

GI SPECIAL 4D23:



Vietnam Days

[Thanks to John Gingerich, who sent this in.]

**“After Spending A Year
In Iraq, I Have Found
That The Iraqis Are Not
A Threat Or The Enemy”**

“We Do Not Know What We Are Fighting For Anymore; We Do Not Know What Our Mission Is”

Army Times
April 24, 2006
Letters To The Editor

I am a soldier about to embark on my second tour in Iraq.

My first tour started in November 2003. When we arrived, Saddam Hussein was on the loose. In December, he was caught.

When I came into the military, I signed a contract that said I would defend this country against all threats, foreign and domestic.

After spending a year in Iraq, I have found that the Iraqis are not a threat or the enemy. I did find that we are the threat and the enemy to them.

They acted as we would if someone came into America and said we are going to change your ways.

I feel this war is no longer about taking out a threat. But I believe it is about securing oil commerce for the future.

Securing this country and stabilizing it would mean oil contracts and people lining their pockets with money from the oil that my friends have been wounded for and have died for.

I hear the president speak with the press and tell them things to appease them and to divert them to a different subject.

What I don't see is the president having a conference with the soldiers who have fought on the ground in Iraq.

We do not know what we are fighting for anymore; we do not know what our mission is.

I am not alone in this thought. My boys need to know what they may possibly die for.

Is it for a few extra bucks for Halliburton subsidiary KBR?

Is it about the oil?

Is it for America?

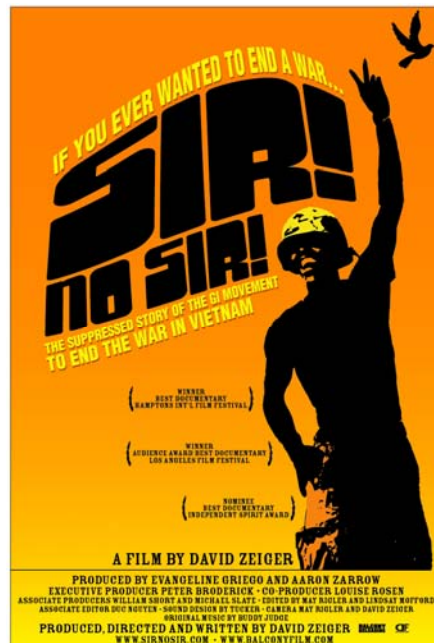
How will this war help my family in the future?

Staff Sgt. Christopher Galka
Rainier, Wash.

[Someday, when the history of the movement in the armed forces that stopped this evil Imperial war is written, this letter, for its courage and clarity, will be well remembered, and the writer honored down through the corridors of time. T]

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.

“GI’s Came Home Disillusioned With The War And Joined The Resistance Themselves”



Apr 20th, 2006 by Wilfred, Boomantribune.com [Excerpts]

I just saw the new documentary Sir! No Sir! which was wonderful.

It takes us back to 1962 and the War in Vietnam and how the resistance was born and grew. Just as importantly it shows us how it has been co-opted and revised since then by the conservatives:

The Vietnam War has been the subject of hundreds of films, both fiction and non-fiction, but this story, the story of the rebellion of thousands of American soldiers against the war-has never been told in film.

This is certainly not for lack of evidence.

By the Pentagon's own figures, 503,926 "incidents of desertion" occurred between 1966 and 1971; officers were being "fragged" (killed with fragmentation grenades by their own troops) at an alarming rate; and by 1971 entire units were refusing to go into battle in unprecedented numbers.

In the course of a few short years, over 100 underground newspapers were published by soldiers around the world; local and national antiwar GI organizations were joined by thousands; thousands more demonstrated against the war at every major base in the world in 1970 and 1971, including in Vietnam itself; stockades and federal prisons were filling up with soldiers jailed for their opposition to the war and the military.

The part that jolted me to the back wall of the theater was when they talked about the reaction of the public to the returning GI's. They go back and investigate the 'girls would spit at the returning GI's at the airport' rhetoric and show it for the urban myth it is.

I was in my teens when the war ended and never saw anyone disrespect a returning soldier from the war. They go back and check news reports in tv and newspapers and find no instances of this supposed occurrence. They show Sylvester Stallone in "Rambo" (a right-wing film from the Reagan era) spouting this as he had an Uzi or some such in his hands screaming what is basically a total non-truth.

This is something hawks have done to rewrite history.

They show no incidents reported of it, combined with very important facts.

First the myth states that these GI's would return to the 'airport' and face derision. The fact is that GI's did not return to civilian airports but to military bases.

Secondly the myth states over and over that these hippie chicks spit at them. The real kicker here is that women don't spit in general even today when behavior is looser than ever. Hippies and war protesters were quite peaceful in general so this wide occurring event always made my alarm bells go off but until I saw this film today did it come into perspective for what it is, an urban myth.

The film does a great job showing how the media downplayed the far-reaching implications that most returning GI's came home disillusioned with the war and joined the resistance themselves and many started their rebuke of the military in Vietnam and also on or near the military bases at the local coffeehouses.

I encourage people to do their own research and most importantly to see this film now and when it is available on video. It's very important as it is the precedent for where we are now in Iraq and Afghanistan and possibly very soon in Iran. Please check out the trailer to the film <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

One great reason to see the film is to see how incredibly conservative our society has become in the last 30 years (when the film ends).

