

GI SPECIAL 4G12:



**“The Recruiter Never
Said That I Wouldn’t Be
Able To Look My Mom In
The Eye When It Was
Over”**



Cody Camacho of IVAW, Veterans Day 2005, Chicago

By Ken Nielsen, *The Veteran*, Vietnam Veterans Against The War [Excerpt] *Ken Nielsen served in the US Army from 1991 to 1993 (4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, 1st Division). He is a member of the Chicago chapter of VVAW.*

Veterans Day, November 11, 2005 saw the dedication of the city's new Vietnam War memorial, located nearly underground, steps away from one of the state's dirtiest rivers, and almost completely hidden to anyone not taking a vomit-inducing boat tour. It's a nice memorial; there's grass, and a new fountain.

But the whole thing has been treated just like veterans in this country: kept out of sight and out of mind. Except, of course, for the dedication. That was where the mayor got to show off his fellow war supporters, busing in Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legionnaires from the suburbs to stock his event.

The first speaker was Cody Camacho, an Iraq War veteran who served with the 41st Field Artillery and the 72nd MP Company at the Abu Ghraib prison from March 2003 to March 2004.

After giving a firsthand confirmation of the torture that occurred at Abu Ghraib, Cody described some of the problems he faces after returning from the war. "You can't get back. The nightmares, the shakes, the hollow feeling of a soul that's dry for what seems like no reason at all.

"The recruiter never said that I wouldn't be able to look my mom in the eye when it was over."

Cody called for support for returning veterans and thanked veterans of previous wars for helping him and others muster the courage it takes to oppose the war.

Another Iraq War veteran, Dave Adams, who served with the 101st Airborne Division in 2003, spoke of an incident in which his convoy ran down a small child in the streets of Al Khut and was not able to stop to assist the child, due to their orders.

After having been told that his mission was "to win the hearts and minds" of Iraqis, Dave struggled to make sense of this incident, and it became one of the many contradictions he witnessed in Iraq that helped shape his current feelings about the war.

Dave went on to issue a challenge: "We have to go home and engage our neighbors, our family, our friends. We have to call our representatives and ask for change, demand change. Ask them what they're doing to stop this war now."



www.ivaw.net

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Carson GI, A Broncos Fan, Dies In Iraq Attack

July 8, 2006 By Hector Gutierrez, Rocky Mountain News

An Army sergeant based at Fort Carson was killed in combat last week in Iraq, the Defense Department confirmed Thursday.

Sgt. James P. Muldoon, 23, was wounded June 29 while stationed at a control point during combat operations in Baqubah, about 30 miles northeast of Baghdad, the Army said.

The sergeant, who was born in Denver, died later from his wounds in the town of Balad, the Army said.

Though he moved around the country quite a bit and settled in Bells, Texas, Muldoon took the Denver Broncos with him, his widow, Ashlee Muldoon, said Thursday.

"He played football and track when he was in high school, and he was a big football fan, a big Broncos fan," his widow recalled from Bells, a small town near the Oklahoma border and about 70 miles northeast of Dallas. "He's always liked them since he was little."

Muldoon became the 15th Fort Carson soldier to die this year in Iraq, and 168th soldier lost from the Mountain Post since the 2003 Iraqi invasion, the Army said.

Muldoon was originally assigned to Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and transferred to Fort Carson in May 2005. In November, Muldoon and his unit were deployed to Iraq.

"He wanted to serve his country," his wife said.

Muldoon was assigned to Fort Carson's 1st Battalion, 68th Combined Arms Regiment and 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team - 4th Infantry Division, the Army said.

In addition to his wife, Muldoon is survived by his daughter, Pyper, who will turn 2 on July 14. He also is survived by his parents, Jimmy and Jullie Criger.

"He was a joker, constantly, and he was a fun guy, and loved his family," his widow said.

Notes From A Deadly Fiasco: The Pitiful Pretenses Of A Hated, Dying Occupation

Rashid, 49, survives largely with - and only with - the protection of U.S. Marines. They hold down the Government Center where he works and escort him to and from work. They fly him around Anbar on a helicopter. Most of the senior members of the government refuse to come to work or to show their faces in public.

July 11, 2006 By Dexter Filkins The New York Times [Excerpts]

Mamoon Sami Rashid is the governor with 29 lives.

That is the number of assassination attempts he has counted since joining the Anbar provincial government in January 2005.

Rashid, 49, survives largely with - and only with - the protection of U.S. Marines.

They hold down the Government Center where he works and escort him to and from work. They fly him around Anbar on a helicopter. Most of the senior members of the government refuse to come to work or to show their faces in public.

"It's been very, very difficult to get people to come in here," said Colonel Frank Corte Jr. of the marines, a reservist and Texas state legislator, and an adviser to Rashid.

"In May, we had a full house - mayors, directors general, contractors - and then came the attack on the governor and the beheading of his secretary. The message went out. Most of them don't come in anymore."

Rashid's troubles go beyond Anbar. The Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad, led by Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, has placed Rashid and Anbar so low on its list of priorities that \$75 million promised for 43 development projects has been hung up for months. Rashid went to Baghdad recently to ask Maliki to send the money. He is still waiting

A recent meeting of the provincial government illuminated the depth of the challenges. Only 6 of 39 senior officials showed up - and those largely because Rashid threatened to fire anyone who did not. When the meeting began, at the Government Center, U.S. Marines far outnumbered the Iraqis in the room.

