

GI SPECIAL 6H1:



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IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST
THE WAR

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IVAW.ORG/BASETOUR

[Thanks to Wendy Barranco, IVAW]

**“What Undermines The Troops
The Most Is Being Lied To By
Their Political Leadership”**

[Thanks to Sally Davidson, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Jul. 31, 2008 By Evan Goodenow of The News-Sentinel

Returning home after serving a year near Nasiriyah as a military police officer with the Army National Guard, Kelly Dougherty remembers people asking her what it was like in Iraq.

But as soon as she started going into detail, they quickly changed the subject.

“I started to feel like people don’t really want to know what my experience was; they just feel obligated to ask,” said Dougherty, executive director of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

“They just want to keep me or keep the veterans in this box of idealized war hero and not confront what is actually being done in the name of them and in the name of our country.”

Dougherty co-founded Iraq Veterans Against the War in 2004 with the aim of telling the hard truths about the war that some Americans might not want to hear and to push for an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. soldiers from Iraq.

The organization is taking part in anti-war rallies around the country, and members are going into high schools in “counter-recruitment” efforts.

They’re also assisting in post-Hurricane Katrina rebuilding efforts to highlight what they say is a diversion of money to Iraq that they believe should have been spent at home.

Members are also speaking out about what they say happens when soldiers reach their physical and emotional breaking points by repeated deployments to Iraq.

At hearings held by the group in Silver Springs, Md., in March, Iraq War veterans spoke of routine atrocities committed by them and fellow soldiers: unarmed civilians shot at checkpoints, civilians run over by convoys driving fast to avoid ambushes or roadside bombs and innocent Iraqis routinely roughed up in their homes during raids.

Dougherty contends the “few bad apples” argument given whenever U.S. soldiers commit atrocities fails to recognize that those acts occur in an atmosphere in which military commanders and the White House either condone or look the other way at criminal behavior – such as the use of dogs, hooding, sleep deprivation and sexual degradation against Iraqi prisoners at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan and Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Dougherty’s organization is pushing for a complete withdrawal, not the ones advocated by presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama, which would leave troops in or around Iraq to fight al-Qaida [translation: to fight Iraqi nationalists resisting a military dictatorship imposed on their country by George W. Bush and the rest of the scum in human form that keep voting him the money in DC to keep on butchering U.S. troops and Iraqis.]

While many soldiers who have served in Iraq support the war, Dougherty believes anti-war vets can make the best case for withdrawal.

And she disputes war supporters' contentions that criticizing the war undermines soldiers in Iraq.

"We know what it's like to lose our friends or to be injured ourselves or come home with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," Dougherty said.

"What undermines the troops the most is being lied to by their political leadership."



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

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

**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. Phone: 917.677.8057

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Ninevah; Two “Wounded”

July 31, 2008 MNF

BAGHDAD: The U.S. military says an American soldier has died in a non-combat incident in northern Iraq. The death pushes the U.S. monthly toll for July to at least 10.

The military says the soldier died and two others were wounded Thursday during operations in Ninevah province. American and Iraqi troops have been targeting insurgents in the provincial capital of Mosul and surrounding areas.

Drone Down At Ballad

August 1, 2008 The Associated Press

An unmanned U.S. aerial vehicle supporting military operations below went down east of Ballad, 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Baghdad, the military said, without elaborating.

U.S. Military Dictatorship In Baghdad Arrests Iraqi Employee Of U.S. News Service: Bush’s Little Weasels-In-Command Out Of Control, As Usual; [So Much For Every Last Shred Of That Silly, Stupid “Sovereign Iraq” Bullshit

July 31, 2008 Reuters & (AP)

Reuters urged the US military to immediately release an Iraqi cameraman working for the news organisation or to publicly produce evidence to justify his detention.

Ali al-Mashhadani, who also freelances for the British Broadcasting Corp. and National Public Radio in the United States, was picked up Saturday in the U.S.-controlled Green Zone where he had gone to apply for a U.S. military press card, Reuters said in a statement.

Al-Mashhadani is being held at the U.S. detention facility at Camp Cropper near Baghdad International Airport, the agency said.

