

GI SPECIAL 5J18:



Vietnam Days [Thanks to Katherine G, Military Project, who sent this in.]

**“I Don’t Think This Place
Is Worth Another
Soldier’s Life”**

**“The American People Don’t
Fully Realize What’s Going On”
“They Just Know Back There What
The Higher-Ups Here Tell Them”**

“The Higher-Ups Only Go To The Safe Places”

“They Don’t Ever Fucking See What We See On The Ground”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, NY City Labor Against The War & Phil G, who sent this in.]

October 27, 2007 By Joshua Partlow, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD, Oct. 26

Their line of tan Humvees and Bradley Fighting Vehicles creeps through another Baghdad afternoon. At this pace, an excruciating slowness, they strain to see everything, hoping the next manhole cover, the next rusted barrel, does not hide another bomb.

A few bullets pass overhead, but they don’t worry much about those.

“I hate this road,” someone says over the radio.

They stop, look around. The streets of Sadiyah are deserted again. To the right, power lines slump down into the dirt. To the left, what was a soccer field is now a pasture of trash, combusting and smoking in the sun. Packs of skinny wild dogs trot past walls painted with slogans of sectarian hate.

A bomb crater blocks one lane, so they cross to the other side, where houses are blackened by fire, shops crumbled into bricks. The remains of a car bomb serve as hideous public art. Sgt. Victor Alarcon’s Humvee rolls into a vast pool of knee-high brown sewage water -- the soldiers call it Lake Havasu, after the Arizona spring-break party spot -- that seeps in the doors of the vehicle and wets his boots.

“When we first got here, all the shops were open. There were women and children walking out on the street,” Alarcon said this week. “The women were in Western clothing. It was our favorite street to go down because of all the hot chicks.”

That was 14 long months ago, when the soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, arrived in southwestern Baghdad.

Next month, the U.S. soldiers will complete their tour in Iraq.

Asked if the American endeavor here was worth their sacrifice -- 20 soldiers from the battalion have been killed in Baghdad -- Alarcon said no: “I don’t think this place is worth another soldier’s life.”

While top U.S. commanders say the statistics of violence have registered a steep drop in Baghdad and elsewhere, the soldiers’ experience in Sadiyah shows that numbers alone

do not describe the sense of aborted normalcy -- the fear, the disrupted lives -- that still hangs over the city.

American soldiers estimate that since violence intensified this year, half of the families in Sadiyah have fled, leaving approximately 100,000 people.

After they left, insurgents and militiamen used their abandoned homes to hold meetings and store weapons.

The neighborhood deteriorated so quickly that many residents came to believe neither U.S. nor Iraqi security forces could stop it happening.

The focus of the battalion's efforts in Sadiyah was to develop the Iraqi security forces into an organized, fair and proficient force -- but the American soldiers soon realized this goal was unattainable.

The soldiers endured repeated bombings of their convoys within view of police checkpoints. During their time here, they have arrested 70 members of the national police for collaboration in such attacks and other crimes.

The U.S. soldiers began facing ever more sophisticated armor-piercing roadside bombs known as EFPs, short for explosively formed penetrators. Some of them were linked in arrays that blasted out as many as 18 heated copper slugs.

Over time, the neighborhood became a battleground that residents fled by the thousands.

In retrospect, I've got to think it was a coordinated effort," Timmerman [Maj. Eric Timmerman, the battalion's operations officer] said.

"To this day, I don't think we truly understand how infiltrated or complicit the national police are" with the militias."

"This is a dangerous place," said Capt. Lee Showman, 28, a senior officer in the battalion. "People are killed here every day, and you don't hear about it. People are kidnapped here every day, and you don't hear about it."

Those who patrol the neighborhood every day say the fight has left them tired, bitter, wounded and confused.

Many of their scars are on display, some no one can see.

Sgt. 1st Class Todd Carlsrud has a long gash on the right side of his neck and carries a lump of shrapnel lodged against his spine that his doctors would not risk cutting out.

Another sergeant felt the flaming pain of a bullet tearing through his cheek and learned the taste of his own warm blood. He was one of three soldiers that day to get shot in the head -- a fourth was hit in the biceps -- when his squad walked into a house and found two gunmen waiting.

“The closer we get to leaving, the more we worry about it,” said Alarcon, 27, sitting at a plastic table with several other soldiers outside their outpost in Sadiyah.

“Being here, you know that any second, any time of the day, your life could be over.”

“Gone in a flash,” said Sgt. Matthew Marino.

“We had two mechanics working in the motor pool get hit by mortars,” Alarcon said. “You would have never thought.” Both died.

Many of the soldiers from the battalion are on their second tour in Iraq. Three years ago, they were based in Tikrit, the home of Saddam Hussein, a city they entered expecting to fight a determined Sunni insurgency.

By the end of their tour, with much of the violence contained, many of them felt optimistic about progress in Iraq.