"I'm very glad to see your directors general here today," said Corte, the U.S. adviser, referring to the six Iraqi officials. "They are very brave men."

One of the first topics was the renovations at several schools, which were being financed and supervised by marines. When the marines reported that some work had stopped - on an elementary school in Haditha, for instance - Rashid grew visibly distressed.

"Why aren't these schools being rebuilt?" Rashid asked, looking at the Americans. "Somebody is threatening the contractors," a marine replied

Rashid shook his head. The schools, he said, had to be ready when the new school year started in September. "We need to put pressure on the contractors," he said. "There is a tremendous amount of fear and intimidation," the marine replied. "We need to be able to say, 'Your family won't be killed, your workers won't be killed.'"

Everyone resolved to better protect the Iraqi contractors.

The next topic was even stickier.

The day before, about 10 billion Iraqi dinars, or \$7 million, had disappeared from Al Rafidain Bank in central Ramadi, next door to a U.S. command post.

Al Rafidain was the only functioning bank in Anbar, and the \$7 million represented most of the bank's deposits. That amount of dinars would have filled several large trunks, but no one admitted to seeing a thing.

As the meeting ended, a marine warned of the dangers that loomed the moment anyone stepped outside.

"Sniper area - run!" he shouted, and those leaving the meeting ran.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. Army soldiers climb into a Paladin gun used to counter enemy mortar fire, in Ramadi June 24, 2006. In this capital of deadly Anbar province, the conflict is nearly constant. Gunbattles in the streets are common and mortars rain down on the bases every week. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



The casket of Army Cpl. Jeremy Jones July 8, 2006, in Omaha, Neb. Jones, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas, was killed June 27 by an explosive in Baghdad. (AP Photo/Dave Weaver)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Helicopter Trashed

July 11, 2006 By Times Online and agencies

In an overnight raid on a hide-out in southern Afghanistan, the US military said today the US-led force destroyed a weapons cache, although as they left the area a malfunctioning helicopter was damaged "beyond repair" in an emergency landing and destroyed by a coalition airstrike. No coalition or Afghan forces were hurt.

The Occupation Government: Heartless Thieves At Work

July 12, 2006 Paul McGeough, Chief Herald Correspondent in Kabul [Excerpt]

In Qualala Pushta, one of Kabul's wealthier suburbs, hundreds of girls are being schooled under canvas because housing developers associated with Qayum Karzai, a brother of the President, had commandeered the land on which their school was to be built, according to a senior official in the Education Ministry.

Two others on a list of 20 schools urgently needed to relieve appalling conditions for children and staff were on hold because of the land-grabbing activities of associates of the Vice-President, Abdul Karim Khalili, and Mohammad Yonus Qanooni, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the official said.

When it was believed that the Manucheri School at Qualala Pushta might be safeguarded from the march of new apartment blocks on adjoining land, funds donated by the US-based United Methodist Committee on Relief had been used for extensive renovations to a block of eight classrooms. But denied the land on which to expand it now seemed that the building might have to be abandoned.

The official said: "For now the students are refugees, under canvas at a nearby school. We have objected, but these developers have powerful backers in the Government."

More than \$US4 million (\$5.3 million) had been allocated for the 20 schools, at which more than 60,000 children were enrolled.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Attack In Al-Saidiah Destroys Police Building; At Least 15 Occupation Cops Dead

July 11 (KUNA)

A fighter in a car attacked on Tuesday a building which belongs to Iraqi special police forces in Al-Saidiah south of the capital.

Iraqi police source said the attack caused heavy damages to the building and that rescue teams were still trying to recover victims trapped underneath the rubble.

An Iraqi police source said mortar shells targeting the police building caused havoc along with injuring four of its soldiers minutes after the car exploded to level the building to the ground.

It is still not clear how many of the police special forces were killed, but first estimates suggest death casualties to 15.

Assorted Resistance Action

07/11/06 Reuters & by Ammar Karim, AFP & AP

In Iraq's northern Salaheddin province a raging gunbattle between Iraqi troops and villagers left 10 soldiers dead, a security source said.

A group of soldiers raided Al-Salman village, 260 kilometers (160 miles) northwest of Baghdad early Tuesday, but met stiff resistance from armed villagers, the source said, adding that civilian casualties were not known.

Clashes between Iraqi forces and insurgents broke out near the northwestern city of Mosul. Brig. Khalaf al-Jubour said 10 policemen who were part of an oil-protection force were killed in the fighting near Sharqat, 45 miles south of Mosul.

Police also said gunmen opened fire on an Iraqi army convoy near Sharqat on Monday evening, killing nine soldiers and wounding three.

Guerrillas captured an Iraqi consul who is posted in Iran from his house in Baghdad on Tuesday, police and Interior Ministry sources said.

Wissam Abdulla al-Awadi, Iraq's consul in the Iranian city of Kermanshah, was snatched in the predominantly Shiite Ammil district in southwestern Baghdad by armed fighters in two cars. Abdulla al-Awadi was in Baghdad visiting his family.

A parked car bomb followed by an attacker on foot struck a restaurant frequented by police near the heavily guarded Green Zone government compound, killing five people and wounding 10, as parliament prepared to meet a few hundred yards away.

Militants killed an engineer with Iraq's North Oil Co. and his driver in the early morning, police said.

A bomb planted under a fuel tanker exploded between a market and a medical center in the southeastern Baghdad suburb of Nahrawan, killing two people and wounding 18, Lt. Bilal Ali said. It sparked a fire that was extinguished, Ali said.