Soldiers openly disobeying the orders of a lying government and hanging out at coffeehouses writing and listening to poetry seems ages ago.

For all we know there could be a lot of desertion and refusal to fight that isn't even covered by the corporate owned media.

Sir! No Sir!:
For one week beginning
Wednesday April 19th at the
IFC Center
322 Sixth Avenue, at West Third Street, New
York City

Advance tickets on sale NOW through the IFC box office
Recording: 212-924-7771
Live box office: 212-924-5246
Online at www.ifccenter.com

Check out the trailer at www.sirnosir.com

Please contact max@riseup.net or celia@riseup.net for posters, postcards and flyers to help promote this event!

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

3 American Soldiers Killed in Baghdad

Apr 23 AP

Three U.S. soldiers were killed Sunday when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb northwest of Baghdad, the U.S. command said. That brought the number of American troops killed in the Iraqi capital area over the weekend to eight.

The latest deaths occurred about 11:30 a.m., the command, without giving further details.

They were assigned to the Army's Multinational Brigade Baghdad which is responsible for security in Baghdad and surrounding areas.

Modesto Area Marine Killed

Apr. 11, 2006 Associated Press

CERES, Calif.: A 24-year-old woman who was inspired to join the Marines after her younger twin brothers enlisted was fatally shot in the head in Iraq over the weekend.

Lance Cpl. Juana Navarro, of Ceres, was killed Saturday while guarding other soldiers during a mission in the Iraqi province of Anbar, said Marine Capt. Donn Puca.

"This was something she always wanted to do," said her older sister, Beatriz Lopez.

She left for duty in May, her family said.

Navarro was born in Michoacan, Mexico, and she and a twin sister became U.S. citizens at age 13. She graduated from Johansen High School in Modesto in 2000, where she volunteered with special education children.

She showered her three nephews with gifts, Lopez said.

"She was like a second mom to my oldest," Lopez said. "When I told him she died, his face, it just shattered into pieces."

Cincinnati Soldier Killed In Iraq Explosion

4/10/2006 Reported by: Lynn Giroud, 9News

The ongoing U.S. military presence in Iraq has claimed the life of another Tri-state military member.

Sergeant First Class Gregory S. Rogers, 42, of Cincinnati, was killed Sunday.

The military reports he died when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicles during convoy operations.

Rogers' wife died from a medical condition a few months before he was deployed to Iraq in December 2005.

He planned to retire when he returned from his tour of duty in December 2006.

Rogers is survived by a daughter in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania and a daughter in Ravenna, Ohio.

His parents, Luther and Donna, live in West Chester.

Rogers joined the Army in April 1984 and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Rogers is the 22nd military member to die serving in the latest invasion of Iraq.

He Had Hoped To See The World: The Plant City Man Killed Saturday In Iraq Left For The Army Last Spring, A Week After High School Graduation.

April 11, 2006 By ABBIE VANSICKLE, St. Petersburg Times

PLANT CITY: When Shirley Missildine's grandson enlisted in the Army and went off to war, she watched as the world transformed the Plant City teen into a mature young man.

"When he walked through the mall or the airport in his uniform, people looked at him with respect," she said. "They looked at him like he's a man."

Pvt. Jody Missildine was still a baby to his grandmother, though, and he always will be. Missildine died Saturday when an explosive detonated beside his Humvee in Iraq. He was 19.

No funeral plans were in place by Monday afternoon. His family was waiting for information about when his body would be brought to Florida.

"Life's just going to be so empty without him," his grandmother said.

Missildine, who was in the infantry, had signed up for the Army in high school. He wanted to satisfy his wanderlust and pay his way through college, his grandmother said. For a boy who grew up in a rural corner of Hillsborough County, the Army seemed like a good way to see the world.

"He still had the rest of his life to decide what he wanted to do," she said, her eyes glistening with tears.

Mrs. Missildine, 57, and her husband, Melvin, 58, were particularly close to her grandson. They raised him and his brother, Jason, 22. The boys' father, Kelvin Missildine, 40, lived in the area, but the boys lived with their grandparents.

The pair sat together on a couch in the living room of their Plant City home on Monday morning, unsure of what lay ahead. Photographs of their grandson were spread on the coffee table. In many of the photos, Missildine is a smiling toddler.

As a child, he wanted to be an archaeologist. He was always trying to figure out how things worked.

"He was very inquisitive," she said.

He grew up to be an athlete, joining the track and wrestling teams at school. He loved computers, Taco Bell and his cat, Tigger, whom he would cradle like a baby in his arms. At the end of high school, he got back together with a girl he'd liked in elementary school.

The couple stayed together while he was serving in Iraq. She was at her senior prom when she learned of his death, Mrs. Missildine said.

Much had changed for Missildine in the past year. He graduated from Plant City High School in the spring. One week later, he left for the Army. Religion began to play a bigger role in his life. He started attending Baptist services on a military base. He got a glimpse of Europe when he was stationed in Germany. Then he got word he would be going to Iraq.

The news troubled the family, his grandmother said. "Germany was like a steppingstone to Iraq," she said. "I was very uneasy. But we tried to convince him, and he tried to convince us that it was all right."