“I honestly thought we were making a difference in Tikrit. Then we come back to a hellhole,” Marino said. “That was a playground compared to Baghdad.”

The American people don’t fully realize what’s going on, said Staff Sgt. Richard McClary, 27, a section leader from Buffalo.

“They just know back there what the higher-ups here tell them.

“But the higher-ups don’t go anywhere, and actually they only go to the safe places, places with a little bit of gunfire,” he said.

“They don’t ever fucking see what we see on the ground.”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?

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 war, 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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier;

Four More Wounded

10.26.07 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071026-06

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldier was killed and four others wounded when their unit was attacked with an explosively-formed penetrating device in a southern section of the Iraqi capital Oct. 25.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Tikrit

10.27.07 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071027-01

TIKRIT, Iraq – A U.S. Soldier assigned to Multi-National Division – North was killed when he sustained small arms fire while conducting operations in Salah ad Din Oct. 25.

Donald L. Munn II: Soldier's Character Bred Respect



Donald L. Munn II

October 15, 2007 BY TINA LAM, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Donald L. Munn II joined the Army in 2002 after his younger sister Courtney Pyles brought him along to her recruitment test for moral support. He decided to take the test, too. He did so well the recruiter chose him first.

"The Army made us closer," Pyles said Sunday, remembering her 25-year-old brother who died Oct. 10 in Iraq. Staff Sgt. Munn, a military police officer, was on a mission in Baghdad with 11 other soldiers when a bomb exploded near their vehicle.

Sgt. Munn was born in Grosse Pointe and graduated from Lakeshore High School in St. Clair Shores in 2000.

"He was always the good one, and I was always the one getting into trouble," said the 24-year-old Pyles, who now lives in Casper, Wyo. But as soldiers living in the same world, they understood each other better and talked more.

"I was proud of him, and I wanted him to be proud of me," she said. "I looked up to him more than anyone." Pyles served in Korea and is now in the Army Reserve.

Sgt. Munn served two tours of duty in Iraq and had been scheduled to come home this month, but that was moved to February 2008, his aunt Deborah Brown of Smithville, Tenn., said. She added that his smile could light up a room and he was usually the clown of any group.

Sgt. Munn married a soldier, Jennifer Salvador. She lives in Fairfield, Calif., with their 17-month-old daughter, Jordan Lyn.

Sgt. Munn was in the Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry, based at Ft. Hood, Texas.

Survivors include his father, Donald Munn; his mother, Rae Richardson-Randazzo, and grandmothers Dorothy Richards and Alice Munn.

Burial will be California.

Family From Mass. Mourns Soldier



Army Private First Class Kenneth J. Iwasinski, 22, of Belchertown.

October 16, 2007 By Elizabeth Ratto, Globe Correspondent

Army Private First Class Kenneth J. Iwasinski and his father had plans when the soldier returned from war duty in Iraq.

They were going to work on a car together and catch up, the father, Dominick Iwasinski, said last night. Instead, the elder Iwasinski was remembering his son - killed Sunday in

Baghdad - for his strong sense of patriotism and commitment to protecting his country. "He was very patriotic," Dominick Iwasinski said in a phone interview from his home in Belchertown. "He believed in everything he was doing, he just believed in it."

Iwasinski, 22, was a member of the Second Infantry Division's Second Brigade Combat Team, based in Fort Carson, Colo. He was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations, the Department of Defense announced yesterday.

His family was notified of his death early yesterday, his father said.

Iwasinski was a gunner on the vehicle when he was killed, his father said. "When he came home on leave, you could see that he saw a lot of bad things, but he still walked proud," Iwasinski said.

He said his son had left Belchertown High School before graduating, and enlisted in the Army just days after receiving his GED in March 2006.

"When he enlisted, he knew he was going to Iraq," Iwasinski said. "He enlisted in the infantry. He knew he was going into harm's way."

Iwasinski lived with his father and stepmother, Tawnia Iwasinski, in Belchertown. His mother and sister, Tracy and Amanda Taylor, live in Chicopee, his father said.

According to the military, 3,819 US servicepeople have been killed in Iraq since the war began in March 2003.

Iwasinski said his son had served in Iraq for a year, and had been due to return to the states earlier this month, before his duty was extended until January.

Funeral arrangements will be made once Iwasinski's body is flown back, probably later this week, his father said.

Iwasinski said he is remembering his son for his big heart and his accomplishments.

"It takes someone special to do something like that and a special kind of commitment . . . I have to believe in what he believed in," Iwasinski said.

Notes From A Lost War:

**“The Sniper Is Probably Long Gone
By Now”**

**“Not A Single Iraqi Will Have Come
Forward With Information”**

I'm on a journey through Iraq's Sunni heartland with the soldiers of the 101st Airborne.

Inch by inch, they check for roadside bombs.

It is slow going. After four hours, they still haven't found an IED, or improvised explosive device.