Reuters Editor-in-Chief David Schlesinger called on the U.S. military to make public its accusations against the photographer so they can be "dealt with fairly and swiftly, with the journalist having the right to counsel and present a defense."

"Iraqi journalists like Mashhadani play a vital role in telling this story to the world," Schlesinger said in a statement Thursday.

The BBC said it was concerned about al-Mashhadani's detention and urged the American military to "disclose as a matter of urgency the grounds on which he is being held and what charges, if any, he faces."

Reuters said two Iraqi journalists who were in the military press office at the time said they saw American soldiers frisking al-Mashhadani and leading him away. The agency said two other witnesses said they saw U.S. soldiers escorting a handcuffed man with a hood over his head.

The U.S. military maintains that a U.N. mandate gives it the authority to detain indefinitely anyone believed to pose a security threat to U.S.-run coalition operations in Iraq.

Al-Mashhadani was detained in August 2005 after U.S. troops found photos of insurgent activity in his camera while searching his home in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province.

He was released without charge in January 2006 but was detained for two weeks a few months later. No charges were filed after the second detention.

U.S. forces have held [wrong: U.S. scum officers are responsible] other Iraqi journalists working for foreign news organizations for long periods without charging them.

In April, the U.S. military released Bilal Hussein, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer working for The Associated Press, after holding him for two years.

An Iraqi television camera operator working for the AP in Tikrit, Ahmed Nouri Raziak, was detained by U.S. forces in June. He was recently ordered held for at least six more months.

The U.S. military said [wrong: some lame officer doing press relations puked up the lies from all the shit he eats every day] Raziak is being detained because he has been assessed to be a threat to the security of Iraq and coalition forces," the spokesman said, declining to elaborate.

Reuters and international media rights groups have previously criticised the military's refusal to deal more quickly with suspicions apparently arising from reporters' legitimate journalistic activities covering violence.

The AP reported this month that an Iraqi cameraman working for AP television who was detained by US and Iraqi forces in June had been ordered held for at least six more months.

The US military said this was for "imperative reasons of security" and provided no details about any allegations against Ahmed Nouri Raziak, the agency has said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Blasts Kill 5 Foreign Occupation Soldiers In Afghanistan; Probably American

8.1.08 AP & BBC

KABUL, Afghanistan: Roadside bombs killed five NATO troops in eastern Afghanistan on Friday.

Four of the NATO soldiers and a civilian died in Kunar province Friday, the alliance said in a statement. It said the civilian casualty had been acting as an interpreter for Isaf in Kunar.

The fifth troop death was in Khost, another eastern province. The alliance did not release the nationalities of the soldiers.

However, most of the troops in those areas are American.

British Soldier Killed In Helmand

30 Jul 08 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier from 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, was killed in Helmand province yesterday, Tuesday 29 July 2008.

At 0600hrs local time, a routine patrol conducting reassurance and interdiction activities left Forward Operating Base (FOB) Gibraltar and at 0847hrs local time encountered enemy forces and engaged them.

A short while later the patrol reported one casualty from the engagement who was seriously wounded by a blast. The injured soldier was airlifted from the scene to the

Joint Force Medical Facility at Camp Bastion, but sadly, despite the efforts of the medical response team, he died of his injuries in flight.

Afghan Insurgent Attacks At Record High: 569 in June

August 01, 2008 AFP

INSURGENT attacks in Afghanistan have hit record highs this year. Unrest had spread to once stable areas

“So far this year the number of insurgent attacks, bombings and other violent incidents is up by approximately 50 per cent on the same period last year,” said ACBAR, a grouping of about 100 Afghan and international non-governmental organisations.

There were 463 insurgent attacks in May and 569 in June, it said in a statement, citing figures from a range of sources including the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office.

This was “greater than the number of such attacks in any other month since the end of major hostilities following the international intervention in 2001,” it said.

Resistance Action

July 31 (Xinhua) & Reuters

Taliban rebels fighting the Afghan government Wednesday night attacked several tribal elders' houses in the Arghandab district of southern Afghanistan's Kandahar province, an official said on Thursday.

