

GI SPECIAL 4C19:

GET THE MESSAGE?



March 19, 2006, Portland, Ore. The third anniversary of the U.S.-led war in Iraq drew tens of thousands of protesters around the globe, from hurricane-ravaged Louisiana to Australia, with chants of 'Stop the War' and calls for the immediate withdrawal of troops. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)

A Note Of Thanks:

From March 17 through 21, while GI Special was suspended for organizing activities, over 600 emails were received with news stories, comments, and more. It's impossible to reply to each individually, or use them all because of space limitations. Please accept this way of saying how much they are all welcome.

“She Said Her Son Had Become Disillusioned With The War”

“He Didn't Believe That What President Bush Was Doing Was The Right Thing Anymore”

“He believed what he was doing was the right thing,” Bradreau said. “He didn't believe that what President Bush was doing was the right thing anymore. He thought we could let them (the Iraqis) fight their own battles from now on over there.”

Mar. 18, 2006 By Rodney Foo, Mercury News

When Angelo Zawaydeh was 16, the San Bruno boy wanted to join the military. His parents refused.

“When he was 18, he said, ‘Well, I don't need anybody's permission,’” his mother, April Bradreau, recalled Friday.

He enlisted in the Army, and in September he was sent to Iraq.

Wednesday, at a Baghdad traffic control point, 19-year-old Pfc. Zawaydeh was manning a machine gun atop a tank when he was killed by a bullet in the neck. He becomes one of more than 2,300 U.S. soldiers who have been killed since the Iraq war began three years ago.

Bradreau, 45, and her husband received the news of their son's death Thursday, on the eve of their 21st wedding anniversary. Reached by phone at the family's San Bruno home Friday afternoon, she said her son had become disillusioned with the war, but he also had been instilled with a soldier's pride, to do as ordered and do that job well.

His parents cited many reasons for him not to go into the military. His mother and father, Akram Zawaydeh, who is Jordanian, did not believe their son should participate in a Middle Eastern war. The younger Zawaydeh's uncle is a member of the Jordanian parliament, Bradreau said.

They debated many things, including the politics of the war. But most of all, the parents were worried about how the violence, the carnage, the killing, might affect their son.

"Mostly what it was, what would it do to his psyche? To have to murder someone else? Unfortunately, when boys are 18 years old, their testosterone gets in the way, doesn't it?" Bradreau said.

Over time, Pfc. Zawaydeh began to draw a bright line between the job he knew he had to carry out and the politics of the war.

"He believed what he was doing was the right thing," Bradreau said. "He didn't believe that what President Bush was doing was the right thing anymore. He thought we could let them (the Iraqis) fight their own battles from now on over there."

Zawaydeh was born in San Francisco. He attended Terra Nova High School in Pacifica. Many of his good pals would enlist in the armed forces, which played a part in his motivation to enlist.

"When he joined," Bradreau said, "we asked, 'Why didn't you go to college?' And he said, 'I can't sit in the classroom anymore. I need to get up and do something.' "

He was assigned to the Army's 101st Airborne Division based in Fort Campbell, Ky.

After his four-year hitch, Zawaydeh intended to attend college in the Los Angeles area.

"He said he wanted to go where the sun shines all the time . . . He just wanted to go and get in college and take some classes and figure out from there what was his," she said.

He had been an avid skateboarder, and when he heard the family was moving to a house at Folsom he was delighted -- it would make it easier for him to learn how to snowboard.

"What did I love about him? He was always there for anybody who needed help. He never said no to anybody. He was a respectful young man. He helped whenever I needed help," she said.

He was at home in December 2004 when his 89-year-old grandmother, Helene Bradreau, suffered a massive heart attack. He tried to save her life with CPR only to see her die days later in a hospital.

A week before his death, he phoned his parents. He was excited about his pet Siberian husky, Shadow, and her 3-month-old male pup, Oso.

"He was telling us he was going to go south and set up a new camp . . . He told us not to worry and that he'd be coming home anyway in May and telling everybody he loved them and that we better take care of his dogs," she said.

Zawaydeh is survived by his parents and his sisters, Francesca, 17, and Nicole, 14; and his 12-year-old brother, Dominic.

TROOP NEWS

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME



DO LIKE SHE SAYS



A woman in front of symbolic headstones representing dead US soldiers in Iraq at a rally in Miami demanding the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. (3.19.06 AFP/Roberto Schmidt)

Bush's Pet General Delivers The Bad News: JCS Boss Says U.S. Troop Levels In Iraq Will Go Up

March 20, 2006 By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan: U.S. troop levels in Iraq may temporarily bump higher this year, even as Iraqi forces take control of larger portions of the country, the top U.S. military commander said Monday.

Last week, an Army battalion of about 700 soldiers was sent to the Baghdad area from Kuwait to deal with a Shiite religious holiday.

"There will be times when we need to plus up" U.S. troop strength, Pace said.

