

**GI SPECIAL 7C21:**

**George Bush Lite**



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

**Obama Uses Bush Bullshit Lies  
To Announce Plan To Kill More  
U.S. Troops In Afghanistan:  
“Making The War His Own, Obama  
Warned That Al-Qaida Is Actively  
Planning Attacks On The United  
States From Secret Havens In  
Pakistan”**

# **“No Timetable For Withdrawal” “No Estimate Yet On How Many Billions Of Dollars Plan Will Cost”**

**Taking firm control of the war that dominated Bush’s presidency, Obama broke with his predecessor in significant ways but also used phrases that sounded strikingly familiar. Bush often reminded the nation that terrorists were plotting to kill Americans, even as the public fear dissipated with each passing year after the 9/11 attacks.**

Mar 27, 2009 By Ben Feller - The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON — Widening war in “the most dangerous place in the world,” President Barack Obama launched a fresh effort Friday to defeat al-Qaida terrorists in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, defending his strategy with shades of the dire language of George W. Bush.**

**Stirring echoes of Sept. 11 and making the war his own, Obama warned that al-Qaida is actively planning attacks on the United States from secret havens in Pakistan.**

He said he was setting new benchmarks and sending in 4,000 more troops, hundreds of civilians and increased aid for a six-year war that has seemed to be easing in Iraq but still has no end in sight.

**The president, who declared last weekend an “exit strategy” was needed for Afghanistan, never used those words in announcing his plans on Friday.**

**There is no timetable for withdrawal, and the White House said it had no estimate yet on how many billions of dollars its plan will cost.**

Since becoming president, Obama has ordered 21,000 troops into Afghanistan, counting 17,000 combat forces who will try to quell surging violence. The Pentagon says that will put the U.S. total there at more than 60,000, the most to date. As the Iraq conflict winds down, the Afghanistan war is growing.

**Taking firm control of the war that dominated Bush’s presidency, Obama broke with his predecessor in significant ways but also used phrases that sounded strikingly familiar.**

**He described the ruthlessness of the enemy, the need to take on terrorists, the genesis of the fight.**

**Bush often reminded the nation that terrorists were plotting to kill Americans, even as the public fear dissipated with each passing year after the 9/11 attacks.**

"I remind everybody, the United States of America did not choose to fight a war in Afghanistan," Obama said. "Nearly 3,000 of our people were killed on Sept. 11, 2001, for doing nothing more than going about their daily lives."

**The former president often decried what he-called artificial timelines for pulling troops home from Iraq.**

**In this case, Bruce Riedel, who led the Obama review of the Afghanistan-Pakistan plan, said it deliberately does not have timelines, to ensure flexibility. "We're not going to impose artificial constraints," he said.**

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## **ACTION REPORTS**

# **Successful Outreach At Railroad And Bus Stations**

From: Alan Stolzer, Military Project  
To: GI Special  
Sent: 23 Mar 2009  
Subject: Outreach to troops at Railroad and Bus stations

3.23.09

For weeks I've found no troops in the 3 sites (2 Railroad stations and 1 bus terminal) I usually outreach to. This is a result of a rescheduling on the part of the National Guard.

Previously, I was able to find patrolling troops almost any day I chose to outreach. Then, within the last year, that reliability ended.

Consequently, I've had to take pot luck, sometimes successful, other times not.

Today was interesting.

I decided to try, again, at the Railroad station where I've handed out the most lit and DVDs over the past several years I've been doing this. The reason was that I had been there a few days ago without results but upon returning there after my errand, I found 6 troops leaving for the day at 1pm.

I had missed them previously. Since they were in a hurry I wasn't able to access them but I decided to come back today.

En route, I passed through a bus station where I've had less luck and found 3 troops carefully observing pedestrian traffic. Speaking to one, I found him a bit nervous, eyes

darting here and there but nevertheless grateful for my offer of Sir! No Sir! but refusing to accept lit.

He did, however, ask for a website and I provided him with the Military Project site and gave him information about how to make contact with us in the future, and asked he pass along his opinion of the Sir No Sir DVD to me once he saw it.

The other two soldiers had both seen the DVD, knew me from previous contact and commented how much they liked it.

When I told them I had no idea when and where troops would be patrolling they laughed and said that's what the plan for the patrols is - which was as good an explanation I've had over the scheduling changes previously referred to.

I continued on to my original destination and found no one after a careful search. I decided to walk back to the area of the day's success and found 3 more troops lagging behind the 3 I had already met.

They were in a rush, probably leaving for the day (back to Ft. Hamilton) but all took lit and a DVD.

Lesson learned: one must keep trying.

### **MORE:**

# **ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!**

**An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.**

**If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.**

**Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.**

**They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.**

**If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.**

**If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.**

### **NOTE WELL:**

**Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.**

**Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the war.**

**If accidentally included, that information will not be published.**

**The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Del City Soldier Was Engaged To Be Married**

3/20 TULSA, Okla. (AP)

A friend of a Del City soldier killed this week in Iraq described him as a religious young man who loved knowing that he was defending his country.

Cpl. Gary L. Moore, 25, of Del City died Monday when a roadside bomb blew up his vehicle in Baghdad, according to the military.

A military police officer, Moore was assigned to the 978th Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Amber Rudd of El Paso, Texas, said she first met Moore more than two years ago when he began attending Sunday school classes at the Hillcrest Baptist Church in El Paso, which is near Fort Bliss.

“He was an amazing guy,” the 22-year-old Rudd said. “He was always smiling, always there for everyone.