Then, they do. They have spotted a man running to a nearby village and they give chase. He may be behind this attack - and others.

Suspicion falls on every male here. The risk for the US is that this will create future enemies.

Two roadside bomb attacks have been triggered from this village in just a matter of days and, to the ordinary soldier, the IED threat seems as dangerous as ever.

Within sight of the police checkpoint, the patrol stops to meet the locals. There is sniper fire.

To the right of the armoured jeep, a soldier has been hit. He crumples.

For some of these young soldiers - just 18 or 19 years old - it is their first time under fire.

But their sergeants, now on a third tour of Iraq, react instinctively. No-one can see the sniper.

The medic - and our cameraman - break cover to get to the injured man.

Mute with shock, he is losing a lot of blood. The bullet passed through his leg but it missed the artery.

The soldiers want to hit back. But where?

The sniper is probably long gone by now. It is immensely frustrating. And anyway, the priority now is to evacuate the casualty.

Back at the base, they get ready to return - in force - to the scene of the shooting. But, by the time their sweep of the town is complete, not a single Iraqi will have come forward with information.

And Now For The Good News....

Stabbings of American military personnel in Iraq or Afghanistan are extremely rare, outnumbered by drownings, strokes, cancer, drug overdoses and electrocutions.

--- Patrick Winn, October 29, 2007 Army Times

**FUTILE EXERCISE:
ONLY 10 MILLION MORE TO GO:
COME ON HOME NOW!**



U.S. soldiers arrest Iraqi man him during a night patrol at the Zafraniya neighborhood, southeast of Baghdad September 4, 2007. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**AFGHANISTAN OCCUPATION
FORCES**

Albania	138
Australia	907
Austria	3
Azerbaijan	22
Belgium	368
Bulgaria	401
Canada	1730
Croatia	199
Czech Rep.	233
Denmark	454
Estonia	128
Finland	85
France	073
Germany	155
Greece	146
Hungary	25

Iceland	11
Ireland	7
Italy	395
Latvia	97
Lithuania	195
Luxembourg	9
Macedonia	129
Netherlands	1516
New Zealand	138
Norway	508
Poland	937
Portugal	162
Romania	536
Slovakia	70
Slovenia	42
Spain	715
Sweden	340
Switzerland	2
Turkey	220
UK	7740
USA	15108
Total:	41144



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

TROOP NEWS

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



Group burial at Arlington National Cemetery October 12, 2007, for 12 U.S. soldiers killed when their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed in Iraq on January 20, 2007. The single casket holds the remains of all 12 soldiers. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

Half Of N.J. National Guard To Head To Iraq Next Year; “What’s Going To Happen To Their Kids? Their Kids’ Tuition? Mortgage Payments?”

[Thanks to Chris Lombardi, Military Project, who sent this in.]

Oct 18, 2007 WNBC-TV

NEW YORK - The Pentagon has ordered roughly half of New Jersey’s Army National Guard to deploy to Iraq in the second half of next year, NewsChannel 4 learned on Wednesday. A full combat brigade of New Jersey guardsmen, more than 3,000 soldiers, received their orders over the weekend.

They are part of a Defense Department rotation of eight National Guard units from across the country who will replace active duty troops fighting the wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan. Training, expected at least initially at Fort Dix in central New Jersey, will begin no later than next summer.

The New Jersey Guardsmen got their orders this past weekend. But on Wednesday, at places like the Teaneck Armory, guardsmen said they were not authorized to talk about it.

State senator and former acting Gov. Dick Codey said all of New Jersey will feel the impact of the large deployment.

“They should pray for these men and women who are going into battle,” Codey said. “You’re talking about thousands of families that are affected by this.”

Defense Secretary Robert Gates is on record saying citizen soldiers should serve on duty no longer than 12 months, including training -- unlike active duty troops who are now on 15-month deployments. That means time in a war zone for the guardsmen might be as little as eight or nine months.

However, units of the New Jersey and New York National Guard who were in Iraq last year were among the first soldiers to have their tours extended to 15 months as part of President George W. Bush’s surge strategy last winter.

Codey said long tours disrupt lives.

“What’s going to happen to their kids? Their kids’ tuition? Mortgage payments?” he said. “The salaries certainly don’t match.”

This would be the largest deployment of New Jersey guardsmen to Iraq since the war began four and a half years ago.

More details on the announcement are expected Thursday in a briefing at Fort Dix.

MORE:

New Jersey Gov Condemns Guard Call Up

[Thanks to Chris Lombardi, Military Project, who sent this in.]

October 18, 2007 By TOM HESTER Jr.; Associated Press Writer

TRENTON, N.J. - New Jersey Gov. Jon S. Corzine says an impending large deployment of state National Guard troops represents an overuse of the citizen soldiers that undermines their purpose.

“The fact that we continue to have the kind of overuse of our National Guard is just a mistake,” said Corzine, who voted against the Iraq war when he was a U.S. senator.

