are also represented on the Oil Council within the Ministry of Oil. This council has sole responsibility for increasing and decreasing oil production within the Cabinet. As a union, we have the power and the muscle to make the government listen by halting work.

Q: Your region is occupied mainly by British forces. Have British forces intervened in favour of the private companies? And what actions are legitimate for trade unions in order to end the occupation?

A: (In fact the area of the SOC union is also occupied by US and Danish forces). There was a strike by Khurafi welders (traditionally highly paid) who had not got their wages.

Neil, an American who is head of Khurafi, told them that if they did not go back to work US forces would be used to break the strike.

During another Khurafi strike tanks came and put themselves between the company management and strikers.

These incidents are not reported due to the Occupation's clamp-down.

With regard to trade unions acting against the occupation, HJ says all forces that want an end to the occupation must unite. Trade unions are like any other who wants an end to the occupation -- by all available means.

We back all Iraqis, because we want to be inside the arena of struggle, we do not want to be outside. We represent 50% of industrial workers; 23,000 in the Southern oil sector alone. Port workers, rail workers, engineers and health workers need to unite.

Q: What is the current level of oil production, and what levels are possible in the future?

A: Once levels were very high, but with no gains for the Iraqi people; 4,530,000 barrels per day at \$36 per barrel.

This adds up to enough money to build a very advanced society, but unfortunately this was used to prop up the failing military-industrial complex.

Right now 1.8 million barrels are being exported -- 2.5 would be possible, as some is used domestically. Since we eliminated the two bottom grades of the wage scale the relative economic situation has improved -- not enough, but it has improved. Sanctions once caused workers to sell all their possessions. If it was 800 dinars for a kilo of flour, then a teacher's salary would buy five kilos. I think Saddam had an inner hatred towards educated people. He said once that someone with a PhD, if they were jobless they should go and sell cigarettes in the market.

Q: I heard that the SOC union was once within the IFTU -- what happened? And also, can trade unions help the unemployed?

A: We were never part of the IFTU, because we questioned their legitimacy.

Abdullah Masen (UK representative of the IFTU) often tells people here that we are part of the IFTU. I say now, let him know that I have been nominated to the board of co-ordination between Iraqi and Iranian oil trade unions by the Arab Labour league.

So how can we be affiliated to the IFTU if the ALL deals with us separately. In fact I have a document issued to the ALL by the president of the IFTU declaring that the IFTU will dissolve itself after the election of a new Iraqi government. I can

send you a copy of this document through Munir (an Iraqi member of Iraq Occupation Focus).

On the other question, we do not organise with the unemployed but we try to find them work! Now my frankness in answering such questions often puts me in trouble in Iraq, -- the unemployed union belongs to the Worker-Communist Party and I do not wish to tread on them.

Q: Are there any Asian workers still in Iraq? And the oil exporting that is currently happening, how big a part does smuggling play in this?

A: The US forces and the terrorists work to keep foreigners out of Iraq to sabotage the economy. Therefore there are none in Iraq due to security.

The oil that is smuggled – this is processed oil products; paraffin and petrol. The US cannot stop it because it has a clear outlet through the southern port.

Q: Who organises the smuggling?

A: There are more mafia in Iraq than in Italy! It is not a threat to the USA so they do not stop it. When suicide bombers tried to blow up the export area itself the US forces acted very fast to occupy it.

Ewa Jasiewicz finished the meeting with a few words:

Our responsibility is to bolster the SOC trade union struggle.

They are under threat of death; they have said that privatisation will happen over their dead bodies – and I worry that this will be the case!

ERINYS are the company that control the security of the Southern Oil Company, and they have killed in the past, killed in South Africa (and other places I didn't get down). They have offices in London and we can target them if they hurt Iraqi trade unionists.

Initially the trade unionists' struggle has been to raise their own living standards – however this path will soon bring them into a collision with the nature of the occupation itself.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

TROUBLETOWN

BY LLOYD DANGLE



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Bush Says U.S. Treasury Bonds Are Worthless Trash

2.17.05 By Joe Conason, issuesandalibis.com

The bogus threat conjured by Mr. Bush and his conservative supporters is the U.S. government's abandonment of its commitment to generations of workers who paid taxes into the Social Security system.

They tell us that the system is going bankrupt, that the system is "flat broke"-by which they mean that the bonds held by the Social Security trust fund are worthless.

The catch phrase they use is "worthless I.O.U.'s."

This is an argument that can be convincing only to someone who has no idea how government is financed every day-which is to say, someone who doesn't know that governments subsist on borrowing, just like corporations and families, and they always have.

The scale is different, but the principle remains the same. If Treasury bonds are indeed "worthless," then the government itself must be on the verge of collapse.

Until this administration came to power and emptied the cookie jar, U.S. Treasury bonds were universally regarded as the most reliable investment on earth. Now, as the dollar sinks and the deficits explode, nobody is quite so certain about that traditional repository of value.

Actually, all the blather about "worthless" Treasury bonds sounds particularly juvenile and irresponsible at a time when, thanks to the President's tax cuts, we are increasingly dependent on foreign lenders in places like China and Japan. Why would anybody buy a bond from him?

Bush Reaffirms Support For Global Warming

February 16, 2005 The Borowitz Report

On the day that the U.N. Kyoto Protocol finally went into effect, President George W. Bush reaffirmed his strong support for global warming, arguing that the phenomenon helps to make the world a "toastier, homier" place.

"Right now, Hawaii has a climate that is the envy of the world," Mr. Bush said at a White House briefing. "If global warming continues at its current pace, by 2050 the whole world will be as hot as Hawaii, if not hotter."

President Bush added that global warming - far from being the threat to the world's ecosystem that many experts say it is -- may actually be the best long-term solution to the world's energy problems.

"If the world got a few degrees warmer every year, we wouldn't have to turn up the darned thermostat so much," Mr. Bush said. "Thanks to global warming, the world will be a toastier, homier place."

Mr. Bush said that each and every American can do his or her part to help increase global warming, adding, "Instead of walking to the corner, drive your SUV."

"A lot of folks think they can't do much to produce greenhouse gasses, but that's just not true," Mr. Bush said. "Every little bit helps."

President Bush departed from his remarks on global warming to comment on the current situation in Syria, calling for "the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops in the Middle East except for the ones I put there."

CLASS WAR NEWS

Typical

A company, feeling it was time for a shakeup, hires a new CEO.

This new boss is determined to rid the company of all slackers. On a tour of the facilities, the CEO notices a guy leaning on a wall.

The room is full of workers and he wants to let them know he means business!

The CEO walks up to the guy and asks, "And how much money do you make a week?"

A little surprised, the young fellow looks at him and replies, "I make \$300.00 a week. Why?"

The CEO then hands the guy \$1,200 in cash and screams, "Here's four weeks' pay, now GET OUT and don't come back!"

Feeling pretty good about his first firing, the CEO looks around the room and asks, "Does anyone want to tell me what that goof-off did here?"

With a sheepish grin, one of the other workers mutters, "That was the Pizza delivery guy from Domino's."

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