“He was a friendly soul, and he had tons of friends,” she said. Moore “loved the military, loved being a MP, and he loved knowing he was protecting our country,” she said.

Moore and the rest of his Fort Bliss outfit deployed to Iraq in June to provide training and oversight of Iraqi police.

Rudd said she last talked to Moore last week, and “he said he couldn’t wait to come home.”

Rudd said Moore loved playing football and volleyball and was engaged to be married.

At the Southwest Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, a spokeswoman said Moore and his fiancée were planning a marriage ceremony there this summer.

Rudd said Moore's family lives in Del City. The family could not be reached for comment.

Rudd was shocked and stunned when she heard the news that Moore had been killed, she said.

"It hit me hard, especially since I had just talked to him on Thursday," she said. "I've done my fair share of crying since then."

"He was just one amazing person," she said, her voice cracking with emotion.

Before heading to Fort Bliss, Moore had been at Fort Leonard Wood, southwest of Rolla, Mo.

Moore was just promoted from specialist to corporal in January, Fort Bliss officials said.

He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart. His other awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon.

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## **“Of The 50,740 Night-Vision Devices Shipped To Iraq, Eight Percent Are Now Unaccounted For” They “Allow The Viewer To Identify U.S.-Friendly Fighters Wearing Infrared Tabs”**

March 24, 2009 By Te-Ping Chen, The Center for Public Integrity

The Pentagon seems to have some trouble keeping track of its materiel. The latest items to go missing?

Night-vision devices.

In a new report, the Defense Department's Inspector General notes that of the 50,740 night-vision devices shipped to Iraq, eight percent are now unaccounted for. What's more, the report says, U.S.-led forces failed to track serial numbers for another 30,740 devices.

News that the U.S. lost track of 190,000 weapons in Iraq and another 87,000 in Afghanistan sparked a flurry of recent stories. Yet this latest report has gone largely unnoticed.

But while large stashes of missing weapons may make for sexier headlines, the potential loss of technology embedded in night-vision devices also puts U.S. troops in jeopardy.

**Night-vision goggles, in particular, contain components that allow the viewer to identify U.S.-friendly fighters wearing infrared tabs — helpful for allies to avoid shooting at their comrades in arms.**

**But also for any enemies targeting U.S. forces.**

According to the Pentagon report, one set of night-vision goggles can cost the military up to \$4,500. Last year, a Government Accountability Office investigation found such technology being auctioned on sites like eBay and Craigslist.

Though the Pentagon has made “significant progress” to resolve its tracking issues, existing lapses “could lead to misappropriation and theft, ultimately putting U.S. service members at risk by providing our enemies a capability they might not have otherwise had,” says the Inspector General.

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## **NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME**



U.S. Army soldier in southwestern Mosul, 360 kilometers (225 miles) northwest of Baghdad, March 14, 2009. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

# **Two Foreign Occupation Troops Killed, One Wounded By Afghan Soldier; Nationality Not Announced**

Mar 27, 2009 Army Times staff report

Two coalition service members died and another was wounded March 27 when an Afghan National Army soldier reportedly opened fire on them, officials in Kabul said in a press release.

A fourth service member appeared to be unharmed but was evacuated to a medical facility for evaluation. The Afghan soldier is reported to have killed himself immediately after the incident, which happened about 2:20 p.m. on March 27 in northern Afghanistan.

The names and nationalities of the service members have not been released.

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## **Jeremy E. Bessa**



Jeremy E. Bessa

March 05, 2009 The Pilot

Staff Sgt. Jeremy E. Bessa, 26, beloved husband, son, brother and devoted father, was killed in action in Afghanistan Friday, Feb. 20, 2009, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

A member of the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Bessa deployed to Afghanistan in January 2009, his third deployment in support of the Global War on Terror and second deployment to Afghanistan.

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, May 11, 1982, Staff Sgt. Bessa volunteered for military service in April 2002 following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Earning the coveted "Green Beret" in March 2007, Bessa was assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, as a Special Forces Communications Sergeant.

Funeral services, with full military honors, will be held at noon Tuesday, March 10, 2009, at Sparkman/Hillcrest Funeral Home, Dallas, Texas, with graveside services to follow at the Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery.

Staff Sgt. Bessa was posthumously awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medals.

He is survived by his wife, Lindsey Melton Bessa, their son, Carson, both of Fayetteville; parents, Ted and Julie Bessa; brothers, Christopher and Joel Bessa; and sister, Bryana Bessa.

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## **Three Australian Soldiers Wounded "In A Mine"**

26 March Military World

Three Australian soldiers serving in the peacekeeping of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), were wounded in a mine.

The military forces of Australia and Afghanistan launched an investigation on the fact, the representation of the Australian military contingent in Afghanistan released on March 25.

According to the Voice of Afghanistan agency, one of the wounded soldiers is in a critical state.

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## **"After Eight Years In The Country, Even Our Own Employees Don't Feel We Have Their Best Interests At Heart"**

# **“U.S. Soldiers Repeatedly Tell Stories Of ANA Troops And The ANP Abandoning Checkpoints Or Refusing To Leave The Roadside Buildings That Function As Their Offices”**

**“He Kept Looking At His Food. Then, Using The Irrefutable Logic Of A Soldier, He Raised His Head And Said, ‘I’m Here Because I Was Told To Be Here’”**

[Thanks to Carl Foster, Military Project & Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.

March 25, 2009 By P.J. Tobia, Village Voice [Excerpts]

The road leading to Bagram Air Base is a mess.