Guerrillas in three cars attacked a Saudi Arabian import/export company in the upscale Mansour neighborhood in western Baghdad, killing five Iraqi employees before fleeing, Capt. Jamil Hussein said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

BETWEEN THE OOH'S AND AHH'S



From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: July 10, 2006

BETWEEN THE OOH'S AND AHH'S

By Dennis Serdel: VFP #50, VVAW, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Purple Heart Americal Div. 11th Brigade, UAW GM retiree, Perry, Michigan

**The night was as black as charlie's pajamas.
But flares were being sent up
into the Southern Cross
and tracer bullets were crossing the sky
and twirling around like a child's sparkler
on the 4th of July.
It was the 4th of July in Vietnam 1968
and almost everybody was celebrating,
smoking pot, drinking beer and whiskey.
Every so often, there would be a "mad minute"
where everybody flipped her on automatic
and unloaded clips for a minute or a little longer.
One bunker was going ape with machine gun tracers,
"Who the hell is that ?"
asked one of our guys to his buddies.
"It's Sarge," one answered, "he's all messed up
on pot and whiskey."
Another answered in the dark,
"he's been just hooking tracer rounds together
and just shooting tracer rounds."
On the LZ that night, the celebrating went on
until everybody was calling it good,
except for Sarge with the machinegun's
noise and tracer rounds.
Finally, someone said,
"Look, a couple of us better go down there
and tell Sarge to quit.
Two walked down there
and after a while, Sarge stopped.
A little girl was hugging her daddy's leg
and looking up to the Starry black sky.
Then a firework burst like a star
and wiggly red travelled down
like an umbrella, then a blue star burst
and a wiggly blue umbrella fell
and a white star boomed
with a big thumping boom
that shook the air
and all the children would go
"Ooh" and "Aah."
Sarge stood in the crowd and watched**

as all the parents became little children too
and began to "Ooh" and "Aah"
and point with their fingers
while holding their little ones.
Old Sarge wondered what day
charlie picked as their Independence Day.
Then he realized he had been shooting
at God that 4th in Vietnam
under the Southern Cross
and feelings rose from the heart of his chest
flowing up into the emotions in his head,
his eye's watering up.
After all these years,
the war still bothered him
and he didn't know why.

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

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

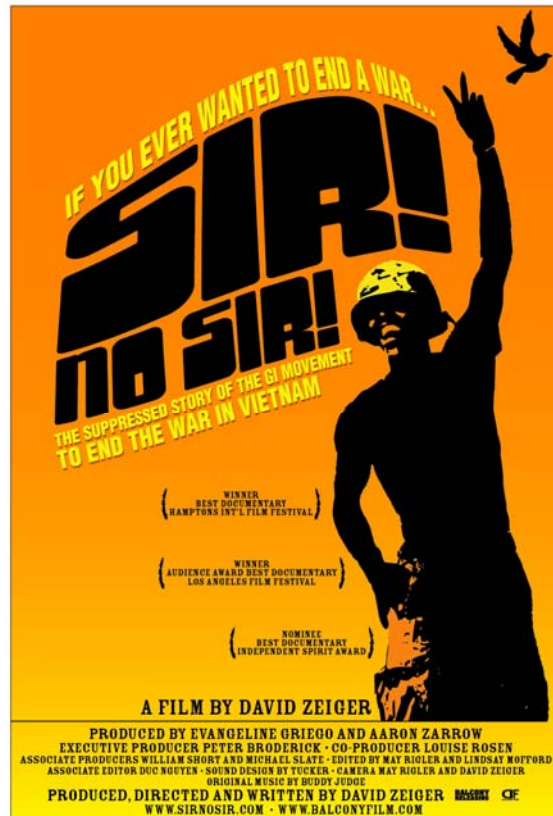
Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our 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)

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

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

“Resistance To The Vietnam War From Within The Ranks”



7.10.06 By Eric Moe, DocumentariesAbout.com

During the Iraq War, much has been written about the responsibility of soldiers to relinquish their civilian freedoms in the name of military duty.

Books, blogs, and opinion pieces by soldiers critical of the administration have been attacked not for their content, but for the appearance of aiding the enemy.

David Zeiger's documentary Sir! No Sir! offers a surprising parallel in the history of resistance to the Vietnam War from within the ranks.

Long before the internet and blogs, printed and mimeographed underground papers circulated in military barracks. Often filled with vulgar humor and lampoons of barking Sergeants and the hardships of military life, these papers were officially banned but universally available.

As more and more soldiers became disenchanted with the mission in Vietnam, the underground military press expanded in tandem with the civilian protest movement.

G.I.s began to see that the civil rights movement's calls for equality were equally relevant in a military that had disproportionately few black officers. In the ideology of Black Nationalism, other soldiers began to see the Vietnamese people as fighting the same system of white oppression they faced at home.

Soldiers who took part in protests – either in uniform or civilian dress – were subject to detention and court marshal.

Despite this risk, large numbers of G.I.s took part in sit-ins, marches, and – especially late in the war – outright refusal to obey orders they considered immoral.

Zeiger interviews soldiers who were jailed for sit-ins and protests.

A group of intelligence officers speak about their decision to supply inaccurate locations of villages when they realized that the U.S. bombing campaign would not sway a war that was already lost.

Figuring prominently in *Sir! No Sir!* is Jane Fonda – who became a face of the Vietnam protest movement.

The breadth of opposition to the war within the ranks is apparent in footage of her "FTA" tour (officially "Free The Army," but soldiers knew the 'F' to stand for something else).