“Who Is Providing The Checks And Balances To Ensure Everyone Rotates Either To Iraq Or Afghanistan?”
“One Or Two ‘Tax-Free’ Day Trips To Iraq And/Or Afghanistan Do Not Count As Deployed Time”

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
October 29, 2007

A recent article showed how many times various brigades had deployed (“Balancing Act” Sept. 24). It did not, however, show how many times the same soldiers had deployed.

I recently met a soldier who, according to him, was preparing for his fourth deployment. He wanted to know if everyone else was on their third and fourth deployment. I had to tell him no. I have deployed only once.

The truth is that many soldiers have not been exposed to recent deployments or permanent-change-of-station moves.

Some of these soldiers have been homesteading for years in a nondeployable, nontactical unit. How is this possible when junior soldiers are being deployed again and again?

Let us not forget those soldiers who serve year after year in some districts, and then leave for a yearlong tour to Korea or the Army Sergeants Major Academy.

And, by the way, the one or two “tax-free” day trips to Iraq and/or Afghanistan do not count as deployed time.

The question is, who is providing the checks and balances to ensure everyone rotates either to Iraq or Afghanistan?

Master Sgt. Gerry Ronan
Fort Bragg, N.C.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**When Foreign Soldiers Arrest Your
Commander, That's Called Freedom
And Democracy:
[Don't Like It? Go Back Where You Came
From!]**



Iraqi police in Sadr City, Iraq, protest the arrest of their Iraqi commander, Imad Taklif Sayhoud, an Iraqi citizen, in Baghdad, Iraq Oct. 27, 2007. The Iraqi commander was taken prisoner by U.S. troops on Friday. (AP Photo/ Adil al-Kazali)

**Occupation Commander Admits
Resistance Funding Secure And
Successful;
“If You Think That The Majority Of
Money Is Coming From Outside The**

Country To Fund The Insurgency, You'd Be Wrong”

“Militants May Have Tapped Into American Reconstruction Efforts”

October 26, 2007 By Alexandra Zavis, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

“If you think that the majority of money is coming from outside the country to fund the insurgency, you’d be wrong,” said Army Lt. Col. Eric Welsh, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, in the northern city of Mosul.

“I think a majority is being done right here . . . under the disguise of legitimate storefront operations.”

“We can’t win this thing with a bullet. We can’t win it by killing everybody,” Mixon said. “We have got to attack the insurgency from what source it comes from. Part of that is the financing.”

In Mosul alone, illegal real estate deals, in which government property is sold to unsuspecting buyers, have generated \$40 million to \$60 million for the insurgency in the last couple of years, a source told U.S. forces. Black-market sales of gasoline and propane in Nineveh province, of which Mosul is the capital, are believed to generate an additional \$1 million a month.

Sunni extremists [translation: nationalist freedom fighters], who last year declared their own Islamic caliphate headquartered in Baqubah, extort drivers and take a portion of the harvests and goods transported through the areas they control as “taxes,” U.S. commanders say.

U.S. commanders even suspect that militants may have tapped into American reconstruction efforts, by extorting money from contractors and recipients of business grants from the Army.

Iraq developed a flourishing black-market economy to counter the United Nations embargo after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and it did not take insurgents long to realize this was a quick and untraceable way to generate and transfer funds.

White-collar criminals in Mosul are forced to pay a cut to insurgents, whose causes they may or may not support, Welsh said.

Anti-corruption agencies have proven ill-equipped to tackle the problem, because of the level of obstruction and violence.

Resistance Action

Oct 26 (KUNA) & Reuters & AP & 27 October 2007 VOA News & by Salam Faraj (AFP) & (VOI) & Reuters

Insurgents wearing military uniforms abducted the police chief of the town of Muqdadiyah in Diyala and his seven bodyguards, security officials said. The convoy of Colonel Amer Nsaif was ambushed near the village of Abu Saidr on Friday by armed men, they told AFP.

They said Colonel Amer Nussayif Jassim, chief of police in the town of Miqdadiya, northeast of Baghdad, had been stopped at an army checkpoint while driving to work in a two-car convoy, bundled into the trunk of a car by soldiers, and taken away.

“He was returning to Muqdadiyah from Baghdad yesterday when he was kidnapped near Abu Saidr close to Baquba,” a security official said. He said 13 Iraqi soldiers who had been manning a checkpoint near Abu Saidr where the ambush occurred had been detained.

One policeman was killed and six others wounded when an explosive charge went off near their patrol vehicle in northern Babel, a local police source said on Saturday.

“A roadside explosive device planted on the road linking al-Asriyya village to al-Iskanriya district in northern Hilla was detonated by means of remote control while a patrol car was passing by,” the source, who preferred to remain unnamed, told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI). “The explosion killed one policeman and injured six others, who were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment,” the source indicated.