Car-sized craters dot the lane, interspersed with ruts deep enough to get lost in. For stretches, it’s hard even to know where the road is as it peters out into expanses of dusty scrubland stretching for miles.

Every few hundred yards, a half-built structure rises from uneven ground. It’s impossible to tell whether these buildings are in the middle of construction or demolition.

It’s about half past 9 a.m. as I drive down this road with a man named Farooz, a driver and translator I got in Kabul, the Afghan capital, about 45 minutes behind us.

Through the swirling grit that fills the air, I see large, low shapes before us. A roadblock.

“It’s not always like this,” Farooz says. “There must be something going on today.”

There is. A car-bomb threat has been called in.

A traffic jam of ancient minivans, half-broken pickups, and jingle trucks — transport vehicles adorned with flags, bells, and banners — stands in the dusty sun while U.S. soldiers walk about shouting testily.

“Stay the fuck there!” a soldier growls, pointing an assault rifle at a man on a bicycle. He stops and fixes the soldier with a bored stare.

Farooz pulls around the mass, attempting to jump the line. Two Americans materialize, weapons fixed.

“Are you kidding?!” one of them shouts. “Fucking stop!”

Farooz steers back to the road.

The soldiers retreat to the roadblock behind two massive armored vehicles. Gunners sit atop, helmeted heads rising above .50 caliber machine guns like turtle shells.

Around us, people wait, packed into cars like frogs in a pickle jar. The jingle truck drivers smoke. I step from the car and trudge toward the soldiers.

A young grunt stands calmly in the sun, cradling a machine gun with a grenade launcher attachment. I wave a crumpled piece of paper — my orders — telling him I’ve been assigned to cover a unit. Any chance I can get through the roadblock?

He ignores the rumpled document and listens implacably behind wraparound shades. I’ll have to wait like everyone else, he says, and offers to walk me back to my car.

Just then, a sedan roars around the traffic, bearing down on us in third gear. The soldier shoulders his weapon, pointing at the driver’s chest while marching quick-time at the oncoming car.

The soldiers behind us raise their weapons, a dozen barrels following the man on point.

“What the fuck are you doing?” the soldier yells at the car while I step behind him. “Stop now!”

The sedan halts just 10 yards from us. The soldier lowers his machine gun and smiles. “Everybody speaks weapon,” he says, chuckling.

So begins my vacation in Afghanistan.

Standing on that sunny road, watching the occupants of that car throw up their hands in stark terror, I begin to doubt the wisdom of my decision. Why didn’t I go to Miami?

Like many Americans, I never questioned the justness of our Afghan adventure. Basic logic: We invaded central Asia because of the horrors of 9/11. The Taliban sheltered bin Laden. They let Al Qaeda plot in safety. We had to kick their ass.

But eight years later, we’re still there, and I had no idea why.

Conversations with smart people in the U.S. got me nowhere. They talked of “geopolitical ramifications” and “bookending Pakistan.” What the hell does that mean?

So I decided to go to Afghanistan and see for myself.

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Saifwah stands on the porch of the Media Operations Center (MOC) at Forward Operating Base Salerno, a frown wrinkling his normally smooth brow.

“Walking to my car is very dangerous,” he says, staring off toward the parking lot for Afghan employees. “We have a separate entrance, and it’s unguarded. We could all be killed by the time soldiers came to help.”

Saifwah works in the MOC as a liaison to the Afghan media. He translates Army press releases and monitors newspapers and radio broadcasts. He lives in a nearby village instead of on base, which is only a few miles from the Pakistan border near the town of Khost.

A fastidious, conservative man, Saifwah seems uncomfortable with the soldiers’ rough language, and he often gets in heated arguments over the length of women’s skirts with Sergeant Barbara Ospina, the public affairs officer who is his boss.

But he has bigger woes than coarse Americans: The mere fact that he works here could mean a death sentence from the Taliban.

At this moment, he’s just worried about making it to his car alive.

He likes his job and his boss, but thinks the military isn’t too concerned about his safety. “They don’t care about us,” he says. “They don’t protect us enough.”

It’s America’s essential problem in Afghanistan: After eight years in the country, even our own employees don’t feel we have their best interests at heart.

Other interpreters — “terps” — feel the same way.

Like soldiers, terps get to take leave for weeks at a time. But unlike soldiers, they don’t get transport to their home provinces, often hundreds of miles from their bases. They must travel alone for days over roads crawling with men who want to kill them.

“I am from Paktika province,” says Farah. “The military flies there every day, but I am not allowed to get on those planes.”

It’s a strange policy, considering terps are indispensable to the U.S. Very few Americans speak Pashto or Dari, Afghanistan’s two most common languages, so nearly every platoon needs an interpreter.

Yet they’re stuck with older body armor and they don’t have guns, sticking out as easy targets for insurgents.

Everybody complains in war, of course. But the terps’ gripes are very different from those of the U.S. soldiers.

**Though they don’t expressly say it, there’s a sense of hurt in their words, a feeling that they’re being used. While NATO is ostensibly here for the Afghan people, they remain secondary citizens.**

Rafal Gerszak, a Canadian photographer, has been to shuras, meetings between field officers and village elders.

He says that most of the captains and lieutenants are “young, 23- or 24-year-old guys. They’ll go to these meetings and try to make friends with the elders and they won’t get any real respect, because in this culture, age is respected.

The elders will only give respect because they know these guys are military and know they can kill them. But that’s not real respect.”

The problems get worse when the military makes promises it can’t keep.