For a while it was.

Her grandson was proud to be in the military, she said. Many of his high school friends had joined. When he came home for a visit in December, he seemed optimistic. He called his grandparents at least once a week.

But his attitude changed after a visit home in March, she said. When he returned to Iraq, he learned that a friend had been killed, and that another had lost a leg. He called home in tears.

His grandmother tried to reassure him, to tell him that everything was going to be all right. He'd come home safe and sound, she had told him.

"Little did I know that the very next week that was going to be it," she said.

State Soldier Wounded

April 23, 2006 AP

BROOKFIELD: A Connecticut soldier is recovering from a gunshot wound to the abdomen, sustained while working with his unit earlier this month in northern Iraq.

Army Spc. Scott Nimer, 24, of Brookfield, was shot as he entered a house near Balad with other members of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat.

**NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Soldiers fire on insurgent positions from a rooftop April 22, 2006 in Ramadi. U.S. and Iraqi forces fought an hour-long gunbattle with insurgents Saturday in Ramadi, firing automatic weapons from rooftops at small guerrilla teams maneuvering around them in alleyways and an abandoned fairground. (AP Photo Todd/Pitman)

TROOP NEWS

**Marine Gold Star Father Has Had
Enough Of The Traitor Bush**



Terry Davis, a retired U.S. Marine whose son was killed while on duty in Iraq, acknowledges a supportive motorist down the road from the entrance of the Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center Sunday, April 23, 2006, in Twentynine Palms, Calif. President Bush visited the base Sunday as part of his four day trip to California. (AP Photo/Ric Francis)

“The Revolt By Retired Generals Has Opened An Extraordinary Debate Among Younger Officers”

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

[The good news is that this kind of dissent among the officers opens up even more space for resistance among the troops themselves. The fire spreads. The chains are breaking. T]

April 23, 2006 By THOM SHANKER and ERIC SCHMITT, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

The revolt by retired generals who publicly criticized Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has opened an extraordinary debate among younger officers, in military academies, in the armed services' staff colleges and even in command posts and mess halls in Iraq.

Junior and midlevel officers are discussing whether the war plans for Iraq reflected unvarnished military advice, whether the retired generals should have spoken out,

whether active-duty generals will feel free to state their views in private sessions with the civilian leaders and, most divisive of all, whether Mr. Rumsfeld should resign.

In recent weeks, military correspondents of The Times discussed those issues with dozens of younger officers and cadets in classrooms and with combat units in the field, as well as in informal conversations at the Pentagon and in e-mail exchanges and telephone calls.

To protect their careers, the officers were granted anonymity so they could speak frankly about the debates they have had and have heard. The stances that emerged are anything but uniform, although all seem colored by deep concern over the quality of civil-military relations, and the way ahead in Iraq.

The discussions often flare with anger, particularly among many midlevel officers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan and face the prospect of additional tours of duty.

"This is about the moral bankruptcy of general officers who lived through the Vietnam era yet refused to advise our civilian leadership properly," said one Army major in the Special Forces who has served two combat tours. "I can only hope that my generation does better someday."

The debates are fueled by the desire to mete out blame for the situation in Iraq, a drawn-out war that has taken many military lives and has no clear end in sight.

A midgrade officer who has served two tours in Iraq said a number of his cohorts were angered last month when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that "tactical errors, a thousand of them, I am sure," had been made in Iraq. "We have not lost a single tactical engagement on the ground in Iraq," the officer said, noting that the definition of tactical missions is specific movements against an enemy target. "The mistakes have all been at the strategic and political levels."

Some senior officers said part of their own discussions were about fears for the immediate future, centering on the fact that Mr. Rumsfeld has surrounded himself with senior officers who share his views and are personally invested in his policies.

"If civilian officials feel as if they could be faced with a revolt of sorts, they will select officers who are like-minded," said another Army officer who has served in Iraq. "They will, as a result, get the military advice they want based on whom they appoint."

Others contend that the military's own failings are equally at fault. A field-grade officer now serving in Iraq said he thought it was incorrect for the retired generals to call for Mr. Rumsfeld's resignation. His position, he said, is that "if there is a judgment to be cast, it rests as much upon the shoulders of our senior military leaders."

INDEPENDENT CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE JOHN MURPHY DENOUNCES DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP FOR ITS BLOODTHIRSTY MIDTERM ELECTION PLATFORM: Calls For Immediate Withdrawal From Iraq

If Osama is to be held accountable for his acts of terrorism so must the members of the Reagan administration, the Clinton administration and the Bush administration. The terrorism rained down on the United States, Great Britain and Spain was nothing compared to the terrorism that the United States and its allies have rained down upon the Middle East, Central and South America in the last twenty-five years.

April 21, 2006 Johnmurphyforcongress.org [Excerpts]

CHESTER COUNTY, PA: John Murphy the Independent congressional candidate in the 16th District severely criticized the Democratic leadership today for its proclamation entitled "Real Security" which now forms the basis of its midterm election platform.

Mr. Murphy issued the following statement: "It's not surprising that the proclamation was issued in the presence of the Clinton administration's former Secretary of State, war criminal Madeleine Albright who was virtually ecstatic over the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children caused by the Clinton administration's sanctions as she told news correspondent Lesley Stahl: "it was worth it".