The Traitor Bush Says Troops Will Stay In Iraq As Long As He Is President [Draw The Obvious Conclusion]

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

3.21.06 By TERENCE HUNT, AP White House Correspondent

President Bush said Tuesday that American forces will remain in Iraq for years and it will be up to a future president to decide when to bring them all home.

Bush has adamantly refused to set a deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. Asked if there would come a day when there would be no more U.S. forces in Iraq, Bush said, "That, of course, is an objective. And that will be decided by future presidents and future governments of Iraq."

White House officials worried Bush's remarks would be read as saying there would not be significant troop reductions during his presidency. [Duh.]

**LIAR
TRAITOR
SOLDIER-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



REUTERS/Mannie Garcia

A Coffin For Rumsfeld: “He Lost An Eye And An Arm”

March 20, 2006 By Derrill Holly, Associated Press

Marchers protesting the Iraq war tried to deliver a mock coffin to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on Monday, but police kept them off Pentagon grounds during a largely peaceful demonstration marking the war's third anniversary.

“You know what is happening to this beautiful generation of American men and women,” said Katy Scott, 63, of Chicago, whose son, Peter, 29, enlisted after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks.

He lost an eye and an arm as a result of an Oct. 15 roadside bomb attack near Samara, Iraq.

Got PTSD? Need Help? Tough Shit

[Thanks to Alan S., who sent this in.]

March 20, 2006 BY CRAIG GORDON, Newsday Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON: At Ground Zero in lower Manhattan, Larry Provost said, he spent a week digging through the still-smoldering pile for survivors who weren't there.

His Army Reserve unit touched down in Afghanistan a year to the day after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Then it was onto Iraq a year later, where every trip off base could be deadly, and Provost knew three fellow soldiers who died in a Baghdad roadside bomb attack.

It's why back home, he swerves to avoid a piece of trash in the road, or tries to avoid large crowds -- things that would have been danger signs in Iraq, a hiding place for a bomb, or a bomber.

Some experiences, he just can't forget, no matter how hard he tries.

But when he sought counseling at a Veterans Affairs hospital near his home in Virginia Beach, Va., he said he felt like the message was, "Take a number." He said he's been waiting several weeks for a counseling appointment and was told by one doctor it could be two months before getting in.

"I say to them, 'Why?'"

“And they say back to me that 'Unfortunately, it's because of all you guys coming back, and we just can't handle you. It's nothing personal. It's just the way it is,'" Provost, 27, recalled.

Iraq Veteran Condemns The War At Staten Island Demonstration

March 21, 2006 Debbie Anderson, Veterans For Peace, via VetPax [Excerpts]

Peace Action Staten Island members held a very successful Demonstration yesterday in Staten Island to mark the end of the 3rd year of war in Iraq. It was held in front of the Armed Forces Recruiting Center, St. George.

We had a turn out of about 80 people. In attendance were members from Staten Island Peace Action, MFSO, VFP, IVAW [Iraq Veterans Against The War], VVAW [Vietnam Veterans Against The War] and the War Resisters League (I hope I didn't leave anyone out).

People driving and passing by were mostly positive in response to seeing our demo and signs. We had reporters and photographers.

We had several speakers including a young Iraq Veteran named Chris Busamante from IVAW who served in the National Guard and Ghanim Khalil, a U.S. Marine Veteran who is a Muslim and a powerful speaker.

We also had several other speakers from the Vietnam war and WWII. All the speakers were wonderful!

At the end of the Demonstration we marched about 2 blocks in a solemn Funeral procession with flag draped coffins to the Major Clarence T. Barrett Monument, Civil War hero of Staten Island, where we had a moment of silence to mourn the dead and to share our personal feelings about the war.

“The Americans And Iraqis Being Killed”

“They're All One Team. They're Both Being Used”

March 20, 2006 By MAURA YATES, STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

The third anniversary of the war in Iraq was commemorated across the nation and the globe this weekend, with solemn remembrances of the lives lost, and fervent protests calling for the withdrawal of troops.

"We are not here as Democrats or Republicans, or as liberals or conservatives. We are here as citizens who are sick of the death and destruction," said John Bostrom of Ward Hill, an original member of Peace Action Staten Island, which organized a protest yesterday outside the St. George Military Recruitment Center.

More than 75 protesters, including five generations of war veterans, gathered on Bay Street, holding signs and sharing their views about the war, which organizer Mike May of Peace Action Staten Island said is "benefiting nobody."

Cars and buses honked in solidarity as they passed.

"The people are taking it to the streets," said protester Sue McAnanama of Livingston. "It's unfortunate that they have to do that."

The protest included a funeral procession -- carrying cardboard coffins draped in American flags, an Iraqi flag, and a black veil, symbolizing death -- across Bay Street to the Civil War memorial next to Borough Hall. The memorial, they said, symbolized a war fought for a good cause.

Former Marine Ghanim Khalil of Dongan Hills spoke about how his Muslim faith led to complex feelings about the war, which caused him to seek conscientious objector status before being sent to Iraq.

"It doesn't matter if you're a Muslim or a Marine. What matters is right and wrong," Khalil said.