Hilla, the capital city of Babel province, is located 100 km south of the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

Two Iraqi soldiers were killed Friday in the southern city of Diwaniya. An Iraqi police source told KUNA that an explosive device went off earlier this morning at an Iraqi emergency forces’ patrol was passing by in Diwaniya, the largest city of the southern Iraqi province of Qadisiya.

Two Iraqi policemen, one an officer, were killed in the blast, and another three were wounded, according to the source, who added that the wounded were rushed to hospital for treatment.

Roadside bombs killed six truck drivers and wounded five others when they exploded near a supply convoy in Adhaim, 53 km (32 miles) north of Baquba, police said.

A bomber killed one civilian and wounded four others at the office building of agents of the occupation in Muqdadiya, 90 km (55 miles) northeast of Baghdad, police said. The attacker detonated his explosives belt after he was unable to get through the main gate of the headquarters of the 1920s Revolution Brigades. The brigades has joined forces with the U.S.

Two policemen were wounded by a roadside bomb that targeted their patrol on the road between Kirkuk and Mosul, police said.

A roadside bomb killed two policemen and wounded three others in the town of Dagghara, 10 km (6 miles) north of Diwaniya, police said. Diwaniya is 180 km (112 miles) south of Baghdad.

Iraqi police say a bomb blast in an area southeast of Baghdad has wounded two policemen in the blast, which targeted an area of restaurants.

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

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 Douglas, 1852

**"What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
--Camille Desmoulins**

United For Peace And Justice United For War And Injustice

October 19, 2007 By SHARON SMITH, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

IN THEIR first 11 months as a congressional majority, the Democrats show no progress toward fulfilling the campaign promises that won them votes from the antiwar majority last November.

If anything, they have accomplished less than nothing, since their rubber-stamping of Bush's troops surge last January raised the number of U.S. troops in Iraq to more than 160,000 for the foreseeable future.

Not surprisingly, a Washington Post-ABC News poll released on October 2 showed just 29 percent of respondents approve of the job Congress is doing--a 14-point drop since the Democrats took control last January (and even lower than Bush's paltry 33 percent approval rating).

The same poll showed seven in 10 respondents want Iraq war funding decreased, "with 46 percent wanting it cut sharply or entirely."

[S]ome congressional party leaders have become openly hostile to antiwar activists.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi bitterly complained to the Washington Post on October 10 about antiwar protesters camped outside her home, "If they were poor and they were sleeping on my sidewalk, they would be arrested for loitering, but because they have 'Impeach Bush' across their chest, it's the First Amendment."

But United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), the nation's largest antiwar coalition, remains undeterred from maintaining its amicable relationship with Democrats, however miserably that strategy failed in 2004 when pro-war neoliberal John Kerry was the party's anointed candidate.

UFPJ's third national assembly, held in Chicago on June 22-24, declared as a priority "engaging in the 2008 electoral season to project a peace and justice agenda."

No decision was made on how to proceed in the strong likelihood that no major candidate offers a peace and justice agenda.

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments 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:. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

OCCUPATION REPORT

***Good News For The Iraqi
Resistance!!***

U.S. Occupation Commands' Dumbass Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



Foreign occupation soldiers from U.S. of Bravo company, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, stop Iraqi citizens at gunpoint as they walk on a public street and demand to see their documents during a night patrol at the Zafraniya neighborhood, southeast of Baghdad September 4, 2007. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

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

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

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

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

The Great Iraqi “Turn Over” Propaganda Bullshit Strikes Again: “U.S. Forces Will Turn Over Security To Iraqi Authorities In Karbala” “But U.S. Troops Will Remain” [Of Course] Usual Stupid Command Lies Documented

He [Bush] said then that the Iraqi government “plans to take responsibility for security in all of Iraq’s provinces by November.” In June, the Pentagon informed congress that the target had slipped to “no later than” next march.

In late September, the Pentagon said its “current projection” was that all 18 provinces would move to Iraqi control “as early as” July [2008].

10.26.07 By KIM GAMEL, Associated Press Writer

NAHRAWAN, Iraq - U.S. forces will turn over security to Iraqi authorities in Karbala province, a Shiite region in south, on Monday, the American commander for the area said.

But U.S. troops will remain ready to step in when help is needed.

Karbala will become only the eighth of Iraq’s 18 provinces to revert to Iraqi control, despite President Bush’s prediction in January that the Iraqi government would have responsibility for security in all of the provinces by November.

A Pentagon report to Congress last month said the target date for putting Iraqi authorities in charge of security in all 18 provinces has slipped yet again, to at least July, highlighting the difficulties in developing Iraqi police forces and the slow pace of economic and political progress in some areas.

It was the second time this year the target date for completing what is known as “Provincial Iraqi Control” was pushed back.

In January, Bush announced his new strategy for stabilizing Iraq and his decision to send an additional 30,000 U.S. combat troops to Baghdad and to Anbar province.