Also on hand was war criminal Wesley Clark, the first man to bomb Yugoslavia since Adolph Hitler.

Instead of criticizing the Bush administration for its illegal wars on Iraq and Afghanistan and its bogus war on terrorism, the Democrats assure us that they will now be even more bloodthirsty than the Bush administration by doing a more complete job of waging all three wars! One illusory, the other two immoral, unjust and imperialistic!

Both parties are in favor of terrorizing the American people into accepting illegal and unprovoked wars and unprecedented attacks on our basic democratic rights here at home through the USA Patriot Act which has destroyed our civil liberties and gutted the Bill of Rights.

Both parties have now trashed any semblance of integrity in foreign policy by embracing the "Bush Doctrine" which allows the United States to "preemptively invade" any nation which can be shown to have citizens who are engaged in terrorist activities.

Ever since the Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941 we have found the entire concept of "preemptive strikes" as monstrous but now both the Republicans and Democrats outdo themselves in their efforts to continue the expansion of American military might through glorifying the once odious concept of preemption.

The Democrats are attempting to terrorize the American people into voting for them by making "National Security" their preeminent issue.

Lois Herr, the Democratic candidate for Congress in the 16th Congressional District has the gall to assert on her web site that her primary objective is the capture of Osama bin Laden! I suspect she will find him right after she finds Jimmy Hoffa.

This jingoism outstrips anything seen in American history for the last two centuries! The insane quest for Osama led to the unprovoked invasion of Afghanistan and the deaths of thousands of innocent men, women and children. Lois Herr wishes to continue the fiction that the search for Osama is real rather than illusory.

I'm running against both Lois Herr and Joe Pitts. My primary goal would certainly never be to find Osama bin Laden but I would like to sit down and talk with him and then lay out once and for all to the American people how this bogus war on terrorism was manufactured by both the Republicans and Democrats (Regan, Clinton, Kerry and Bush) just as they have manufactured the phony problem of "illegal immigration".

If Osama is to be held accountable for his acts of terrorism so must the members of the Reagan administration, the Clinton administration and the Bush administration. The terrorism rained down on the United States, Great Britain and Spain was nothing compared to the terrorism that the United States and its allies have rained down upon the Middle East, Central and South America in the last twenty-five years.

There is no choice of the "lesser evil" between the Democratic and Republican congressional candidates in the 16th District and for that matter anywhere else in the country. The two-party system serves only to defend the interests of the ruling elite.

Backing a supposedly less reactionary Democrat against a Republican only serves to derail the necessary struggle to establish the political independence of the American people from the corporate controlled parties. In 2006 the "lesser evil" argument falls flat on its face! The Democrats are promising only to be more brutal than the Republicans both domestically and internationally.

We need a party independent of the Democrats and Republicans.

I will fight in this congressional election to give voice to the mass antiwar sentiment in the nation demanding the complete and unconditional withdrawal of

our troops from Iraq, Afghanistan and the other 126 nations where we now quarter American troops.

My campaign will further demand a return of our civil liberties through the repeal of the USA Patriot Act and that all who are responsible for launching these unprovoked and illegal wars be held accountable through prosecution for war crimes and that the US government and its allies be assessed for the damages it has wrought and compensate both the Iraqi and Afghani people for the death and destruction this war has inflicted upon their countries as well as the American soldiers wounded in this conflict and the families of those who have been killed.

I urge all those who support these demands to join us in this fight.

Air Force Screwed: Once Info Posted, It Stays Out There [Duh]

April 19, 2006 San Francisco Chronicle

A week after Pentagon officials ordered an Air Force base in Georgia to remove from its Web site security information about the two Air Force One aircraft, the data remained publicly available.

Officials at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center removed the information within hours of getting the order, but the Air Force has discovered that once it, or for that matter anyone, places a Web page on a publicly accessible Internet site, that information moves into the public domain, thanks to sites such as Google and the Way Back Machine, and individuals, that make copies.

Kalashnikov Says U.S. Troops In Iraq Show His Weapon Is Still Best

MOSCOW, April 17 (Reuters)

Mikhail Kalashnikov, designer of the world's most popular assault rifle, says that U.S. soldiers in Iraq are using his invention in preference to their own weapons, proving that his gun is still the best.

"Even after lying in a swamp you can pick up this rifle, aim it and shoot. That's the best job description there is for a gun. Real soldiers know that and understand it," the 86-year-old gunmaker told a weekend news conference in Moscow.

"In Vietnam, American soldiers threw away their M-16 rifles and used (Kalashnikov) AK-47s from dead Vietnamese soldiers, with bullets they captured. That was because the climate is different to America, where M-16s may work properly," he said.

"Look what's happening now: every day on television we see that the Americans in Iraq have my machine guns and assault rifles in their armored vehicles. Even there American rifles don't work properly."

Some U.S. troops in Iraq have reportedly taken to using AK-47s in preference to the standard-issue M-16. The Cold War-era gun, renowned for its durability and easy handling, is plentiful in Iraq.

Kalashnikov designed his first weapon in 1947 and is still chief constructor at Izhmash arms factory in Izhevsk in the Urals mountains.