"The Americans and Iraqis being killed -- they're both my brothers and sisters. They're all one team. They're both being used."

"We need to spend money on education and jobs, not building bombs," May said.

While protests throughout the country largely focused on the deaths and destruction in Iraq, a 140-mile march from Mobile, Ala., to New Orleans stressed the damage to the homefront.

Mrs. McAnanama's husband, George, was among about 200 war veterans, hurricane survivors and others organized by Veterans for Peace. They said the military conflict had drained resources needed for rebuilding Gulf Coast cities devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Protesters marched past gutted houses and piles of rotting wood and debris yesterday, saying the slow pace of rebuilding the hurricane-ravaged city shows the price the country is paying for continuing to wage war in Iraq.

"A lot of people don't have a grasp of what this war is costing us," Vern Hall, a Vietnam War veteran from Minnesota, said as he walked by shuttered buildings with broken glass and precariously hanging metal. "Here's the actual cost of this," he said, looking around. "Things are not getting done."

Recalling President Bush's now infamous "Mission accomplished" statement in 2003, McAnanama said, "This is far from over. There's a lot to be done. These people still need help."

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.



Protesters march in Minneapolis Saturday, March 18, 2006. Thousands of anti-war protesters took to the streets around the world Saturday, marking the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq with demands that coalition troops leave immediately. (AP Photo/Jayme Halbritter)

EE UU Arresta A Ex Soldados Que Huyeron Del Ejército Para No Ir A Vietnam: Sin Perdón Para Los Desertores

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

15, 03, 2006 Y. MONGE: Washington, Diario EL PAÍS S.L.

Pensó que ya nadie le buscaba y cruzó la frontera de Canadá con Estados Unidos, como había hecho otros cientos de veces. Pero 38 años después de que desertara de la guerra de Vietnam, Allen Abney, de 56 años, jubilado, con pasaporte estadounidense y canadiense, fue detenido la semana pasada y transferido ayer a una prisión militar.

BAGHDAD BOB NAMED PENTAGON SPOKESMAN: Stunning Comeback for Former Iraqi Information Minister

March 20, 2006 The Borowitz Report

Muhammed Saeed al-Sahaf, who became famous around the world for his rosy pronouncements when he served as Information Minister to Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein, staged a stunning political comeback today by being named the chief spokesman for the Pentagon in Washington.

Mr. al-Sahaf, who made headlines as "Baghdad Bob" three years ago by repeatedly proclaiming that the Iraqi army was demolishing invading U.S. forces, appeared at a press briefing at the Pentagon this afternoon with a beaming Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who called the former Iraqi Information Minister "the right man for the right job at the right time."

Explaining his decision to tap Mr. al-Sahaf as chief Pentagon spokesman, Secretary Rumsfeld said, "I realized that our spokesmen have been trying to do the same thing that Muhammed did three years ago, only they aren't as credible as he was."

Stepping up to the microphone, an ebullient Mr. al-Sahaf said that conditions on the ground in Iraq "have never been better" and that the insurgency was "all but vanquished."

"Democracy is flowering in Iraq so fast you wouldn't believe it!" Mr. al-Sahaf added. "People think the new constitution is awesome!"

When asked by a reporter about the burned-out cars that litter the streets of Baghdad and other cities, Mr. al-Sahaf was unfazed, explaining, "Their engines overheated."

The former Iraqi Information Minister was also upbeat about the trial of Saddam Hussein, telling reporters, "It's moving even faster than Milosevic's!"

Elsewhere, President Bush acknowledged that prewar intelligence about Iraq had been false, and said that the U.S. would discontinue its practice of ordering military intelligence from Costco.



Rally against the war At Fayetteville, N.C. 3.18.06 [Photo by James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace]

“It Was A Mistake From Day One, And The Only People Who Don’t Want To Admit It’s A Mistake Is The Politicians”

1.16.06 Forth Worth Star-Telegram

In November 1969 Ernest McQueen deserted the Marines less than two years after joining.

He walked out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., and never went back.

But now, after more than 36 years on the lam, McQueen is behind bars on a federal Warrant for military desertion. On Thursday, Fort Worth fugitive officers arrested McQueen after receiving information from the Marines that he was living in southwest Fort Worth with his girlfriend.

Military officials say McQueen's true name is Ernest Johnson Jr.

McQueen said he was “gung-ho” when he enlisted in 1968, but not for long.

“I just decided I didn’t want to be a part of killing anybody,” McQueen said. “That’s about as plain as I can say it.”

A Marine Corps spokesman, said McQueen has reached “the end result of a decision he made long ago.”

Others, such as lawyer Louis Font disagree and say the military has gone too far.

“I think they were trying to send a signal to young Marines that if they go, they will be followed to their graves by the Marine Corps,” Font said.

After Texiera spent more than five months in confinement — four in a county jail and one at Camp Lejeune — military officials announced Wednesday that they were releasing him and would give him an other-than-honorable discharge in lieu of prosecution.

Font said he had hoped the dismissal was a sign that cooler heads has prevailed and that the search for military deserters from the Vietnam era would stop.