In a new interview, Fonda recalls the vast crowds of soldiers filling off-base auditoriums and amphitheaters despite the fact that they could be disciplined for attending such events. Between rousing jokes and songs, solemn moments reveal the young men and women to be filled with genuine concern for their country and a deep yearning to return to their families.

During the 1960s and 70s, reporting on desertions, low morale, and opposition to the war among soldiers was common in the mainstream press. In the decades since, the cultural wound of the war has been patched over with stories that reframe opposition to the war as limited to long-haired drug users.

***Sir! No Sir!* sets the record straight with first-hand accounts, press clippings, and remarkable footage from Vietnam and U.S. bases.**

As an example the film cites the ubiquitous story of soldiers being spit upon by protesters upon returning from fighting for their country in Vietnam. The story is so common that conservative and liberal commentators alike cite it when talking about the respect owed to our men and women in uniform. A researcher in Zeiger's film explains why this story is logistically unlikely and has found no evidence of it ever having happened.

The story illustrates how our understanding of Vietnam has been shaped by those who seek to gloss over the errors of the past to present an unblemished view of U.S. history.

Vietnam Veterans at the screening I attended were particularly thankful for the retelling of their struggles within a military machine that had so clearly gone off track.

Sir! No Sir! likewise offers much to the post-Vietnam generations who are struggling with conflicting loyalties to duty and country.

At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

The **Sir! No Sir!** DVD goes on sale July 15, exclusively at www.sirnosir.com.

Also available will be a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film by me about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

United To Fuck Peace And Justice: Serving The Imperial Democrats, As Usual

May-June 2006 International Socialist Review Editorial

THERE IS a striking contrast between the size and energy of the immigrant rights movement and the current fairly passive state of antiwar the movement.

The majority of Americans are now opposed to the war in Iraq. Yet there continues to be a tremendous gap between mass antiwar sentiment and its expression in big or sustained protests.

There are a number of reasons for this discrepancy. Many who came out to the global day of action on February 15, 2003, before the war began, came away feeling that "we didn't stop the war."

Others may think that with two out of three Americans opposed to the war, that there's no need for protest. Politicians are talking about "deadlines" and "exit strategies," so the war must be winding down.

Both of these are dangerous conclusions.

The first simply misunderstands the type of sustained effort that is necessary to force the U.S. out of Iraq.

The second mistakes the rhetorical posturing of politicians trying to distance themselves from an unpopular war for an actual change in policy.

In reality, none of the so-called exit plans or “redeployments,” including the one proposed by Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.) last November, have anything to do with an antiwar position.

At best, they are attempts to reconfigure U.S. forces to head off disaster for the U.S. armed forces.

There have been important developments, among students, military families, and soldiers, for example, as well as some large protests that have indicated great potential. But to date, the movement has yet to take on a mass character.

Another important factor in constraining the antiwar movement has been the rightward political trajectory of the self-appointed national leadership of the movement, the New York-based United For Peace and Justice (UFPJ).

As they did in 2004, when they urged support for the prowar Democrat John Kerry, they are gearing up to push the antiwar movement into a primary orientation on the 2006 congressional elections.

UFPJ (whose leadership largely consists of liberals, exMaoists, and the Communist Party), and a number of allied organizations, including Military Families Speak Out and Progressive Democrats of America, has retained its strategic orientation to the Democratic Party even after the Kerry disaster in 2004.

The promising uptick of activism sparked by Gold Star Families for Peace mother Cindy Sheehan’s encampment outside of Bush’s ranch in Crawford, Texas, has not been sustained.

In what was a missed opportunity, the main organizations of the antiwar movement did not heed the international call for a demonstration on March 18, the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. UFPJ, for example, chose as their next national mobilization April 29, and have explicitly connected it to turning Republicans out of Congress in 2006.

For many antiwar activists, this might seem like a reasonable strategy. Why not work to defeat the politicians who led the U.S. into the Iraq disaster and who continue to fund it?

But this very “reasonable” sounding position is doomed to failure, especially when it is premised on supporting candidates of a prowar party.

It is impossible to build a vibrant, fighting antiwar movement that ties its coattails to a party that is as committed to the project of American imperialism as its GOP rival.

It politically disorients and weakens the movement.

It is this orientation toward a party committed to the “war on terror” that has prevented UFPJ from making the defense of Arabs and Muslims and against the

Patriot Act central to its activity, or of linking the war in Iraq with Israel's occupation of Palestine.

Above all, this orientation has had a dampening effect on antiwar mobilizing.

To quote Campus Antiwar Network activist Elizabeth Wrigley-Field, "The experience of the antiwar movement over the past three years is that the liberal politics of 'loyal opposition' disorient the movement, and encourage passivity rather than struggle."

This logic, of loyal opposition, is justified by Phyllis Bennis, a member of the UFPJ steering committee, on the grounds that since Congress has the power, the movement must orient itself on Congress. "Where, besides Congress," she wrote in a recent UFPJ perspective document, "are the powers that might have some influence, political, economic, social, media, whatever, on decision-making in the Bush White House?"

From this point of view, the important issue isn't mobilizing power in the streets to push the politicians, but to "engage with power":

"We can largely assume opposition to the war as a default position, but we need to figure out strategies for transforming that anti-war sentiment into an actual change in policy. We need to figure out how to engage with power, to provide that popular opinion a viable political answer: how to end the war and occupation."