Marai Khan, the district police chief told Xinhua that several groups of Taliban militants attacked the houses belonging to district tribal elders at the same time late Wednesday evening, killing elder Haji Bacha and two sons of his. "Seven more elders were captured by insurgents from their houses," he said, "operation has been started for searching and rescuing the hostages."

Taliban militants accused those tribal elders of having close relationships with the government.

Taliban insurgents killed three policemen and seized their vehicle in an ambush in Logar, south of Kabul, a provincial official said. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the incident.

Five police were killed and two others were wounded in southern Kandahar province's Panjwayi district when a roadside bomb ripped through their vehicle on Thursday, according to district police official Bismullah Khan.

A roadside bomb struck an Iraqi army patrol killing three soldiers and wounding another near Kirkuk, the Iraqi army said.

Two bombers detonated their explosive vests, wounding three Iraqi soldiers during a raid near Duluiyah, some 75 kilometers (45 miles) north of Baghdad, the Iraqi military said.

FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW!



A U.S. soldier in the village of Sanjaray, in Zhari district, west of Kandahar, May 2, 2008.
(Goran Tomasevic/Files/Reuters)

TROOP NEWS

Sgt. Reported Deadly Electrical Danger To Chain Of Command Before Soldier Electrocuted In Shower: Staff Sgt. Ryan Maseth Killed By Criminal Negligence; Nobody Held Responsible

[Serious payback is owed for this one. T]

July 30th, 2008 WASHINGTON (CNN)

An Army sergeant complained about faulty wiring in Iraq months before the fatal electrocution of another soldier in a shower in the same quarters, according to documents released Wednesday by a congressional committee.

Sgt. Justin Hummer filled out a work order in July 2007 that warned, “Pipes have voltage, get shocked in the shower.”

Hummer told investigators from the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee that at least once, he had to use a wooden stick to turn off the shower “because the electrical current was so strong.”

Army records show electricians from contractor Kellogg, Brown and Root found “several safety issues concerning the improper grounding of electrical devices” in February 2007.

In January 2008, Staff Sgt. Ryan Maseth was electrocuted in a shower in the same quarters Hummer occupied the previous summer — and a follow-up investigation “found nearly all of the same problems and deficiencies that had been reported one year previously,” a committee report states.

The Scum Of The Earth Busy Busy Busy: Recruiter Rat Filth Threatened Kids With Prison If They Didn't Join The Army

July 28, 2008 By MARK GREENBLATT, KHOU-TV [Excerpts]

HOUSTON – With a war in Iraq and fighting on the rise in Afghanistan, the struggle to bring in new U.S. Army recruits is heating up again.

And Irving Gonzales, 18, got caught up in it all.

As his family's oldest male, he feels he has to do whatever it takes to help out his single mom. For him, that means working long hours at his after-school job.

"My mom was left struggling. I would give her more than half my paycheck," Gonzales said.

That's why the Aldine High School senior started thinking about the Army – and the tens of thousands of dollars in bonuses that can come with enlistment.

"They were offering me school, they were offering me bonuses," he said.

So Gonzales signed up – but only to "pre-enlist" in the Delayed Entry Program. DEP allows kids to try out the military without a binding commitment.

But the 11 News Defenders have found there is a problem: Army recruiters aren't sticking to the program and are bullying and even lying to potential recruits and their families to keep them from dropping out.

After he had a change of heart, Gonzalez became one such victim.

"I'd rather just stay here, go to college," he said he told his recruiter.

The reaction: Gonzalez said a recruiter told him if he did drop out, they would send him to jail.

Scared, Gonzales called Sgt. Glenn Marquette, a supervisor at the Greenspoint Recruiting Station.

Marquette told Gonzales there was no way out.

"You signed a binding contract," he said.

But that wasn't true.

Army recruiting regulations say delayed entry members can leave any time.

They specifically mention "under no circumstances will any (recruiter) threaten, coerce, manipulate, or intimidate (future soldiers), nor may they obstruct separation requests."

Further, they state: "At no time will any (recruiter) tell a (Delayed Entry Program) member he or she must go in the Army or he or she will go to jail."