“It doesn’t seem to be the case,” Font said. “It looks like it’s full speed ahead in putting the elderly and the infirm in the military briggs around the country.”

Tod Ensign, legal director of Citizen Soldier, believes that McQueen deserves support. Ensign said that in a time when U.S. soldiers in Iraq do not have sufficient body armor, he is amazed that the military is spending the money and time to track down people like McQueen.

“I don’t care what your opinion of the war is. My God, where is the sense here?” said Ensign, who joined the effort to win Texiera’s release.

Tajari, McQueen’s girlfriend, although initially shocked to learn that he was wanted for military desertion, said Sunday she is not bitter that he kept the truth from her. She said it is not her place to judge his actions all those years ago.

“This was a war that was a bad thing, and it may have taken him more soul-searching, more commitment, more courage to walk away than to stay,” Tajari said.

She described McQueen as an honest, honorable man with integrity who is loved by many. She said she worries about how the arrest and court proceedings will affect his health.

“They’re going to transport him all the way to wherever and hold court and waste money on a man who is 55 years old and probably dying from prostate cancer?” Tajari said. “I think it’s wrong. It’s a shame for the military to have been looking for this man for 36 years.”

McQueen sticks by his reasons for leaving the military.

“I don’t think anybody that went to Nam can honestly come back and say, ‘Yes, we did the right thing,’” McQueen said.

“It was a mistake from Day One, and the only people who don’t want to admit it’s a mistake is the politicians.”

To those who believe that he should be arrested for a decision he made 36 years ago, McQueen suggests one thing: “Walk the road before you judge it.”

Soldiers Going AWOL Have Trebled Since The Invasion Of Iraq

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

21 March 2006 By Severin Carrell, The Independent (UK)

The number of soldiers absconding from the British Army has trebled since the invasion of Iraq, raising fears that the military is facing a crisis in morale.

The Independent on Sunday can reveal that last year more than 380 soldiers went absent without leave and have since failed to return to duty, marking a dramatic increase since the invasion of Iraq three years ago.

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)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Checkpoint Up Close And Personal



Iraqi insurgents raise their weapons as they stop traffic near Samarra March 21, 2006. REUTERS/Stringer

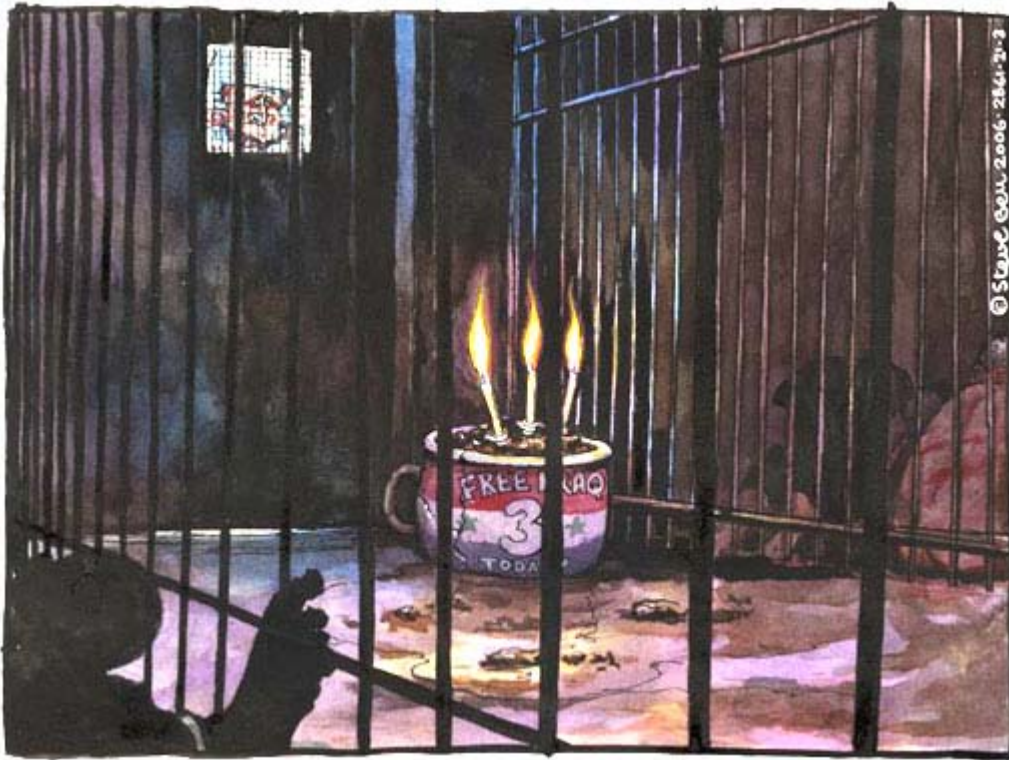
“Hundreds Of Rebels Stormed An Iraqi Police Station”



Destroyed Iraqi police cars in Moqdadiyahd. Hundreds of rebels stormed an Iraqi police station in a pre-dawn raid to free inmates, triggering the deadliest firefight this year, which left 18 police and 10 insurgents dead. (AFP/Ali Yussef)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

Famous Last Words: [Same Worthless Imperial Bullshit]

“But I also know, as a realistic public servant, that as long as there are men who hate and destroy, we must have the courage to resist or we’ll see it all, all that we have built, all that we hope to build, all our dreams for freedom; all, all will be swept away on the flood of conquest.