The factory's director Vladimir Grodetsky told the news conference that around a billion rifles had been produced around the world using parts of Kalashnikovs or based on the same design, only 10-12 percent of which were made in Russia.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Big Fire Occurs At Oil And Gas Complex In Northern Iraq



A burning pipeline near the Kirkuk, April 23, 2006, on the main pipeline leading from Kirkuk to the Baiji oil refinery. REUTERS/Slahaldeen Rasheed

April 23, 2006 Star Publications (Malaysia) Bhd

A large fire burned at a government oil and gas complex in northern Iraq on Sunday, but it was not known whether it was caused by an accident or sabotage, officials said.

Firefighters and Iraqi soldiers backed by the American forces were fighting the blaze, which began about 5 a.m., said police Capt. Imad Abdullah of the area's oil pipeline protection force.

Abdullah said the fire covered the whole North Oil Co. complex near Kirkuk and that pipelines were closed that normally carry oil and natural gas to refineries and power stations in Beiji, 50 kilometers (30 miles) to the southwest.

It was the biggest fire at the complex in five months, an official at North Oil Co. said on condition of anonymity because he isn't authorized to speak as a company spokesman.

He said an initial investigation indicated the fire was started by a fuse near a pool of oil, but that it wasn't known if the blaze was accidental or started by insurgents. [Gee, could that be a clue? Duh.]

Assorted Resistance Action

4.23.06 AFP & Reuters & (AP)

Insurgents launched attacks early Sunday on Baghdad's defence and interior ministries, with three mortars landing at the entrance of the defence ministry building.

The three explosions occurred at about 8 a.m. outside a wall of the Green Zone where Iraq's Defense Ministry is located, killing seven Iraqi civilians and wounding eight, U.S. and Iraqi officials said. Three of the wounded worked at the ministry, an official there said.

Police Lt. Maitham Abdul-Razzaq said it was hard to identify the dead because the powerful blasts and shrapnel severed their limbs and destroyed their identification cards.

An Iraqi soldier was killed and two others wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol in the main road between Latifiya and Iskandariya.

Guerrillas killed an Iraqi contractor in the northern oil city of Kirkuk.

A roadside bomb targeting a convoy carrying a provincial police commander missed him but killed two policemen and wounded another near Beiji, prompting local officials to impose a curfew.

A drive-by shooting near Kirkuk killed Muhammed Fathi, director of the Ardhul Battira, a Turkish company working on the area's railways.

Iraq Achieves The American Dream

4/23/2006 (AP)

Insurgents raided a real estate agency in Baghdad and killed its owner.

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

Up Close And Personal



A rocket which exploded near the heavily fortified green zone April 23, 2006 in Baghdad.
(AP Photo/Mohammed Hato)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“The Generals’ Revolt Is Not Just Against Rumsfeld, But Is Aimed At The Man Who Appointed Him”



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

April 15, 2006 by Patrick J. Buchanan, V Report [Excerpt]

In just two weeks, six retired U.S. Marine and Army generals have denounced the Pentagon planning for the war in Iraq and called for the resignation or firing of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Washington Post columnist David Ignatius, who travels often to Iraq and supports the war, says that the generals mirror the views of 75 percent of the officers in the field, and probably more.

This is a vote of no confidence in the leadership of the U.S. armed forces by senior officers once responsible for carrying out the orders of that leadership.

It is hard to recall a situation in history where retired U.S. Army and Marine Corps generals, almost all of whom had major commands in a war yet underway, denounced the civilian leadership and called on the president to fire his secretary for war.

As those generals must be aware, their revolt cannot but send a message to friend and enemy alike that the U.S. high command is deeply divided, that U.S. policy is floundering, that the loss of Iraq impends if the civilian leadership at the Pentagon is not changed.

The generals have sent an unmistakable message to Commander in Chief George W. Bush: Get rid of Rumsfeld, or you will lose the war.

Whatever one thinks of the Iraq war, dismissal of Rumsfeld in response to a clamor created by ex-generals would mark Bush as a weak if not fatally compromised president. He will have capitulated to a generals' coup. Will he then have to clear Rumsfeld's successor with them?

Bush will begin to look like Czar Nicholas in 1916.

And there is an unstated message of the Generals' Revolt. If Iraq collapses in chaos and sectarian war, and is perceived as another U.S. defeat, they are saying: We are not going to carry the can. The first volley in a "Who Lost Iraq?" war of recriminations has been fired.

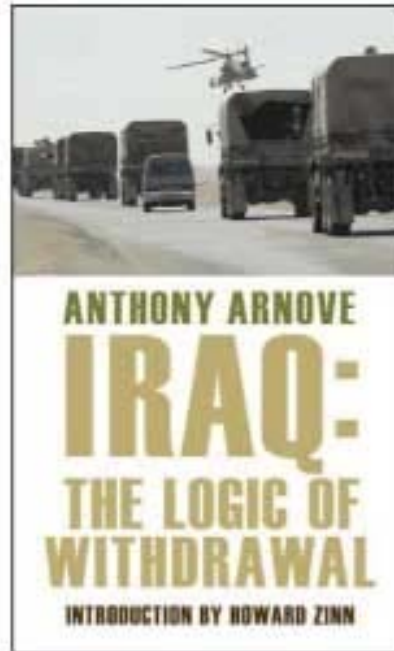
In the last analysis, the Generals' Revolt is not just against Rumsfeld, but is aimed at the man who appointed him and has stood by him for three years of a guerrilla war the Pentagon did not predict or expect.