He said then that the Iraqi government “plans to take responsibility for security in all of Iraq’s provinces by November.”

In June, the Pentagon informed Congress that the target had slipped to “no later than” next March.

In late September, the Pentagon said its “current projection” was that all 18 provinces would move to Iraqi control “as early as” July.

How Odd: **State Department Diplomats Don't Want To Serve In The New, Successfully Surged Iraq: Silly People Ignore Petraeus' Cheery Reports & Think It's Too Dangerous: State Dept Starts First Large-Scale Draft Since Vietnam**

Oct 26, 2007 (CBS)

WASHINGTON: The State Department said Friday it will require some diplomats to serve in Iraq because of a lack of volunteers willing to work at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Beginning Monday, 200 to 300 diplomats will be notified that they have been identified as “prime candidates” to fill 40 to 50 vacancies that will open next year at the embassy, said Harry Thomas, director general of the Foreign Service.

Those notified that they have been selected for a one-year posting will have 10 days to respond. Only those with compelling reasons, such as a medical condition, will be excused from duty, Thomas said.

More than 1,200 of the department's 11,500 Foreign Service officers have served in Iraq since 2003, but the generous incentives have not persuaded enough diplomats to volunteer for duty in Baghdad or with the State Department's provincial reconstruction teams.

Iraq is an extremely dangerous hardship post with near daily insurgent mortar attacks on the fortified Green Zone where the embassy is located.

In particular, Defense Department employees and service members were forced to fill spots on provincial reconstruction teams for months because the State Department could not get personnel there.

Military officials have complained that other federal agencies -- including State, Commerce and Agriculture -- aren't moving quickly enough to fill critical needs in Iraq. Those agencies, they argue, have the expertise to help Iraqi business people and farmers get back to their jobs and improve the economy.

DynCorp Thieves May Replace Blackwater Homicidal Maniacs

10.24.07 (AP)

The State Department so badly managed a \$1.2 billion contract for Iraqi police training that it can't tell what it got for the money spent, a new report says.

Because of disarray in invoices and records on the project — and because the government is trying to recoup money paid inappropriately to contractor DynCorp International, LLC — auditors have temporarily suspended their effort to review the contract's implementation, said Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Stuart Bowen Jr.

Although training has been conducted and equipment provided under the contract, the bureau is in the process of trying to organize and validate invoices and does not believe its records accurately show the reasons for most payments that were made, the report said.

“As a result, INL does not know specifically what it received for most of the \$1.2 billion in expenditures under its DynCorp contract for the Iraqi Police Training Program,” Bowen said in a new 18-page report.

Bowen reported in January that the State Department paid \$43.8 million to DynCorp for a residential camp for police training personnel outside of Baghdad's Adnan Palace grounds. He said the camp had been empty for months; about \$4.2 million of the money was improperly spent on 20 VIP trailers and an Olympic-size pool, all ordered by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior but never authorized by the U.S.

DynCorp has been mentioned as a possible replacement for Blackwater USA in the contract to provide armed security for diplomats in Iraq following a string of security incidents involving Blackwater guards, including a September shooting that left 17 Iraqis dead.

The U.S. Spent \$38 Million For Iraq Government Computerized Accounting System;

“No One Noticed When It Was Not Working For A Month”

October 24, 2007 By PAULINE JELINEK, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

The U.S. spent at least \$38 million to give Iraq's government a computerized accounting system - and no one noticed when it was not working for a month, a report said Wednesday.

It was the latest in a series of reports from the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction, Stuart W. Bowen Jr., that detailed slow progress on some projects and waste and chaos in the management of another.

At issue are several contracts awarded in 2003, 2004 and 2006 for a broad range of work related to economic and financial reforms in Iraq.

One of the tasks was to develop and implement a computerized Iraq Financial Management System, or IFMIS, to replace a Saddam-era computerized system.

Although some progress has been reported on it, "it is difficult to tell specifically what has been developed and implemented" and how much has been spent for it, the report said, estimating costs at more than \$38 million.

“According to U.S. Embassy officials, the Ministry of Finance continues to use its legacy system for overall budget and accounting, ‘nobody noticed’ when IFMIS was down for a month and no one relies on IFMIS to produce reports,” Bowen said.