“So, too this will not happen.

“We will stand in Vietnam.”

President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965

The Logic Of Withdrawal: “THE UNITED STATES IS NOT HONORING THOSE WHO DIED BY CONTINUING THE CONFLICT”

We must confront the bizarre logic of saying that the people who have devastated Iraq, who encouraged and enforced sanctions that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis in the last decade, who have failed at even the most basic responsibilities as an occupying power, who are the source of the instability in Iraq today, are the only ones who can protect Iraqis from hunger and anarchy. In no other area of our lives do we accept such logic, but when it comes to the crimes of empire, we are supposed to continually ignore history.

March 18, 2006 By Anthony Arnove. This article is adapted from Anthony Arnove's forthcoming book Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal, due out on April 18 from The New Press. [Excerpts]

We find ourselves in a remarkable situation today. Despite a massive propaganda campaign in support of the occupation of Iraq, a clear majority of people in the United States now believes the invasion was not worth the consequences and should never have been undertaken.

Likewise, people strongly disapprove of the foreign policy of Republicans and Democrats in Congress, particularly their position on the war in Iraq. In a September 2005 New York Times-CBS News poll, support for immediate withdrawal stood at 52 percent, a remarkable figure when one considers that very few political organizations have articulated an "Out Now" position.

The official justifications for the war have been exposed as complete fallacies. Even conservative defenders of U.S. empire now complain that the situation in Iraq is a disaster.

Yet many people who opposed this unjust invasion, who opposed the 1991 Gulf War and the sanctions on Iraq for years before that, some of whom joined mass demonstrations against the war before it began, have been persuaded that the U.S. military should now remain in Iraq for the benefit of the Iraqi people. We confront the strange situation of many people mobilizing against an unjust war but then reluctantly supporting the military occupation that flows directly from it.

In part, this position is rooted in the pessimistic conclusions many drew after the February 15, 2003, day of international demonstrations--perhaps the largest coordinated protest in human history--failed to prevent the war. This pessimism was exacerbated by some of the leading spokespeople for the antiwar movement, who misled audiences by

suggesting that the demonstrations could stop the war. As inspiring as the demonstrations were, it would have taken a significantly higher degree of protest, organization, and disruption of business as usual to do so.

The lesson of February 15 is not that protest no longer works, but that protest needs to be sustained, coherent, forceful, persistent, and bold--rather than episodic and isolated. And it needs to involve large numbers of working-class people, veterans, military families, conscientious objectors, Arabs, Muslims, and other people from targeted communities, not just as passive observers but as active participants and leaders.

We will need this kind of protest to end the occupation of Iraq.

But we will also need to be able to answer the objections and concerns of thoughtful, well-meaning people who have been persuaded by one or more of the arguments for why U.S. troops should remain in Iraq, at least until "stability" is restored.

Below, I outline eight reasons why the United States should leave Iraq immediately, addressing common arguments for why the United States needs to "stay the course."

THE U.S. MILITARY HAS NO RIGHT TO BE IN IRAQ IN THE FIRST PLACE.

The Bush administration built its case for invading Iraq on a series of deceptions. The war in Iraq was sold on the idea that the United States was preempting a terrorist attack by Iraq. But Iraq posed no threat. The country was disarmed and had overwhelmingly complied with the extremely invasive weapons inspections. In a rare moment of honesty, Vice President Dick Cheney told CNN in March 2001, "I don't believe (Saddam Hussein) is a significant military threat today."

As the case for war has crumbled, so has the case for occupation, which also rests on the idea that the United States can violate the sovereignty of the Iraqi people and all the laws of occupation, such as the Hague and Geneva Conventions, which clearly restrict the right of occupying powers to interfere in the internal affairs of an occupied people.

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT BRINGING DEMOCRACY TO IRAQ.

Having failed to find any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq--the first big lie of the invasion--the United States has turned to a new big lie: George Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, John Negroponte, Condoleezza Rice, John Bolton, and their friends are bringing democracy to the Iraqi people.

Democracy has nothing to do with why the United States is in Iraq. The Bush administration invaded Iraq to secure long-established imperial interests in the Middle East--the same reason Washington backed Saddam Hussein as he carried out the worst of his crimes against the Iraqi people, the Kurds, and the Iranians.

By invading Iraq, Washington hoped not only to install a regime more favorable to U.S. oil interests; it hoped to use Iraq as a staging ground for further interventions to redraw the map of the Middle East.

All of this has nothing to do with democracy. In fact, the United States has long been a major obstacle to any secular, democratic, nationalist, or socialist movements in the region that stood for fundamental change, preferring instead what is euphemistically called "stability," even if it meant supporting the most reactionary fundamentalist religious forces or repressive regimes.