**Gerszak recalls one meeting that ended with a village leader refusing assistance: “The unit before promised to build a well for this village,” he recalls.**

**“Ten months went by, and there was no well. Now these new guys show up and promise to build a well, and the village elder was like, ‘Get the fuck out of here. We talk to you, we give you help, you do nothing, and the Taliban comes and gives us trouble.’ “**

Afghanistan has had a national army for most of the past 150 years, but the current, 80,000-plus iteration was started, equipped, and paid for by the U.S. and NATO allies. It may have come a long way, but it still has a long way to go.

Last year, 1st Sergeant Tommy Scott was stationed at FOB Airborne in Wardak. At the time, the base was manned by a small force of U.S. Army personnel, some French troops, and a group of ANA soldiers.

**“The ANA guys would pull guard duty on their side of the base,” Scott says. “There were nights when I would come and check on them, and they’d be asleep at their post. Literally, asleep. We’re out there in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by guys that want to kill us, and the ANA were asleep.**

**“That, right there, just says it all.”**

**U.S. soldiers repeatedly tell stories of ANA troops and the ANP abandoning checkpoints or refusing to leave the roadside buildings that function as their offices.**

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The chow halls in Afghanistan stand as testament to the bounty of America.

Food is piled everywhere. Burgers and grilled sandwiches. Steam trays brimming with meat, vegetables, and starches of every description. Pasta bars, burrito stations, build-your-own-sandwich tables. To say nothing of the pies and sundae bars.

The dining facilities are run by KBR, a spin-off of Halliburton. Every meal costs the U.S. military \$17. Multiply that by the 10,000 people living on Bagram, and it costs more than \$500,000 to feed one base.

For one day.

And that's pocket change compared to the cost of equipment. The MRAP is the hottest thing going in Afghanistan. If a Brink's truck and a Tonka truck had a child, it would look like an MRAP.

Created in response to the failures of Humvees in Iraq, which proved to be death traps for roadside mines, the MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) has a V-shaped hull that deflects bomb blasts. More than a few soldiers have walked away from direct hits thanks to this creature.

But it is expensive, with a price tag from \$600,000 to \$1 million a truck. And most MRAPS are flown in—at an additional cost of \$135,000 per vehicle.

**Yet it's cost-prohibitive to fly much else into Afghanistan.**

**Roughly 80 percent of coalition supplies come via road from Pakistan, through some of the most dangerous territory on earth. The cost of these trips has risen sharply as the Taliban steps up attacks on the supply line, blowing up convoys and recently destroying a key bridge through the Khyber Pass.**

It all leads to a mind-blowing tab for U.S. taxpayers.

**The monthly bill is estimated at \$16 billion, more than the annual budgets of all but 13 states. And that doesn't even include the \$500 billion we spend each year on the Defense Department and the so-called "black ops" budget for the CIA.**

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"So why are we in Afghanistan?" I asked a young specialist from Nebraska.

She pursed her lips and squinted, as if looking off behind me.

"Umm . . . Osama bin Laden?" she said hesitantly, more questioning herself than answering me.

It was something I asked many soldiers, and the answer still eluded me.

Major Sieber cited infrastructure projects, security, democracy. The rank-and-file echoed these sentiments—that was the mission as explained to them.

When we first invaded Afghanistan, the goal seemed clear: topple the Taliban, destroy Al Qaeda, and kill Osama bin Laden.

The Taliban ceded power almost overnight. Al Qaeda loyalists still mount attacks on U.S. supply lines and troops, but their training camps are gone. As for bin Laden, he could be anywhere, but we haven't had much luck in finding him.

Meanwhile, security has deteriorated, and the people of Afghanistan don't seem thrilled to have us around.

**So what are we still doing there?**

**I finally got an answer on Thanksgiving Day in the chow hall at Salerno. I was with Sergeant Jason Lyke, an Army intelligence analyst.**

**We talked about football, his boys back in Tennessee, and the complexities of running an office in a war zone. I asked him why we were having this conversation in Afghanistan, instead of back home.**

**Sgt. Lyke looked down at his plate in silence. “That’s a political question, sir. I can’t get into that,” he said.**

**“No,” I pressed. “It’s a strategic question. Why are we here?”**

**He kept looking at his food. Then, using the irrefutable logic of a soldier, he raised his head and said, “I’m here because I was told to be here.”**

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## **Taliban Militants Kill Nine Police Officers And Seize Their Weapons**

26 Mar 2009 Times Of India & AP

**KABUL:** Taliban militants attacked a police checkpoint in southern Afghanistan Thursday, killing nine police officers and seized their weapons police officers said.

The militants tossed hand grenades at the police post in Gerishk district of the southern Helmand province Thursday morning before shooting the policemen inside the post, said Kamaludin Khan, the deputy provincial police chief.

“Nine policemen were killed in grenade explosions and (the) firefight,” Khan said, adding that the militants escaped before reinforcements arrived.

Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousfi Ahmadi claimed over telephone from an undisclosed location that their fighters killed 11 police personnel in their pre-dawn attack and seized their weapons.

He said the militants left the area shortly after taking over the post.

Taliban militants attacked a police convoy in central Ghazni province Thursday, wounding six policemen, said regional police spokesman Iqbal Gul Sapan.

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## **Now Why Do You Suppose Resistance Forces Don’t Have This Problem?**

March 26, 2009 By Ellen Nakashima, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

Government auditors sounded a warning yesterday for reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan as they outlined to lawmakers how a lack of security, coordinated planning and effective oversight has hobbled the United States' \$50 billion effort in Iraq.