CORNED RAT: APPROACH WITH CAUTION



REUTERS/Larry Downing/Files

**“When You Look At Society Overall
In Terms Of Working People, Poor
People And People Who Are Affected
By These Issues We're Talking
About, We're The Majority”**



People can see the connection between the questions that immigrants, working people, poor people in this country have and the situation in Iraq. Those are very fertile connections for the antiwar movement to be making.

April 22 / 23, 2006 By THOMAS P. HEALY, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

Review:

Anthony Arnove's new book, *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal* (The New Press, 2006) is tailored after Howard Zinn's 1967 brief against the Vietnam War. Arnove has worked closely with Zinn on *Voices of a People's History of the United States* and a collection of interviews, *Terrorism and War*. Zinn provides both a foreword and afterword to Arnove's book. Arnove spoke with Counterpunch from his home in Brooklyn.

TH: How do you envision generating the political momentum to accomplish immediate withdrawal?

AA: We know from history--recently from the history of the Vietnam War--that public opinion and political protests can change the nature of the debate around a war and change the calculus of power.

Right now I think if we want to change the calculus of power the first thing we need to do is to see that we have to pressure the Democrats just as much as we have to pressure the Republicans. It's not as if the Democrats are on our side in this fight--they're not. So it's a mistake for us to put our energy and resources into persuading the Democrats to somehow be some animal that they're not or hoping that the Democrats are somehow going to become a standard-bearer for our movement--they are not.

They will respond only to the thing that the Republicans respond to: a mass groundswell of opposition.

Protest.

Disaffection that threatens their power to the point where they see we're losing in Iraq, we're losing at home, and each day that we stay in Iraq, things get worse for us. In order to maintain some control over the system, in order to maintain some credibility for future U.S. imperial projects, we need to pull out.

And that's going to involve a greater degree of mobilization, protest and disruption of business as usual. I think it's also going to involve gaining some clarity about who the targets of our protests are and on the nature of the Democratic Party that, unfortunately, the antiwar movement has lacked.

TH: It's hard to have clarity, especially when the media are not supportive. You write in the "Resistance in Iraq" chapter, "The propaganda for this war has been internalized by the establishment media and no one blinks." Despite the many successes of the Peace Movement--we have the numbers, we were right about the president lying to the American people--we weren't paid attention to then and aren't being paid attention to now. How do we suddenly get attention?

AA: Well, look. There are a lot of positive things you can say about the antiwar movement. I think it's also useful to step back and ask what we can do better. Given the scale of the crisis of what's happening in Iraq and given the urgency of the issues we're talking about, I think it's good for us to be sober and self-critical and to realize our weaknesses and realize where we can do things better.

There's an enormous gap that we have not filled between sentiment against the war, which is reflected in polls and other expressions in the culture, and the degree of opposition and organization of protests that we've seen. That says to me that people are seeing through the media deception. People are reaching antiwar conclusions but they're not being engaged or involved in organization.

Ideas can't change the world alone. They need people to embody them--to act on them, to do things with them. They need organization.

For example, I think it's a serious mistake that the major antiwar organizations did not come together in a unified way on the third anniversary of the occupation. It was a gift to the mainstream media.

The establishment media went out on the third anniversary looking for protests. They've got to have a story that lets them off the hook. They had a story: Where are the protesters? People don't care, people aren't paying attention and that story's not the real story. So we gave a gift to our opponents and to the media.

Instead, a number of the organizations that might have been organizing that protest are focused on the midterm congressional elections.

Now, I'm not saying that they have bad intentions. I just think they are making tactical, strategic mistakes. I may be in a minority position with the antiwar movement but I want to argue that position to as many people as I can because I think the antiwar movement would be stronger if it weren't oriented on the midterm elections and if it were oriented on a different set of political priorities. I think those arguments within the antiwar movement are healthy and should be had with a tone of solidarity--of course we're all on the same side--but we can be on the same side and argue and fight things out and hopefully in that process come out with a stronger movement.

TH: You've suggested that by being diverted into electoral strategies it dilutes the movement for immediate withdrawal. What kind of extra-electoral strategies are you thinking of?

AA: A couple of things. First of all, we should try to connect the war at home with the war abroad. There's a war on civil liberties taking place, there's a war on immigrants taking place, there's a war on trade unions, working people and poor people taking place. State after state, city after city, county after county is facing budget cuts in vital social spending, healthcare and education programs and yet, with the Democrats providing the votes that gave the margin of victory, Congress just passed a bill that's going to send tens of billions of dollars more in emergency assistance for the war in Iraq. Every spending bill that George Bush has brought before the Congress asking for more money for this war has been approved. And that's already on top of bloated Pentagon and energy department budgets spending hundreds of billions of dollars on the war, and then they're coming back for yet more.

Where's the money for the people in New Orleans? Where's the money for the entire Gulf Coast affected by Hurricane Katrina? Where's the money for public education?