The U.S. government opposes genuine democracy in the Middle East for a simple reason: if ordinary people controlled the region's energy resources, they might be put toward local economic development and social needs, rather than going to fuel the profits of Western oil companies.

Democracy cannot be "installed" by outside powers, at gunpoint.

Genuine democracy can come about only through the struggle of people for control over their own lives and circumstances, through movements that are themselves democratic in nature. When confronted with such movements, such as the 1991 Iraqi uprising, the U.S. government has consistently preferred to see them crushed than to see them succeed.

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT MAKING THE WORLD A SAFER PLACE BY OCCUPYING IRAQ.

The invasion of Iraq has made the world a far more unstable and dangerous place. By invading Iraq, Washington sent the message to other states that anything goes in the so-called war on terror.

After September 11, India called its nuclear rival Pakistan an "epicenter of terrorism." Israel has carried out "targeted assassinations" of Palestinians, bombed Syria, and threatened to strike Iran, using the same rationale that Bush did for the invasion of Iraq." You don't negotiate with terrorism, you uproot it. This is simply the doctrine of Mr. Bush that we're following," explained Uzi Landau, Israel's minister of public security.

Furthermore, the invasion of Iraq is spurring the drive for countries to develop a deterrent to U.S. power. The most likely response to the invasion of Iraq is that more countries will pursue nuclear weapons, which may be the only possible protection from attack, and will increase their spending on more conventional weapons systems. Each move in this game has a multiplier effect in a world that is already perilously close to the brink of self-annihilation through nuclear warfare or accident.

Meanwhile, the invasion has also quite predictably increased the resentment and anger that many people feel against the United States and its allies, therefore making innocent people in these countries far more vulnerable to terrorism, as we saw in the deadly attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004, and London on July 7, 2005.

The United States is reviled not because people "hate our freedoms," as Bush suggests, but because people hate the very real impact of U.S. policies on their lives.

As the British playwright and essayist Harold Pinter observed, " People do not forget. They do not forget the death of their fellows, they do not forget torture and mutilation, they do not forget injustice, they do not forget oppression, they do not forget the terrorism of mighty powers. They not only don't forget. They strike back."

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT PREVENTING CIVIL WAR IN IRAQ.

Perhaps the greatest fear of many antiwar activists who now support the occupation is that the withdrawal of U.S. troops will lead to civil war. This idea has been encouraged repeatedly by supporters of the war. "Sectarian fault lines in Iraq are inexorably pushing the country towards civil war unless we actually intervene decisively to stem it," explained one U.S. Army official, making the case for a continued U.S. presence.

But Washington is not preventing a civil war from breaking out. In fact, occupation authorities are deliberately pitting Kurds against Arabs, Shia against Sunni, and faction against faction to influence the character of the future government, following a classic divide- and-rule strategy.

Taking this idea to its logical extreme, New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman argues, "We should arm the Shiites and Kurds and leave the Sunnis of Iraq to reap the wind." Such arguments are not just the fantasy of keyboard warriors like Friedman, however. As the journalist A.K. Gupta notes, "the Pentagon is arming, training, and funding" militias in Iraq "for use in counter-insurgency operations." Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said such commandos were among "the forces that are going to have the greatest leverage on suppressing and eliminating the insurgencies."

In addition, the Iraqi constitution, drafted under intense pressure from occupation authorities, essentially enshrines sectarian divisions in Iraqi politics. And, finally, despite all of its rhetoric about confronting Islamic fundamentalism in Iraq, the United States has in fact encouraged it, bringing formerly marginalized fundamentalist parties such as the Dawa Party and the Iranian-backed Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq into the Iraqi government.

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT CONFRONTING TERRORISM BY STAYING IN IRAQ.

Iraq has never been the center of a terrorist threat to the United States. Each month, further evidence emerges that the Bush administration went to great lengths to suppress facts that undermined its case for war, while touting bogus evidence in its support. As the New York Times reported in November 2005, "A top member of Al Qaeda in American custody was identified as a likely fabricator months before the Bush administration began to use his statements as the foundation for its claims that Iraq trained Al Qaeda members to use biological and chemical weapons, according to newly declassified portions of a Defense Intelligence Agency document."

Al-Qaeda made its first appearance in Iraq only after the invasion, a predictable outcome of the U.S. occupation. In reality, the United States engaged in state terrorism under the pretext of fighting a terrorist threat that did not exist in Iraq, and in the process greatly increased the likelihood of individual and organizational terrorist acts targeting the United States or its proxies abroad.

Even more circular is the idea that the United States has to stay in Iraq until it "defeats" the resistance to the occupation. The occupation itself is the source of the resistance, a fact that even some of the people responsible for the war have been forced to acknowledge.

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT HONORING THOSE WHO DIED BY CONTINUING THE CONFLICT.

One of the most cynical reasons for staying in Iraq was advanced by President Bush in response to the growing public criticism over the mounting deaths of U.S. soldiers and the deliberate campaign by the administration to suppress images of the returning coffins.