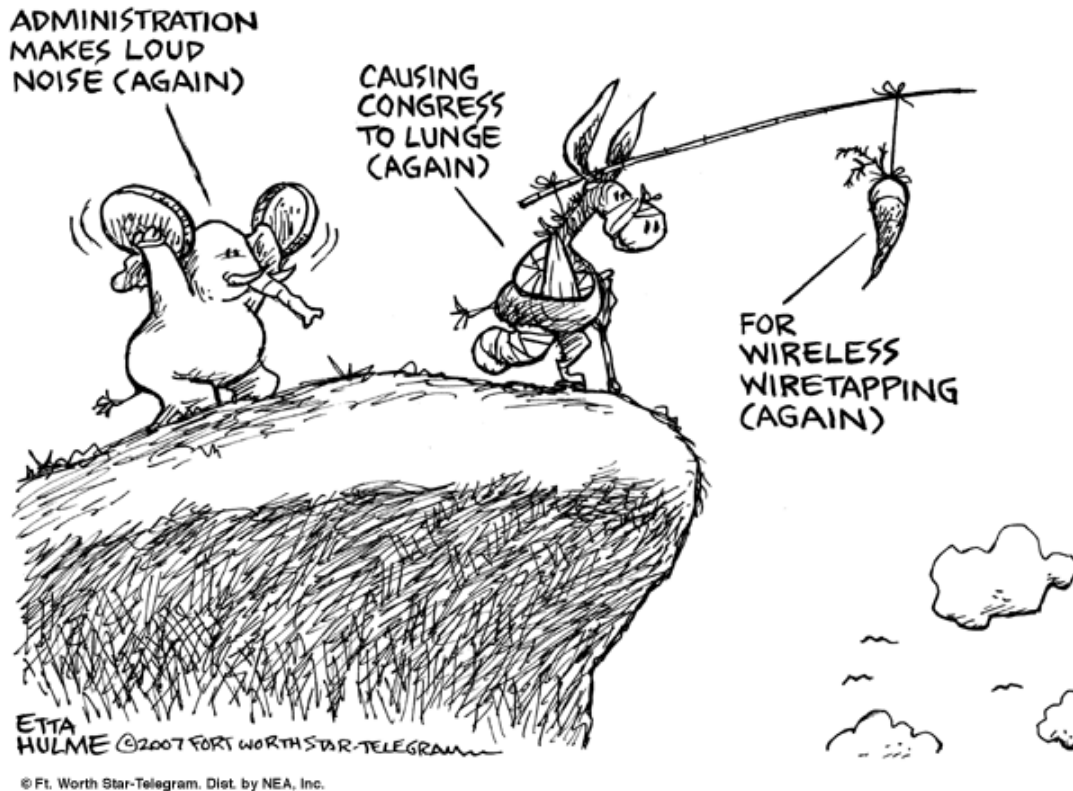
Other ministries, such as interior and defense, have developed their own financial management information systems, and they are not compatible with the new one and cannot transfer financial data from one system to another.

In addition to other the other issues, work on two of the contracts - one for a module for budgeting and another for purchasing - was halted after the May kidnapping of a contractor working on it from the Ministry of Finance building.

The project leader and four of his security guards have not been found.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

New Orleans:
Where Racists Rule And Happily
Destroy Public Housing:
“There Is No Place For Working
People, Especially African American
Working And Poor People, To Live In
New Orleans”

“Sheriff Jack Strain Announced That People With Dreadlocks Or ‘Chee Wee Hairstyles’ Could ‘Expect To Be Getting A Visit From A Sheriff’s Deputy’”

September 25, 2007 By BILL QUIGLEY, CounterPunch. Bill Quigley is a human rights lawyer and law professor at Loyola University New Orleans.

Odessa Lewis is 62 years old.

When I saw her last week, she was crying because she is being evicted.

A long-time resident of the Lafitte public housing apartments, since Katrina she has been locked out of her apartment and forced to live in a 240 square foot FEMA trailer. Ms. Lewis has asked repeatedly to be allowed to return to her apartment to clean and fix it up so she can move back in.

She even offered to do all the work herself and with friends at no cost.

The government continually refused to allow her to return.

Now she is being evicted from her trailer and fears she will become homeless because there is no place for working people, especially African American working and poor people, to live in New Orleans.

Ms. Lewis is a strong woman who has worked her whole life. But the stress of being locked out of her apartment, living in a FEMA trailer and the possibility of being homeless brought out the tears.

Thousands of other mothers and grandmothers are in the same situation.

Renting is so hard in part because there is a noose closing around the housing opportunities of New Orleans African American renters displaced by Katrina.

They have been openly and directly targeted by public and private actions designed to keep them away.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) just added their weight to the attack by approving the demolition of 2966 apartments in New Orleans.

Despite telling a federal judge for the last year and a half that approvals of public housing demolition applications take about 100 working days to evaluate, HUD approved the plan to demolish nearly 3000 apartments one day after the complete application was filed.

HUD says the 3000 apartments are scheduled to be replaced in a few years with up to 744 public housing eligible apartments and a few hundred subsidized apartments.

Unfortunately, HUD's actions are consistent with other governmental attacks on African American renters.

After Katrina, St. Bernard Parish, a 93% white adjoining suburb, enacted a law prohibiting home owners from renting their property to anyone who is not a blood relative.

Jefferson Parish, another majority white adjoining suburb, unanimously passed an ordinance prohibiting the construction of any subsidized housing.