But since 2004, UFPJ has had practically no orientation on the kind of visible protest movement that could play a role in turning public opinion, let alone putting pressure on the government.

It is the disastrous failure of the occupation that has driven the public against the war. If mass demonstrations before the war were insufficient to stop the war from starting, public opinion is certainly not sufficient to force the hand of the U.S. to leave Iraq.

You would think that it would be a no-brainer for Democrats to associate themselves with the antiwar majority. But even Bennis admits, the Democrats

"have been largely paralyzed, unwilling to respond to the massive public opposition to the war, unprepared to challenge Bush directly. and overwhelmingly infected with anti-Arab racism that played out so blatantly in the Clinton-Schumet led attack on the Dubai ports affair."

An orientation to this prowar party has the effect of not only making the antiwar majority seem invisible, but of moving the antiwar movement's goalposts to the right.

So a movement whose leading organizations and whose rank and file want an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq has to content itself with looking for signs of hope in various redeployment plans that politicians are willing to float.

To be sure, the current gap between antiwar sentiment and its organized expression is not solely attributable to the baleful influence of the Democratic Party, and their hangers-

on, in the antiwar movement. The sense among many that little can be done to stop the war is also a major contributing factor.

But the immigrant rights movement has shown once more that mass, sustained protest works.

That has to be the starting point for getting the U.S. out of Iraq.

“The United States Is Not A Democracy, If That Word Is Reserved For A Society Where The People’s Will Is Done”

June 25, 2006 By JONATHAN FREEDLAND, NY TIMES BOOK REVIEW, Review Of 'Failed States,' by Noam Chomsky [Excerpt]

For, he says, the United States is not a democracy, if that word is reserved for a society where the people's will is done.

Take health care.

Chomsky has the data to show that the American system is economically inefficient, much costlier than more socialized models abroad and deeply unpopular with a majority of Americans, who are ready to pay for increased government intervention even if that means higher taxes.

That democratic majority remains unheard, however, because "the pharmaceutical and financial industries and other private powers are strongly opposed."

That is why the mainstream news media, a perennial Chomsky target, say publicly funded health care lacks political support: the majority might back it, but not the people who count.

OCCUPATION REPORT

“It’s A Lot Worse Over Here Than Is Reported”

<p>The administration has been successful to the extent that most Americans are not aware of just how dire it is and how little progress has been made. They keep</p>
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talking about how the Iraqi army is doing much better and taking over responsibilities, but for the most part that's not true.

July 5, 2006 Foreignpolicy.com. [Excerpts] Rod Nordland, chief foreign correspondent for Newsweek, was Baghdad bureau chief from 2003 to 2005.

Reporting from Iraq has become one of journalism's most difficult and dangerous jobs. FP spoke recently with Rod Nordland, who served as Newsweek's Baghdad bureau chief for two years, about the challenge of getting out of the Green Zone to get the scoop.

FOREIGN POLICY: Are Americans getting an accurate picture of what's going on in Iraq?

Rod Nordland: It's a lot worse over here (in Iraq) than is reported.

FP: The Bush administration often complains that the reporting out of Iraq is too negative, yet you say they are managing the news. What's the real story?

RN: You can only manage the news to a certain degree. It is certainly hard to hide the fact that in the third year of this war, Iraqis are only getting electricity for about 5 to 10 percent of the day.

The administration has been successful to the extent that most Americans are not aware of just how dire it is and how little progress has been made. They keep talking about how the Iraqi army is doing much better and taking over responsibilities, but for the most part that's not true.

FP: How often do you travel outside of the Green Zone?

RN: The restrictions on (journalists') movements are very severe. It is extremely dangerous to move around anywhere in Iraq, but we do. We all have Iraqi staff who get around, and we go on trips arranged by the U.S. State Department as frequently as we can.

But the military has started censoring many (embedded reporting) arrangements.

Before a journalist is allowed to go on an embed now, (the military) check the work you have done previously. They want to know your slant on a story, they use the word slant, what you intend to write, and what you have written from embed trips before. If they don't like what you have done before, they refuse to take you.

There are cases where individual reporters have been blacklisted because the military wasn't happy with the work they had done on embed. But we get out among the Iraqi public a whole lot more than almost any American official, certainly more than military officials do.

FP: The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad recently sent a cable to Washington detailing the dangerous situation under which its Iraqi employees work. Is the situation in the Green Zone as bad as the cable made it out to be?

RN: Yes, it is that bad. (The cable) didn't come as a surprise to me, except that somebody in the embassy was courageous enough to outline the hardships in very frank detail, and the ambassador was honest enough to put his name to it.

It is exactly what our own Iraqi staff has gone through for years now. As early as 2003, the Iraqis who work for us were not telling their family or friends that they worked for Americans. At the time, we thought it was a ridiculous precaution; a throwback to the Saddam era; but as time went on, they proved that they knew their society a lot better than we did.

FP: Are journalists and the military seeing two different pictures in Iraq?

RN: Sometimes it's hard to say. Many in the military are here on their second or third tour and they don't want to feel that this is all a doomed enterprise. I'm not saying it is, but to some extent they are victims of their own propaganda.

Two reasonable people can look at the same set of information and come to different conclusions. A good example: I traveled recently to Taji for the handover of a large swath of territory north of Baghdad to the Iraqi Army's 9th Armored Division. This was meant to be a big milestone: an important chunk of territory that has lots of insurgent activity, given over completely to the control of the Iraqi Army.