Similarly, Pentagon officials have expressed a key concern that the Afghan national security forces they are training lack the capacity to perform the intelligence and data gathering necessary for national security, said Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers, managing director for international affairs and trade at the Government Accountability Office.

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

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

## **TROOP NEWS**

**Ample Grounds For Mass  
Resistance:  
Traitors Now Command At Fort  
Richardson:  
19-Year Veteran With Active  
Tuberculosis And Back Injuries  
Sentenced To Six Months In Jail And To  
Forfeit \$1,300 A Month For Six Months  
For Refusing To Deploy**

March 27, 2009 Stars and Stripes

An Army chief warrant officer, who argued his health problems should have prevented him from going to war, has been convicted of failing to deploy to Iraq and disobeying an order, according to a USA Today report.

**Adisa “A.J.” Aiyetoro — a 19-year veteran who has active tuberculosis and suffers from back injuries — was sentenced to six months in jail and ordered to forfeit \$1,300 a month for the next six months after his conviction at a court-martial this week in Fort Richardson, Alaska, USA Today reported Thursday.**

Aiyetoro, an armament maintenance technician, began developing chronic, debilitating back pain after a previous deployment, according to an earlier USA Today report.

**An Army surgeon classified him as non-deployable on Aug. 25, 2007, saying Aiyetoro was unable to wear his body armor.**

**But a revised evaluation a few days later found that he could wear body armor but “only during mission-essential movements,” USA Today reported.**

Since then, doctors have changed Aiyetoro’s medical status, again.

**In February, doctors concluded that Aiyetoro needed more tests on his back and he needs additional tests to determine whether his tuberculosis is active, according to court records.**

Aiyetoro told USA Today that commanders cared more about filling their ranks than about him getting better when they ordered him to deploy in September.

The command offered to allow him to resign, but Aiyetoro chose a court-martial instead, according to the USA Today report.

**Troops Invited:**

**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**

**Guess What:  
There Are 90,000 U.S.-Run  
Military Facilities In Iraq:**

# **Military Inspectors Racing To Examine The Facilities “Before More Troops Are Electrocuted” There Are “Two Fires Each Day In Iraq, Mostly Blamed On Electrical Faults”**

## **Of The 20,340 Military Facilities “Maintained By KBR And Inspected So Far, 6,935 Failed The Government Inspection, The Document Said”**

**“We got a ton of buildings we know probably aren’t safe and we just don’t have them done yet,” said Jim Childs, an electrician the task force hired to help with the inspections. “It’s Russian roulette. I cringe every time I hear of a shock.”**

March 26, 2009 By KIMBERLY HEFLING, The Associated Press

Military inspectors are racing to examine 90,000 U.S.-run facilities in Iraq with the goal of repairing electrical problems before more troops are electrocuted or shocked while showering or using appliances.

About one-third of the inspections so far have turned up major electrical problems, according to interviews and an internal military document obtained by The Associated Press.

Half of the problems they found have since been fixed, but about 65,000 facilities still must be inspected, which could take the rest of this year.

The work assigned to Task Force SAFE, which oversees the inspections and repairs, is aimed at preventing deaths like that of Staff Sgt. Ryan Maseth, 24, of Pittsburgh. He died in January 2008, one of at least three soldiers killed while showering since the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

**“We got a ton of buildings we know probably aren’t safe and we just don’t have them done yet,” said Jim Childs, an electrician the task force hired to help with the inspections. “It’s Russian roulette. I cringe every time I hear of a shock.”**

Faulty electrical grounding is among the most common problems found, the task force said. Some of the facilities are existing Iraqi infrastructure such as a palace, but others were built after U.S. troops moved in the country.

“Just imagine getting the news that they’ve done 25,000 facilities, but your son or daughter is in the 65,000 they haven’t done,” [Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa.] told the AP.

Task Force SAFE inspectors found many of the facilities that fall under KBR’s contract have electrical problems, according to an internal military document obtained by The Associated Press.

**Of the 20,340 maintained by KBR and inspected so far, 6,935 failed the government inspection, the document said.**

Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., questioned why KBR has been allowed to continue to perform electrical work in Iraq.

**He said the military should take a more careful look at the electrical work in Afghanistan, too, where KBR also has a large contract for electrical work.**

“If they found widespread problems, the obvious question is why has there not been action to remove the contract and bring in another contractor?” Dorgan said.

Rep. Carol Shea-Porter, D-N.H., said Thursday she’s waiting for an answer to a letter to Defense Secretary Robert Gates in which she asked a similar question.

“I think the problem that we have here is that most Americans would look at this and say I don’t want them to have the contract again. I think that’s the gut reaction of most Americans,” said Shea-Porter, a member of the House Armed Services committee.

**[And here’s the good news:]**

**The Army is tracking reports of just over two fires each day in Iraq, mostly blamed on electrical faults. But that’s down from nearly five fires a day, Brig. Gen. Kurt Stein said in an e-mail to the AP.**

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**Iraq Veterans In Texas Attack  
Local KBR Contract For Road  
Building:  
“4 County Commissioners And The  
County Judge, All Agreed To Push The**

# Decision Back A Week While They Did More Research On KBR”



03/24/2009 By Bryan Hannah, IVAW, Chapter 28; [Austinivaw.wordpress.com/](http://Austinivaw.wordpress.com/)

Today Greg [Foster] and I responded to a local article about KBR seeking a contract with Hays County to build a road (FM-110) relatively close to our house.