Speaking to a carefully targeted audience in Salt Lake City, Utah, where he fled to escape the protest of Cindy Sheehan, who lost her son, Casey, in Iraq on April 4, 2004, Bush made a rare public acknowledgment of the number of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. "We owe them something," he said. "We will finish the task that they gave their lives for. We will honor their sacrifice by staying on the offensive against the terrorists."

Sheehan herself had the best response to this attempt to manipulate people into supporting continued occupation, asking, "Why should I want one more mother to go through what I've gone through, because my son is dead? . . . I don't want him using my son's death or my family's sacrifice to continue the killing."

The soldiers in Iraq have not died for a "noble cause," as Bush claims. Whatever personal motivations may have brought them into the military, they died for oil, for empire, for power and profit.

More deaths and injuries of Iraqis and of U.S. soldiers will only compound the tragedy of the numerous lives already lost.

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT REBUILDING IRAQ.

The contractors now in Iraq are not there to help the people of Iraq but to help themselves, drawing on their close ties to influential politicians to secure contracts and profit from what Pratap Chatterjee rightly calls the "reconstruction racket."

The reality is, Halliburton, Bechtel, and the other companies in Iraq are looting the country far more than they are rebuilding it. Iraqis have been forced to pay elevated prices to import oil, benefiting corporations like Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root, while ordinary Iraqis have to stand in lines sometimes for days to buy gasoline.

Project after project remains unfinished. Hospitals are in shambles. Electricity is still at woefully inadequate levels.

The Iraqi people are perfectly capable of rebuilding their own society, in fact far more so than foreign soldiers or contractors.

To the extent that there have been any social services or security in the last two years, it is primarily Iraqis who have provided it. During the years of sanctions, Iraqis also showed their immense resourcefulness in holding together their badly damaged infrastructure. Iraqi engineers, teachers, and doctors have long been among the most educated and best trained in the Arab world.

It is ultimately a racist worldview that believes Iraqis cannot rebuild or run their own country.

THE UNITED STATES IS NOT FULFILLING ITS OBLIGATION TO THE IRAQI PEOPLE FOR THE HARM AND SUFFERING IT HAS CAUSED

Understandably, many opponents of the war now believe that the United States has an obligation to the Iraqi people and therefore has to stay to "clean up the mess it has created."

MoveOn.org, which grabbed headlines and signed up millions of online members with its anti-Bush campaigning, refuses to call for withdrawal of troops from Iraq because, in the words of its executive director, Eli Pariser, "There are no good options in Iraq."

Using this same logic, leading anti-sanctions and antiwar groups such as the Education for Peace in Iraq Center have formally adopted positions in support of occupation, if somehow a more enlightened occupation, and therefore against immediate withdrawal.

We must confront the bizarre logic of saying that the people who have devastated Iraq, who encouraged and enforced sanctions that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis in the last decade, who have failed at even the most basic responsibilities as an occupying power, who are the source of the instability in Iraq today, are the only ones who can protect Iraqis from hunger and anarchy. In no other area of our lives do we accept such logic, but when it comes to the crimes of empire, we are supposed to continually ignore history.

The reality, however, is that the U.S. occupation, rather than being a source of stability in Iraq, is the major source of instability and ongoing suffering.

Moreover, those calling for immediate withdrawal do not advocate a position of isolationism and of simply walking away from any obligation to the Iraqi people. Does the U.S. government have an obligation to the Iraqi people? Absolutely. An obligation for the crimes Washington supported for years when Saddam Hussein was an ally. For arming and supporting both sides in the brutal Iran-Iraq War. For the destruction of the 1991 Gulf War. For the use of depleted uranium munitions, cluster bombs, daisy cutters,

and white phosphorus. For the devastating sanctions. For the humiliation and deaths caused by the 2003 invasion, and for the great damage the occupation has caused since.

But the first step in meeting this obligation is to withdraw immediately.

If there were any genuine justice for the people of Iraq, not only would the politicians responsible for this unjust war face prosecution for their crimes, but the U.S. government would be required to pay reparations to the Iraqi people and to the families of U.S. soldiers who have been maimed and killed by its criminal actions.

In demanding an end to the U.S. occupation, we do not need to call for some other occupying power to replace the United States.

We should allow the people of Iraq to determine their own future.

This means, as Naomi Klein has argued, that in addition to calling for an end to military occupation, we should be calling for an end to the economic occupation of Iraq and the cancellation of all debts that Iraq still owes from the previous regime (many of which still have not been forgiven).

If the Iraqis ask for outside assistance, that is their prerogative.

But it is their decision, not ours, to make, and that decision can only be freely made if the United States, United Kingdom, and other occupying armies withdraw completely and end their economic, political, and military coercion of Iraq.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to thomasfbarton@earthlink.net. Name, I.D., address withheld unless publication requested. Replies confidential.

THE SUB DOOR

March 19, 2006 From: K, FIREBASE Network. From Rocco
Subject: SUB DOOR

On board the Robert E. Lee SSBN601B, the crew stole the XO's door. The next day's POD said there were to be no movies until it was returned. For privacy the XO, E.O. Warren hung a blanket over the opening.