But when we spoke to the Iraqi Army officers, they said they didn't have enough equipment. They are still completely dependent on the U.S. Army for their logistics, their meals, and a lot of their communications. The United States turned territory over to them, but they are not a functioning, independent army unit yet.

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

Iraq's Criminal Injustice System: Grounds For Armed Rebellion

Would the U.S. population put up with every other adult citizen being subjected to a false arrest and imprisonment for a few days to a few months or would they too arise in armed rebellion?

By Matthew T. Clarke, May 2006 Prison Legal News [Excerpt]

Abu Ghraib, a 280-acre prison complex located 20 miles west of Baghdad, is a well known symbol to the Iraqi people.

Abu Ghraib holds about 3,500 of the approximately 10,500 prisoners held by American forces in Iraq. All prisoners bound for the American military's three long-term prisons are first processed at Abu Ghraib.

Under Saddam Hussein, it was known as the center of brutal torture and murder of Hussein's political opponents. Ironically, that reputation may have grown under Abu Ghraib's U.S. military management. Numerous cases of abuse of prisoners have been well documented and previously reported in PLN. (PLN, Sept. 2004, p.1; Nov. 2006, p. 36; Dec. 2006, p. 1; Apr. 2005, p. 1).

Succinctly said, Abu Ghraib is still known as a place to which people go and, if they return at all, come back in much worse shape than when they entered. It is known as a location of torture and, perhaps worst of all, it is known as the location where thousands of innocent people are imprisoned.

"How can these be innocent people?" you might ask. "After all, they are suspected insurgents and terrorists, aren't they?" and indeed they are categorized that way by the U.S. government.

However, according to the U, S. military's own statistics, the vast majority of the Iraqi prisoners in U.S. custody are innocent.

To start with, the arrest of an Iraqi is often an intensely dangerous operation, for the Iraqi.

Many Iraqis are beaten upon arrest, often they are shot.

Family members may be threatened, beaten or killed to coerce "cooperation" with U.S. forces.

Often the arrests are "sweeps" of entire neighborhoods or are based upon faulty information given U.S. forces by Iraqis with a grudge against the person being arrested.

The military claims it does not keep statistics on beatings and killings during the arrest procedure, but many reports of abuse have been confirmed by the International Red Cross and the military's own statistics speak of huge volumes of innocent Iraqis being imprisoned.

Iraqis who survive the arrest procedure are given multiple layers of review of their cases. At the battalion level, about 20% of arrestees are released without charges. This review generally takes place within 72 hours of incarceration and is conducted by a battalion legal officer.

The second review occurs at division level and generally takes place within 14 days following arrival at a divisional prison. That review results in the release of 36% of the remaining prisoners.

A third level of review by a mixed board of American and Iraqi officials occurs after the prisoner arrives at Abu Ghraib. The board, which consists of three U.S. officials and six Iraqis from the ministries of interior, defense and human rights, releases over half of the prisoners it reviews due to lack of evidence of guilt of a crime.

This review process takes about 90 days and the prisoner is not allowed any input into the matter.

In fact, neither the prisoner nor the prisoner's family is informed of when the board meets or what its decision was. If the board decides to release a prisoner, it may do so unconditionally, or may require the signature of a guarantor of future good behavior. Such a guarantor could be a tribal elder, for instance.

Of those prisoners who end up going to trial before an Iraqi court, approximately 33% are acquitted.

However, the trials occur only after additional lengthy imprisonment. Only 650 trials took place between August 2004, when the board was established, and late April 2005.

During that time, the board reviewed 9,400 cases, unconditionally releasing 2,200 prisoners and requiring a guarantor for 3,100 released prisoners. That left an additional 4,100 prisoners requiring trials.

One might say that, with all this review and release, the system must be working well. Such an attitude would be naive.

Although 78.2% of all arrestees are released before trial due to lack of evidence and another 17.1% are acquitted for a total of 95.3%, this often occurs only after lengthy detention and never occurs without the prisoners having first been subjected to the dangerous arrest procedure and the abuses which seem endemic in the U.S. military detention facilities in Iraq.

It also ignores the hardships the arrest and detention of innocent Iraqis places on the family of the arrestee. The arrestee is often the male head-of-household and sole breadwinner in the Iraqi culture. Imprisoning innocent men and placing their families into a situation of near-starvation is hardly an effective approach to instilling respect for the law in the Iraqi people.

Imagine the reaction in the United States were the police to arrest and incarcerate 19 innocent citizens for every criminal convicted and sent to prison.

That would mean the arrest of 38 million innocent citizens for the two million prisoners currently serving time in U.S. prisons.

Including the arrestees who are on probation would push the figure toward 100 million.

Would the U.S. population put up with every other adult citizen being subjected to a false arrest and imprisonment for a few days to a few months or would they too arise in armed rebellion?

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

**“A U.S. Plot To Target The Patriotic
Elements In Iraq”
[What Else Is New?]**

7.11.06 AP

The Iraqi Accordance Front suspended its participation in parliament meetings earlier this month after one of its members, Tayseer al-Mashhadani, was kidnapped in a Shiite neighborhood in Baghdad.

Al-Sadr aide Awas al-Khafaji denied that the Mahdi Army was behind the violence and accused the U.S. of trying to stoke sectarian tensions. He also warned that members of the armed group will defend themselves if attacked.

"Such irresponsible statements about the violence in Iraq are hurting the Iraqis," he said in Najaf. "What is happening in Iraq is a U.S. plot to target the patriotic elements in Iraq and this is shown through the attempts to create a gap between al-Mahdi Army and the Sunnis."