**We did not oppose the road, we only opposed paying an internationally scandalous corporate entity accused of covering up rapes, gang rapes, negligent homicide, wrongful death, war profiteering, bribery, and tax evasion (the list goes on) to build our roads.**

While it is another story to pull a federal contract, we can at least stop them from doing business with our county, which is what we did today.

The Court, consisting of 4 County Commissioners and the County Judge, all agreed to push the decision back a week while they did more research on KBR. We are also working on building our case and we will attend open court again next week.

The videos can be found on YouTube by googling KBR vs. Hays County Veterans or checking out Nitro's YouTube channel at: [//www.youtube.com/user/rebeccaleonawilson](http://www.youtube.com/user/rebeccaleonawilson)

## **MORE:**

# **Iraq Vets May Sink KBR Contract In Texas County; “Commissioner Jeff Barton Said The Veterans Made A Powerful Case”**

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Project & Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

March 27, 2009 By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press Writer

SAN ANTONIO — A small Texas county is rethinking a \$617,000 contract with KBR Inc. to build a rural, mile-long road near the home of two anti-Iraq war veterans trying to stop the deal with the defense contractor.

KBR is the lone finalist for the Hays County project, but former soldiers Bryan Hannah, 22, and Gregory Foster, 28, helped put the approval in doubt after criticizing the company's battered image at a commissioner's court meeting in San Marcos this week.

That led a KBR official in attendance Tuesday to deny allegations of exposing U.S. soldiers to toxic chemicals and deadly showers in Iraq in order to save a contract for a small, four-lane road leading to a new suburban high school near Austin.

Commissioners say they're now weighing KBR's record and have delayed their decision until next month.

"I didn't have a lot of faith going in," Hannah said. "But I saw how genuinely open and concerned they were."

Houston-based KBR, which oversees maintenance at most U.S. facilities in Iraq, has been criticized after soldiers there have been shocked or electrocuted while using showers or appliances. The family of one electrocuted soldier has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against KBR, which denies responsibility.

KBR, a popular target for opponents of the war, also faces a lawsuit from soldiers who allege the company knowingly exposed them to carcinogens while guarding an Iraqi water pumping plant.

Marit Babin, director of government relations for KBR, told the Democrat-controlled commissioner's court the allegations were false. "I would remind everyone that there are two sides to every story," Babin said. "Just because you read something on the Internet doesn't mean it's true."

**Babin was partly addressing an article by a local news Web site, [newstreamz.com](http://newstreamz.com), which had laid out allegations against KBR in a lengthy story about the county's road project last month.**

**Hannah said he served with the 1st Calvary Division in Iraq for 15 months before his tour ended in January 2008. He is a self-described activist who proudly said he heckled John Ashcroft when the former U.S. attorney general spoke in Austin earlier this week.**

**Hannah told commissioners he put his life on the line in Iraq to escort empty KBR trucks. Foster said the county shouldn't give its money to KBR because of the way the company does business.**

Commissioner Jeff Barton said the veterans made a powerful case.

"Firms should be held accountable," Barton said. "I don't want to prejudge, but I take very seriously the concerns that were raised."

Commissioners probably will decide whether to award KBR the contract April 7.

KBR spokeswoman Heather Browne said in an e-mail that the company is following up with the county and that KBR is "proud of the work it performs in Iraq."

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE  
MILITARY?**

Forward GI Special 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 wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

**Veterans Organizations Demand  
VA Stop Fucking Over Troops  
With Combat Related PTSD:  
"Congress' Original Intent Was To  
Include All Combat Veterans, But The  
VA Has Interpreted It Otherwise Over  
The Years"  
VA Rules Are "Burdensome, Stressful  
And Adversarial"**

Mar 24 By KIMBERLY HEFLING, Associated Press Writer

**Veterans advocates told Congress on Tuesday that a World War II-era law requiring proof of participation in combat in order to receive certain benefits creates an unnecessary hurdle for veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, but not on the front lines.**

There is particular concern, they said, that the rule interferes with disability benefits for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder whose trauma may not be documented by the military.

PTSD can affect people who experience a traumatic event. Symptoms can include flashbacks and anxiety.

**The mental disorder has affected service members in noninfantry roles such as truck drivers or cooks, who on today's battlefields are vulnerable to roadside bombs or mortar attacks.**

They often lack a combat infantry badge or other documentation to prove their battlefield experience.

The VA has said that about half of all disability claims for PTSD are approved, and the majority of denials come because the veteran lacks evidence of injury related to their time in the service, according to a report last year from the Congressional Budget Office.

Female veterans, who are officially banned from infantry jobs but still experience combat in the current war zones, are among those having difficulty in obtaining the benefits, Carolyn Schapper, an Iraq War veteran, testified.

"The traditional understanding of female servicemembers' military duties has been the biggest hurdle to getting them adequate compensation for their injury," said Schapper, a member of the group Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

Rep. John Hall, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Veterans Affairs subcommittee, which held Tuesday's hearing, said the law should be updated to define a combat veteran as any veteran who served in a combat theater of operations or in combat against a hostile force.

"There should be a better way for VA to assist veterans suffering from PTSD to adjudicate those claims without being burdensome, stressful and adversarial," Hall said.

Organizations such as the Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion argue that Congress' original intent was to include all combat veterans, but the VA has interpreted it otherwise over the years.

## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

**Telling the truth - about the occupations 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 to Imperial wars 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**

**Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now!  
([www.ivaw.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))**

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

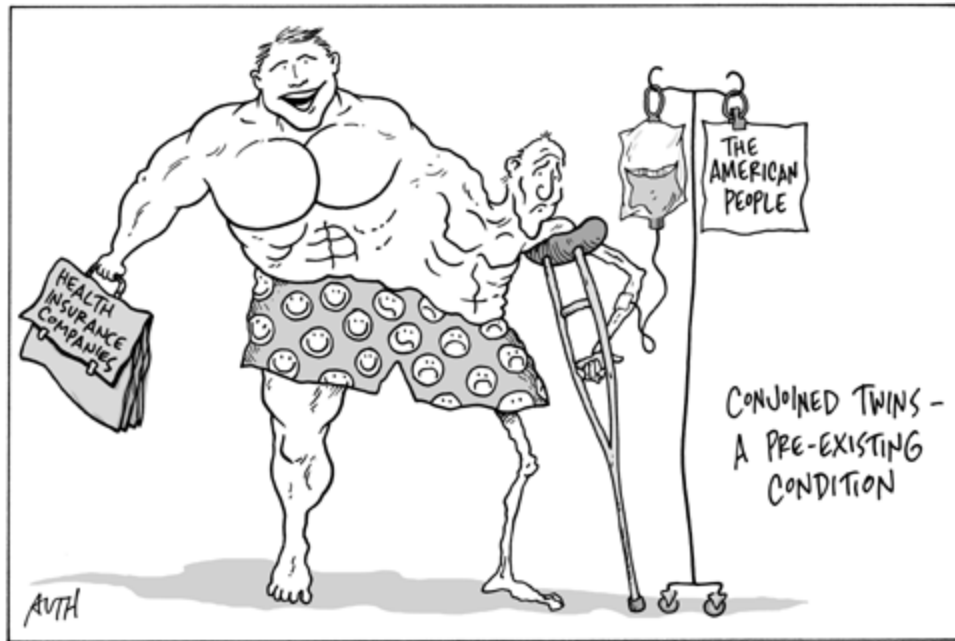
**“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”**

**-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

**We stand in a moment of time between the eternal past and the eternal future, content that, for us, all that was before and all that will be cannot exist for us, and yet we exist because all that was before us gave us our moment in time, and we will share the responsibility for all that will exist in the eternal future.**

**-- Abraham Lincoln**

# “People Everywhere Learned A Blunt Lesson About Power, Who Has It And Who Doesn’t”



March 22, 2009 by William Greider, Washington Post [Excerpts]

**“Populist anger” is a condescending label pundits use to suggest an irrational, unruly temperament.**

But what’s really going on is deeper and potentially more forceful. It will not be contained with good rhetoric or symbolic gestures.

During the past nine months, gigantic financial bailouts amid collapsing economic life made visible the crippling divide between governing elites and citizens at large.

People everywhere learned a blunt lesson about power, who has it and who doesn’t. They watched Washington rush to rescue the very financial interests that caused the catastrophe.

They learned that government has plenty of money to spend when the right people want it.

“Where’s my bailout,” became the rueful punch line at lunch counters and construction sites nationwide.

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## OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**Zionist Government Proclaims “The State Of Israel Is At War With The Palestinian People, People Against People, Collective Against Collective”**

**“If We Are At War With ‘The Palestinian People’, This Means That Every Palestinian, Wherever He Or She May Be, Is An Enemy”**

March 23, 2009 By URI AVNERY, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

The most important sentence written in Israel this week was lost in the general tumult of exciting events.

THE JUDICIAL debate concerns one of the most revolting laws ever enacted in Israel.

It says that the wife of an Israeli citizen is not allowed to join him in Israel if she is living in the occupied Palestinian territories or in a “hostile” Arab country.

The matter came before the Supreme Court, The petitioners, Jews and Arabs, argued that this measure contradicts our Basic Laws (our substitute for a nonexistent constitution) which guarantee the equality of all citizens.

The answer of the Ministry of Justice lawyers let the cat out of the bag.

It asserts, for the first time, in unequivocal language, that:

“The State of Israel is at war with the Palestinian people, people against people, collective against collective.”

ONE SHOULD read this sentence several times to appreciate its full impact.

This is not a phrase escaping from the mouth of a campaigning politician and disappearing with his breath, but a sentence written by cautious lawyers carefully weighing every letter.

If we are at war with “the Palestinian people”, this means that every Palestinian, wherever he or she may be, is an enemy.

That includes the inhabitants of the occupied territories, the refugees scattered throughout the world as well as the Arab citizens of Israel proper.

A mason in Taibeh, Israel, a farmer near Nablus in the West Bank, a policeman of the Palestinian Authority in Jenin, a Hamas fighter in Gaza, a girl in a school in the Mia Mia refugee camp near Sidon, Lebanon, a naturalized American shopkeeper in New York - “collective against collective”.

The Palestinian people, of course, oppose this process. They refuse to budge, set up dams, try to push the stream back.

True, for more than a hundred years they have been on the retreat, but they have never surrendered.

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## **“Random Killings And Vandalism” “‘Shoot And Don’t Worry About The Consequences’ Was The Message From Commanders, Said Marmor”**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

22 March 2009 Peter Beaumont, The Observer [Excerpts]

An investigation by a group of former Israeli soldiers has uncovered new evidence of the military’s conduct during the assault on Gaza two months ago.

According to the group Breaking the Silence, the witness statements of the 15 soldiers who have come forward to describe their concerns over Operation Cast Lead appear to corroborate claims of random killings and vandalism carried out during the operation made by a separate group of anonymous servicemen during a seminar at a military college.