Where's the money for veterans who are coming back injured from this war and who have come back injured from earlier wars? You know, people can see that connection.

Look at the question of immigrants. Part of the way that the war in Iraq has been sold is by demonizing Arabs, demonizing Muslims, demonizing immigrants, and increasing xenophobia and racism.

There's been a tremendous rebellion taking place around the country recently, with Latinos and other immigrants speaking out, asserting their rights and asserting their dignity.

People can see the connection between the questions that immigrants, working people, poor people in this country have and the situation in Iraq. Those are very fertile connections for the antiwar movement to be making.

I think we need to broaden our movement and see all of the ways we can localize these discussions. There are trade unions, city councils and parent/teacher associations expressing opposition to the war and connecting global issues with local, immediate concerns that are quite organic and, I think, very effective. This puts you in conversation with your co-workers, people in your community, your neighbors, people in your school, talking about these vital issues.

That strategy can help not only further solidify antiwar sentiment but also bring people into activity. I think the main obstacle for people right now is not that they support the war, but that they don't think they can do anything to make a difference about it. We need to find small, concrete ways to show people that you can do something, that you can make a difference and that there's an accumulation, an aggregation of all of these democratic efforts and organizational expressions on a local level that can come together to have an impact nationally and even internationally.

TH: What do you think about the tepid impeachment movement?

AA: The impeachment thing is interesting. I think it's a distraction because first of all we have to think realistically. We have a Republican-controlled Congress that's not going to impeach Bush. Even if we could impeach Bush, Dick Cheney becomes the president of the United States.

It seems to me that the antiwar movement or the progressive Left movement more broadly has made a mistake in focusing so much on one individual, George Bush. As much as I don't like George Bush, I think we make a mistake when we don't look at the broader institutional roots of George Bush's politics--the bipartisan character of the most urgent issues we face today.

The Democratic Party could pass some sort of theoretical censure against George Bush but this is the same party that voted for the Patriot Act, the same party that's voting to fund the war in Iraq.

It seems to me it really isn't getting at the core issue. Now, has Bush committed crimes that are impeachable? Absolutely! But strategically is that where we should be directing our energies? I don't think so. The fact that George Bush hasn't been impeached is a reflection of the shift rightward in official politics and the establishment media. We're in a different political moment.

And the Democrats and Republicans both share a commitment to many of the policies I consider illegal and indefensible that George Bush has carried out. So, it's not just about what he as an individual has done.

TH: You write that "withdrawal is the first step in the United States' meeting its obligations to the Iraqis for the devastation we've wrought." Let's say we actually do withdraw. Does the United Nations move in? Do we create a fund for reparations? What's the strategy?

AA: Well, I was in a meeting the other day with an Iraq vet named Geoffrey Millard, who had a very good comment. He's now declaring conscientious objection. He said, "Withdrawal is not a strategy, it's an executive order. You don't need a strategy. You just need to say, "We're giving up the project. We're not going to build long-term bases in Iraq. We're not going to continue to be the colonial power." This happens over and over again in history--the colonial powers have said, "We're staying forever, we can't leave." And then they're forced to leave.

So, that's the first step. The next steps are up to the Iraqi people. I don't think it's up to us to decide what they then ask other countries or the UN or the Red Cross or any other international humanitarian organizations to do. They may very well want their assistance. They may not want their assistance. Genuine self-determination, genuine democracy for the Iraqi people means that's their decision, not ours.

In terms of reparation, I think the moral case is very strong that the United States owes a great financial debt to the Iraqi people for the death and destruction that it has caused. Not just during this occupation but during all of the years of sanctions and during all of the years before that when we supported Saddam Hussein and of course also during the Gulf War of 1991. But the fact that there's a moral case for it doesn't mean that it will happen.

The only way it would happen is if there is pressure, as I would hope there would be domestically and internationally, for the United States to pay reparations. Now we know from the Vietnam War that the opposite happened--that rather than paying reparations to the Vietnamese people, the United States economically punished the Vietnamese people for the crime of standing up against the United States and defeating the world's greatest imperial power. And we would expect they would try to do the same with Iraq but I think we as an antiwar movement shouldn't give up the day the war ends. We should be continuing to pressure the administration on this point and doing whatever we can to make sure that Iraqis have the resources they need to rebuild their country.

Right now the United States has bled the country of resources and has been preventing its development through a completely warped system of economic insertion based on a just a handful of contractors with close ties to the administration making loads of money while ordinary Iraqis have less electricity, less access to safe drinking water than even under the sanctions.

TH: The social and economic justice and peace movement is fighting a battle on a number of fronts. While they're opposing war and racism and economic injustice, the Bush administration is moving forward with a very radical agenda.

AA: I think it's important to see we need to fight on many fronts because these issues are interrelated. I'm reminded of Martin Luther King's speech at the Riverside church one year before his assassination, when he spoke out very powerfully on the Vietnam War. As he said at the beginning of that speech, a number of civil rights leaders didn't want him to speak out on the war in Vietnam. They said it would be a distraction--that it might

even undermine the fight for civil rights to speak about Vietnam. And Dr. King said you can't separate the issues of racism, racial oppression, economic oppression, militarism and imperialism--all those things are combined.