***The Great Baghdad “Crackdown”
Fiasco:
“We Do Nothing But Create Huge
Traffic Jams With These
Checkpoints,’ Abdullah Said”***

"I don't know who these people are. I can't stop them because they never hesitate to point their guns at me." "How can I distinguish between all those and the insurgents, and militias?" he said.

Jul 11 Reuters

Private Uday Abdullah is one of 50,000 Iraqi troops and police sent on to Baghdad's streets last month to make the city safe, but he does not see the point.

Lounging in the shade to escape the midday heat on Tuesday, the soldier said it is gunmen from rival Shi'ite and Sunni parties with clout in the government who rule the streets.

"We arrest lots of gunmen and they just walk free the next day. They're always from the Mehdi Army or the Badr Brigade or the Islamic Party. So what's the point of our job?" he said.

Many in Baghdad wonder the same thing as checkpoints set up as part of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's crackdown on violence spawn ever greater traffic jams but have failed to prevent dozens dying in sectarian shootings and bombings this week.

"We do nothing but create huge traffic jams with these checkpoints," Abdullah said.

Pointing to the traffic backed up on Senak Bridge, a major artery over the Tigris river, he said: "I am standing here. But I have no desire to be here."

Raed Abd al-Hafudh Saleem, a lieutenant in Baghdad's traffic department, is equally bemused and cynical.

From his concrete booth in the middle of a busy intersection in upmarket Mansour, he has a clear view of the many vehicles carrying heavily armed men that speed past every day.

"I don't know who these people are. I can't stop them because they never hesitate to point their guns at me."

Every morning, when he reports for duty at his little booth, he finds fresh bullet casings littering the road.

"I don't know where they come from. Everyone carries a gun in this country, from the bodyguards of officials and members of parliament to private security companies.

"How can I distinguish between all those and the insurgents, and militias?" he said.

He told how bodyguards recently fired into the air to clear the road for a ministerial convoy. When he remonstrated with them, one man fired a burst from his AK-47 just past his head.

"He said to me: 'Who are you to say this? I am the state.'"

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

“The American Economy Is Barrel-Rolling Towards Earth And There Are Only Enough Parachutes For Cheney And The Gang”

July 4, 2006 Mike Whitney, uruknet.info [Excerpt]

The Bush-Cheney team has racked up another \$3 trillion in debt in just 6 years. The US national debt now stands at \$8.4 trillion dollars while the trade deficit has ballooned to \$800 billion nearly 7% of GDP.

This is lunacy.

No country, however powerful, can maintain these staggering numbers. The country is in hock up to its neck and has to borrow \$2.5 billion per day just to stay above water. Presently, the Fed is expanding the money supply and buying back its own treasuries to hide the hemorrhaging from the public. Its utter madness.

Last month the trade deficit climbed to \$70 billion.

More importantly, foreign central banks only purchased a meager \$47 billion in treasuries to shore up our ravenous appetite for cheap junk from China.

Do the math! They're not investing in America anymore. They are decreasing their stockpiles of dollars.

We're sinking fast and Cheney and his pals are manning the lifeboats while the public is diverted with gay marriage amendments and "American Celebrity".

This is the onset of stagflation; the dreaded combo of a slowing economy and inflation.

Did Americans really think they'd be spared the same type of economic colonization that has been applied throughout the developing world under the rubric of "neoliberalism"?

Well, think again. The American economy is barrel-rolling towards earth and there are only enough parachutes for Cheney and the gang.

Consider this from the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) June edition of Foreign Affairs, the Bible of globalists and plutocrats:

"Between 2000 and 2003 alone, foreign firms built 60,000 manufacturing plants in China. European chemical companies, Japanese carmakers, and US industrial conglomerates are all building factories in China to supply export markets around the world. Similarly, banks, insurance companies, professional-service firms, and IT companies are building R&D and service centers in India to support employees, customers, and production worldwide." ("The Globally integrated Enterprise" Samuel Palmisano, Foreign Affairs page 130)

"60,000 manufacturing plants" in 3 years?!?

"Banks, insurance companies, professional-service firms, and IT companies"?

No job is safe.

American elites and corporate tycoons are loading the boats and heading for foreign shores. The only thing they're leaving behind is the insurmountable debt that will be shackled to our children into perpetuity and the carefully arranged levers of a modern police-surveillance state.

Welcome to Bush's 21st Century gulag; third world luxury in a Guantanamo-type setting.

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

DC Politicians: Hogs At Feeding Time

June 27, 2006 From Windbear, Firebase Group

Perhaps we are asking the wrong questions during election years.

Our Senators and Congresswomen do not pay into Social Security and, of course, they do not collect from it.

You see, Social Security benefits were not suitable for persons of their rare elevation in society. They felt they should have a special plan for themselves. So, many years ago they voted in their own benefit plan.

In more recent years, no congressperson has felt the need to change it. After all, it is a great plan.

For all practical purposes their plan works like this:

When they retire, they continue to draw the same pay until they die.

Except it may increase from time to time for cost of living adjustments.

For example, Senator Byrd and Congressman White and their wives may expect to draw \$7,800,000.00 (that's Seven Million, Eight-Hundred Thousand Dollars), with their wives drawing \$275,000.00 during the last years of their lives.

This is calculated on an average life span for each of those two Dignitaries.

Younger Dignitaries who retire at an early age, will receive much more during the rest of their lives.