By the 3rd day he had gotten into the habit of walking thru the blanket instead of moving it. On the 5th day we replaced the door. Re-hanging the blanket over it, and then settled back to watch the fun.

Suddenly the XO came running down the passageway enroute to his stateroom and thru the blanket/curtain, coming up very short upon meeting the door. Nose bleeding and demanding an answer, the CO came to his rescue.

After surveying the damage the CO, R.W. Aldinger, marched to control, grasped the 1MC and announced, "This is the Captain. The XO's door has been found. MOVIE CALL!"

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



Iraqis display a bowl containing bread which was hit by gunfire in Ramadi in a shootout in which an Iraqi civilian died and six others were wounded. (AFP/Abdulqader Saadi)

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

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

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

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Israelis Setting Up Fake Rafah Website

From: Mohammed Omer mohamed7777@hotmail.com
To: GI Special
Sent: March 18, 2006

How are you?

I hope you are doing well.

Please be sure that Rafah today is working online again.

Now Isarelies are trying to change my website and they make their own website which is www.rafahtoday.com instead of mine which is www.rafahtoday.org

Please let your contact list know about this as soon as you can.

We need the people to know about what's going on here.

Best regards from Gaza,
Mohammed

"The world is a dangerous place to live;
not because of the people who are evil,
but because of the people who don't do anything about it."
www.rafahtoday.org

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Scotland on Sunday has obtained remarkable details of one of the most memorably bizarre episodes of the Bush presidency: the day he crashed into a Scottish police constable while cycling in the grounds of Gleneagles Hotel.

The incident, which will do little to improve Bush's accident-prone reputation, began when he took to two wheels for a spot of early-evening exercise during last year's G8 summit at the Perthshire resort.

After a hard day's discussion with fellow world leaders, the president was looking for some relaxation.

Instead, he ended up the subject of a police report in which the leader of the free world was described, in classic police language, as a "moving/falling object".

It was "about 1800 hours on Wednesday, 6 July, 2005" that a detachment of Strathclyde police constables, in "Level 2 public order dress," formed a protective line at the gate at the hotel's rear entrance, in case demonstrators penetrated the biggest-ever security operation on Scottish soil.

The official police incident report states: "(The unit was requested to cover the road junction on the Auchterarder to Braco Road as the President of the USA, George Bush, was cycling through." The report goes on: "(At) about 1800 hours the President approached the junction at speed on the bicycle. The road was damp at the time.

"As the President passed the junction at speed he raised his left arm from the handlebars to wave to the police officers present while shouting 'thanks, you guys, for coming'.

"As he did this he lost control of the cycle, falling to the ground, causing both himself and his bicycle to strike (the officer) on the lower legs. (The officer) fell to the ground, striking his head. The President continued along the ground for approximately five metres, causing himself a number of abrasions. The officers... then assisted both injured parties."

The injured officer, who was not named, was whisked to Perth Royal Infirmary. The report adds: "While en-route President Bush phoned the officer, enquiring after his wellbeing and apologising for the accident."

At hospital, a doctor examined the constable and diagnosed damage to his ankle ligaments and issued him with crutches. The cause was officially recorded as: "Hit by moving/falling object."

No details of damage to the President are recorded from his close encounter with the policeman and the road, although later reports said he had been "bandaged" by a White House physician after suffering scrapes on his hands and arms.

At the time Bush laughed off the incident, saying he should start "acting his age".

Details of precisely how the crash unfolded have until now been kept under wraps for fear of embarrassing both Bush and the injured constable. But the new disclosures are certain to raise eyebrows on Washington's Capitol Hill.

Jim McDermott, a Democrat Congressman, last night quipped: "Not only does he break the law over here on eavesdropping and spying on our own citizens, but it seems he can't even keep to your law when it comes to riding a bike. It's another example of how he can't keep his mind on the things he should be thinking about."

Bush often takes to two wheels for exercise, after pain in his knees forced him to give up running. He regularly rides at secret service training facilities near Washington, and the G8 accident is just one in a long list of mishaps. In May 2004, he fell off his mountain bike, grazing his chin, upper lip, nose, both knees, and his right hand, while riding on his ranch in Texas. In June 2003, he fell off his hi-tech Segway scooter.

In Scotland, an accident such as the one at Gleneagles could have led to police action. Earlier this year, Strathclyde Police issued three fixed penalty notices to errant cyclists as part of a crack-down on rogue riders. Legal experts also suggested lesser mortals could have ended up with a fixed penalty fine, prosecution, or at least a good ticking-off from officers.

John Scott, a human rights lawyer, said: "There's certainly enough in this account for a charge of careless driving. Anyone else would have been warned for dangerous driving.

"I have had clients who have been charged with assaulting a police officer for less than this. The issue of how long the police officer was out of action for is also important. He was away from work for 14 weeks, and that would normally be very significant in a case like this." No one was available for comment from the White House.



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[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/, <http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html> http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>, <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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