So you have to find a way of fighting on multiple fronts but also see the connections between the fights we're engaged in. I think right now is the time where those connections are very clear, and what's encouraging to me is that people are making those connections.

Also, look--we're the majority!

On the Iraq war, on healthcare, on the idea of raising taxes to support Social Security and care for the elderly--we're the majority.

When you look at society overall in terms of working people, poor people and people who are affected by these issues we're talking about, we're the majority.

So there isn't a reason to feel embattled or isolated. We have serious challenges but we also have serious opportunities.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

***This Is Not A Satire:* Silly Collaborator President Says Iraq "Won't Let Other Nations Interfere In Its Internal Affairs"**

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: THIS GUY IS WHINING ABOUT FOREIGNERS CONCENTRATING ARMIES ON IRAQ'S BORDERS BUT FORGETS ABOUT THE 140,000 US AND BRITISH FOREIGNERS OCCUPYING HIS COUNTRY!]

Apr 23 By LEE KEATH, Associated Press Writer

President Jalal Talabani expressed his concern Sunday over reported Iranian and Turkish troop concentrations on those countries' borders with Iraq.

Talabani said that so far Iranian and Turkish forces have stayed on their sides of the border.

But "I have expressed my concern over these concentrations ... Iraq is a sovereign independent nation that he said at a press conference with U.S. ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad in the northern city of Irbil.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Steve Bell Cartoon]

**Members Of Congress Never, Ever
Faced With Losing The Big Money
They Vote Themselves**

Former Rep. Randy “Duke” Cunningham, R-Calif., who was sentenced to eight years and four months in jail after pleading guilty to bribery charges this year, is still entitled to an annual pension of about \$36,000 for his 15 years in the House.

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: Fuckers...]

Apr 19 By JIM ABRAMS, Associated Press Writer

Members of Congress occasionally lose elections, but they never lose retirement and health benefits that most Americans can only envy.

A lawmaker who retires at 60 after just 12 years in office can count on receiving an immediate pension of \$25,000 a year and lifetime benefits that could total more than \$800,000.

That doesn't include 401(k) benefits. And any member who lasts five years in office also can get taxpayer-subsidized health care until he or she reaches Medicare age.

Congressional pensions tend to be far more generous than those offered in the private sector. Benefits start earlier and, unlike most private pension plans promising a fixed monthly payment based on years worked and pay, come with annual cost-of-living increases. They also accrue a third faster than the average plan offered by private companies.

Any member of Congress with five years of service is eligible for full benefits at 62. Those with 20 years in office can get full benefits at 50, younger than most workers.

Cost-of-living adjustments, a shield against inflation, “haven't been slightly common since the 1980s” in the private sector, said John Ehrhardt, an expert in corporate retirement programs at the Seattle-based consulting and actuarial firm Milliman. He said COLAs could add 25 percent to the value of a congressional plan over its lifetime.

It doesn't matter what a lawmaker does before or after leaving office.

Former Rep. Randy “Duke” Cunningham, R-Calif., who was sentenced to eight years and four months in jail after pleading guilty to bribery charges this year, is still entitled to an annual pension of about \$36,000 for his 15 years in the House.

That doesn't include his military pension or 401(k) benefits.

Former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, who is resigning after 22 years, will qualify for an initial pension of \$56,000. DeLay could get pension payments of nearly \$2 million over his expected lifetime, according to the National Taxpayers Union, which tracks congressional pension issues.

[Guess who gets to decide what benefits these Imperial scum take home. They do. They can vote themselves as much money as they want any time they want to.]

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Sadistic Freaks At Work: Principal Made Little Kids Use Buckets For Toilets, Obeying Orders To Stop Them From Joining Immigrant Rights Protest

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

Apr 17 AP

A principal trying to prevent walkouts during immigration rallies inadvertently introduced a lockdown so strict that children weren't allowed to go to the bathroom, and instead had to use buckets in the classroom, an official said.

Worthington Elementary School Principal Angie Marquez imposed the lockdown March 27 as nearly 40,000 students across Southern California left classes that morning to attend immigrants' rights demonstrations. The lockdown continued into the following morning.

Marquez apparently misread the district handbook and ordered a lockdown designed for nuclear attacks.

Tim Brown, the district's director of operations, confirmed some students used buckets but said the principal's order to impose the most severe type of lockdown was an "honest mistake."

[No. The order to lockdown the schools was no “honest mistake.” It was the decision of racist petty tyrants. This idiot wouldn’t have issued any orders at all if the order for lockdown hadn’t come down the school system chain of command. Those who ordered the lockdown are the freaks and criminals. They’ve turned the schools into prisons. That’s where the whole “lockdown” mentality comes from.]

"When there's a nuclear attack, that's when buckets are used," Brown told the Los Angeles Times. The principal "followed procedure. She made a decision to follow the handbook. She just misread it."

In some cases teachers escorted classmates to regular restroom facilities, students said.

Appalled parents have complained to the school board. Brown said the school district planned to update its emergency preparedness instructions to give more explicit directions.

Parents and community activists asked the school board at its April 5 meeting to explain the principal's decision. They also sought promises that the lockdown wouldn't be repeated.

"There was no violence at the protests, so this was based on what?" activist Diane Sambrano asked. "It was unsanitary, unnecessary and absolutely unacceptable."

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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