Their cost for this excellent plan is \$0.00. NADA.! ZILCH...

This little perk they voted for themselves is free to them. You and I pick up the tab for this plan. The funds for this fine retirement plan come directly from the General Funds;

"OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK"!

From our own Social Security Plan, which you and I pay (or have paid) into every payday until we retire (which amount is matched by our employer) we can expect to get an average of \$1,000 per month after retirement.

Or, in other words, we would have to collect our average of \$1,000 monthly benefits for 68 years and one (1) month to equal Senator Bill Bradley's benefits!

Social Security could be very good if only one small change were made.

That change would be to: Jerk the Golden Fleece Retirement Plan from under the Senators and Congressmen--those SOB's.

Put them into the Social Security plan with the rest of us.

Ignorant, Twisted Freaks Spit On Lady Liberty



At a megachurch in Memphis, the Statue of Liberation Through Christ was consecrated Tuesday. The statue, says the church's pastor, is a way of "letting people know that God is the foundation of our nation." Rollin Riggs for The New York Times

[Thanks to James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

July 5, 2006 By SHAILA DEWAN, Memphis Journal [Excerpts]

MEMPHIS, July 4: On Independence Day, Lady Liberty was born again.

As the congregation of the World Overcomers Outreach Ministries Church looked on and its pastor, Apostle Alton R. Williams, presided, a brown shroud much like a burqa was pulled away to reveal a giant statue of the Lady, but with the Ten Commandments under one arm and "Jehovah" inscribed on her crown.

And in place of a torch, she held aloft a large gold cross, as if to ward off the pawnshops, the car dealerships and the discount furniture outlets at the busy corner of Kirby Parkway and Winchester that is her home. A single tear graced her cheek.

It was not clear if she was crying because of her new home, her new identity as a symbol of religion or, as the pastor said, America's increasing godlessness. But although big cheers went up from the few hundred onlookers at the unveiling, and some people even wore foam Lady Liberty crowns bearing Christian slogans, she was not universally welcomed.

Most of the customers at the Dixie Queen food counter near the church viewed the statue as a cheap attention grab, said Guardia Nelson, 27, who works there.

The Statue of Liberation Through Christ, as she is called, stands 72 feet tall from the base of her pedestal to the tip of her cross. She was the idea of Mr. Williams, a very successful pastor whose church, World Overcomers, qualifies as mega: it has a school, a bowling alley, a roller rink, a bookstore and, he said, 12,000 members.

The pastor is not shy. His church has bought full-page advertisements in The Commercial Appeal, the Memphis daily, condemning homosexuality.

The statue, inspired by a Memphis church that has three giant crosses, strikes him as "a creative means of just really letting people know that God is the foundation of our nation," he said. Mr. Williams has written several books and pamphlets analyzing a variety of matters, among them patriotism and the original intent of the founding fathers.

[Mr. Williams is not only a despicable bigot; he's a liar who fakes U.S. history. Check the next article. The founders of the USA specifically repudiated the silly notion that they were founding a "Christian nation." T]

In "The Meaning of the Statue of Liberation Through Christ: Reconnecting Patriotism With Christianity," he explains that the teardrop on his Lady is God's response to what he calls the nation's ills, including legalized abortion, a lack of

prayer in schools and the country's "promotion of expressions of New Age, Wicca, secularism and humanism."

In another book, he said Hurricane Katrina was retribution for New Orleans's embrace of sin.

MORE:

So Much For That Stupid “Christian Nation” Bullshit

Human Quest, July-August 2005, “Christian Nation?”

The recent article by Paul Kurtz was brilliant, reviewing constitutional principles showing that although the people of the U.S. were a religious people, they did not establish America as a “Christian nation.”

As he makes clear, the First Amendment can have no other purpose or meaning.

In addition, Article VI of the Constitution provides that a duly-adopted treaty “...shall be the supreme law of the land...’

One of America's earliest treaties (1797) resulted from conflict with Tripoli, and expressly provided [Treaties of the United States, Volume 2, Document 20, Article 11] that “...the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion....”

That treaty was unanimously approved by the U.S. Senate, and signed by President John Adams; under Article 6. is still “...the supreme law of the land...” and binding on all citizens and officials.

George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and all our other leading forefathers were then building our country, and approved the principle.

If America had been founded as a Christian nation, it would have been Protestant, and Catholics, Jews and Muslims would have been second-hand citizens from day one. **[They were second class citizens from day one, and got shit on plenty, but the point here is that the silly notion that the USA was founded as a Christian nation is a lie.]**

RECEIVED:

From: JF
To: GI Special
Sent: July 10, 2006

Subject: Great issue!

Dear GI Special,

4G11 is a great issue!

"This Is What We Have Done. We Will Carry This Burden Until We Are Old" "All I wanted to see was the town of Baiji leveled," he told the group. "I now understand, very well, how war crimes happen."

Couldn't be clearer than that! Thank you Andrew Sapp!

"Ain't Marchin' Anymore: GIs Revolt in Vietnam; A Personal Account" "But reality has a way of forcing itself back in your face. The images never leave my mind about the war and what we did to people over there. But I always think about how many of us stood up to all that bullshit and helped turn it around, too. That hasn't happened very often in history."

Impotence dispelled by Dave Blalock's crystal clear recollection and testimony!

It may be a lot easier to sit in a chair and put together a newsletter, but what a newsletter! Please keep up the good work.

Reply: It's people like Andrew Sapp and Dave Blalock who are doing the best work of all. T

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/qispecial/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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