“This is not a military that we recognise,” said Mikhael Manekin, one of the former soldiers involved with the group. “This is in a different category to things we have seen before. We have spoken to a lot of different people who served in different places in Gaza, including officers.

“We are not talking about some units being more aggressive than others, but underlying policy. So much so that we are talking to soldiers who said that they were having to restrain the orders given.”

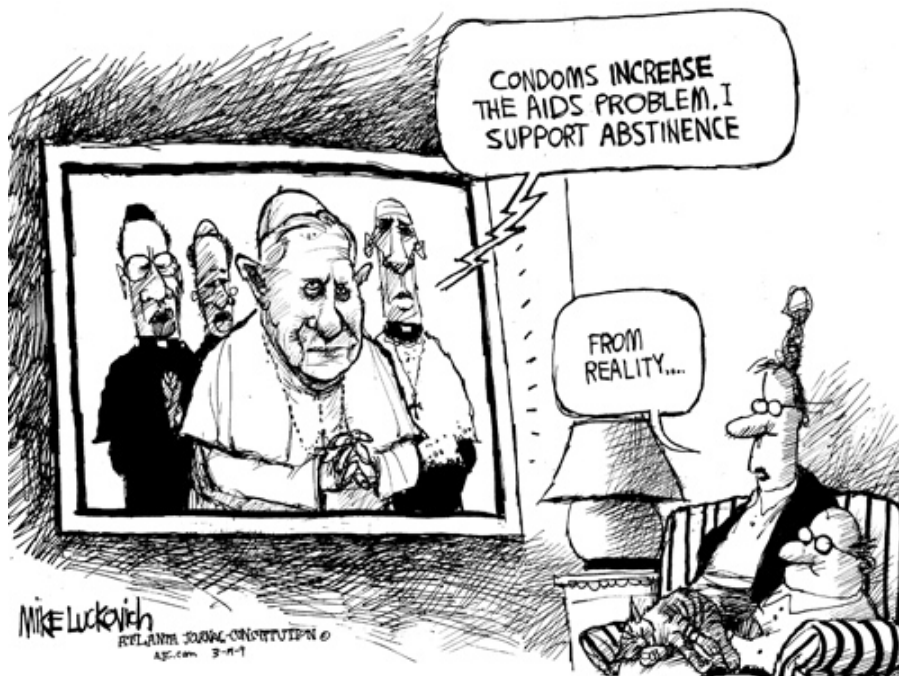
Manekin described how soldiers had reported their units being specifically warned by officers not to discuss what they had seen and done in Gaza.

“Shoot and don’t worry about the consequences” was the message from commanders, said Marmor. Describing the behaviour of a lieutenant-colonel who briefed the troops, Marmor added: “His whole demeanour was extremely gung-ho.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

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## **Huge Majority Of House Of Representatives Refuses To Even Mildly Question Afghan Occupation**

24 March 2009 By: Norman Solomon, Truthout Perspective

Is your representative speaking out against escalation of the Afghanistan war?

Last week, some members of Congress sent President Obama a letter that urged him to “reconsider” his order deploying 17,000 additional US troops to Afghanistan.

Everyone in the House of Representatives had ample opportunity to sign onto the letter. Beginning in late February, it circulated on Capitol Hill for more than two weeks. The letter was the most organized congressional move so far to challenge escalation of the war in Afghanistan.

While the Obama administration says that the problems of the region cannot be solved by military means, the basic approach is reliance on heightened military means.

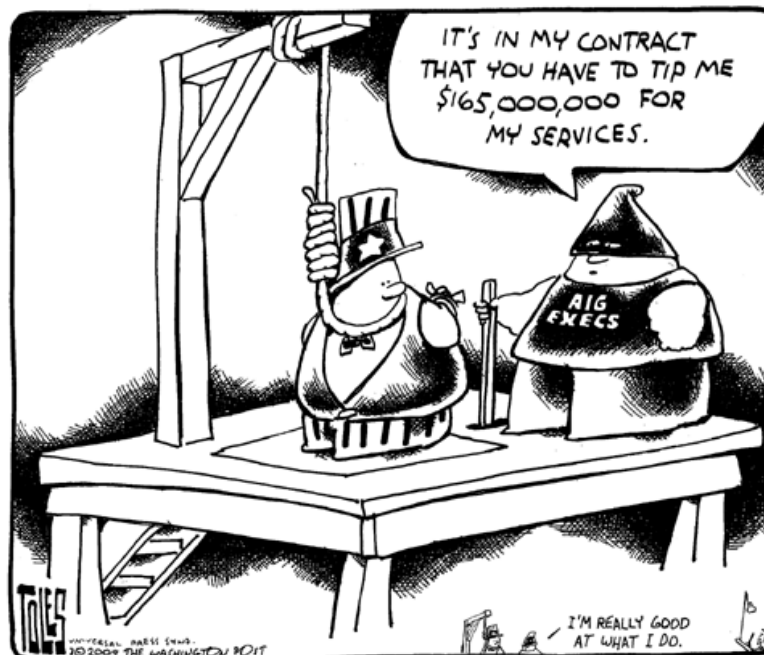
In contrast, the letter from the 14 members of the House (eight Democrats, six Republicans) lays down a clear line of opposition to the rationales for stepping up the warfare.

More than 400 members of the House declined to sign the letter.

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT  
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE  
WARS**

## CLASS WAR REPORTS





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