The sponsoring legislator condemned poor people as “lazy,” “ignorant” and “leeches on society”--specifically hoping to guard against former residents of New Orleans public housing.

Across Lake Ponchartrain from New Orleans, the chief law enforcement officer of St. Tammany Parish, Sheriff Jack Strain, complained openly about the post-Katrina presence of “thugs and trash from New Orleans” and announced that people with dreadlocks or “chee wee hairstyles” could “expect to be getting a visit from a sheriff’s deputy.”

HUD's actions are also bolstered by pervasive racial discrimination in the private market as well. The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center has documented widespread racial discrimination in the metro New Orleans rental market and in the states surrounding the gulf coast.

HUD told a federal judge a few days “the average time (for the process of reviewing applications for demolition) is 100 days.” They did suggest that the process could be expedited in the case of New Orleans.

So it was. Instead of reviewing the details of demolishing 3000 apartments and considering the law and facts and the administrative record for 100 days, HUD expedited the process to one day.

HUD and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO, which HUD has been running for years) argued passionately that residents displaced from public housing (referred to once in their argument as ‘refugees’) are financially “better off” than they were before.

This echoes the Barbara Bush comment of September 5, 2005 when she said, viewing the overwhelmingly African American crowd of thousands of people living on cots in the Astrodome, “And so many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this - (she chuckles slightly) this is working very well for them.”

HUD announced approval of demolition of 2966 units of public housing in New Orleans - 896 apartments at Lafitte, 521 at C.J. Peete, 1158 at B.W. Cooper, and 1391 at St. Bernard. A few buildings on each site will be retained for historical preservation purposes.

New Orleans had a severe affordable housing crisis before Katrina when HANO housed over 5000 families. There was a waiting list of 8000 families trying to get in. HUD and HANO together did such a poor job of administering the agency that there were about 2000 more empty apartments that had been scheduled for major repairs for years.

The continuing deceptions by HUD and HANO have been shameless.

Since Katrina, HUD has continued to act out both sides of a charade that the local housing authority is making decisions and HUD is waiting on local actions. Yet, the decision to demolish was announced by the Secretary of HUD in DC over a year ago.

But in the year since then, HUD has continued to tell a federal judge that any legal challenge to demolitions was premature because HANO had not even submitted an application to HUD for their careful 100 day evaluation. This is while a HUD employee runs the agency, commuting back and forth to DC each week.

HANO even announced they would have 2000 apartments ready for people in August of 2006--a deadline not met even in September 2007. HANO later announced to the public that they had a list of 250 apartments ready for people to return only to admit in writing weeks later that no such list existed--nor were the phantom apartments ready.

The list of untruths goes on.

HUD would not agree to delay the demolition of the 3000 apartments until Congress finished reviewing legislation that would give residents the right to return and participate in the process of determining what kind of affordable housing should be in place in New Orleans.

And so HUD's actions help further restrict the opportunities for African American renters in New Orleans.

Adjoining white suburbs do not want African American renters back. HUD does not want them back. The local federal judge has refused to stop the demolitions.

But the mothers and grandmothers and their families and friends are still determined to return and resist demolition.

One sign at a recent public housing rally summed it up. "We will not allow the community we built to be rebuilt without us."

Odessa Lewis, despite her tears, said she is not giving up.

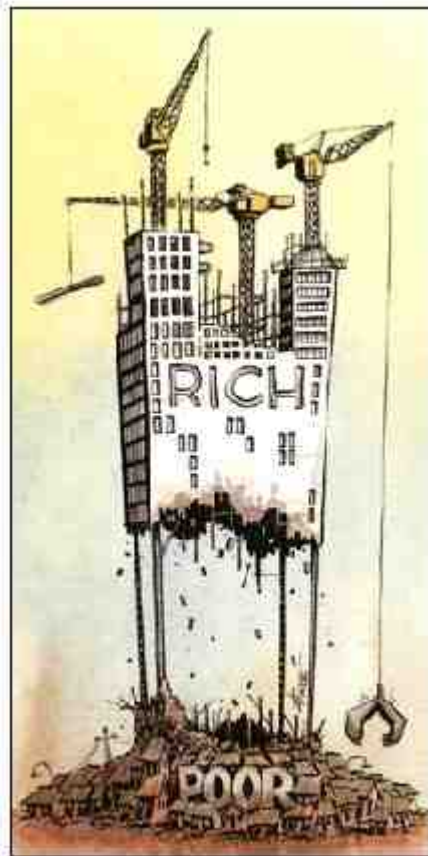
She and other public housing residents promise "we did not come this far to be turned back now. We will do whatever is necessary to protect our homes." Thousands of African American mothers and grandmothers are the ones directly targeted by HUD's actions.

Forty years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr., said "We as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society.

When profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

We can add sexism to the list, particularly in the fight for the right of public housing residents to return.

The fight of Ms. Lewis and others on the gulf coast shows how much we need a radical revolution of values.



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

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