But when Gonzales asked Marquette what would happen if he just didn't show up for service, a phone recording captured this reply:

"Then guess what?" said Marquette.

"You're AWOL. Absent without leave. You want to go to school? You will not get no loans, because all college loans are federal and government loans. So you'll be black barred from that.

"As soon as you get pulled over for a speeding ticket, they're gonna see you're a deserter, they're going to apprehend you, take you to jail."

Marquette continued: "So guess what? All that lovey-dovey 'I wanna go to college' and all that? Guess what? You just threw it out the window, because you just screwed your life."

Eric Martinez, 17, is another young recruit who changed his mind.

"They make it seem there's no way out," his mother said.

Martinez said the nearby National Cemetery constantly reminds him – and his mother – of the risks and horrors of war.

"She tells me about the stories that happen in Iraq. Some people kill themselves or get shot," Martinez said.

But when Martinez told that to the recruiter the Army assigned to him, he said he too was threatened.

Then his mother decided to intervene. But when she spoke to the Greenspoint Recruiting Station, they told her, too, that Martinez would be AWOL and go to jail if he didn't show up for service.

This isn't the first time the 11 News Defenders have found these sorts of problems – and at the VERY SAME recruiting station location.

Three years ago in May of 2005, we found that another recruiter from that station, a Sgt. Thomas Kelt, had left this phone message to a high school student. This time the issue was simply keeping an appointment to talk:

"By federal law you got an appointment with me at two this afternoon at Greenspoint Mall," Kelt told him. "OK? You fail to appear and we'll have a warrant, OK? So give me a call back."

Our investigation into that call led to the Army announcing a national stand-down so all of its recruiters could re-examine their methods and regulations.

But just two months later, 11 News found that instead of punishing Sgt. Kelt, the Army had promoted him to the role of station commander at a neighboring recruiting station. That meant he would supervise and train other recruiters on how to do the job.

(And today? The Army confirms Sgt. Kelt still holds that supervisory position, but has since been transferred out of Texas.)

So we caught up with Sgt. Marquette to ask about these latest incidents.

11 News: "I just want to know why you're telling young recruits they'll go to jail if they want out of the Delayed Entry Program."

Marquette: "What are you talking about?"

11 News: "We'd just like to know why you're telling them that."

Marquette: "I'm on vacation right now. I really don't want to be bothered!"

Congressman Ted Poe believes there is an ongoing problem with recruiters.

We shared with him new figures 11 News obtained from the U.S. Army that track how recruiters have been doing since our story three years ago.

Turns out, instead of going down, allegations of wrongdoing are actually going up. In 2005, 836 complaints were filed against recruiters. That rose to 874 last year, and the Army is on pace to surpass that figure in 2008.

What's more? The number of Army recruiters given formal admonishments has nearly doubled since our first report, with 373 citations in 2005 growing to 635 in 2007.

One possible reason for this trend?

The U.S. Government Accountability Office found the Army gives bonuses and other performance incentives to its recruiters based primarily on how many recruits they send to basic training.

But the Marine Corps focuses on how many recruits actually finish basic training.

A 2006 GAO report on military recruiting concludes, "This criterion may deter Marine Corps recruiters from committing recruiter violations."

It is the same point the GAO made in similar reports in 1997 and 1998.

But despite years of recommendations from the GAO, the Army has not changed its ways.

And why would this matter?

Take a look at another part of what Sgt. Marquette advised potential recruit Irving Gonzales on what to do if he didn't want to join the Army anymore:

Marquette (phone recording): "You get into basic training, and you don't like it? Tell the chaplain you don't like it. That's the right way to get out of the Army. Then they'll process you out of the army... and it's nothing against your record."

Gonzales: "That would be the right way to do it?"

Marquette: "Yeah and guess what? If you do it that way? Maybe in the future you may say well (darn), I'm coming to join the Army. Then guess what? You can. You can join the Army. Cuz you got out of the Army the right way. You at least got to go to basic training and try it."

Gonzales: "I mean that's the only way? I can't do it right here?"

Marquette: "No, you cant, no!"

The problem?

U.S. Army spokesman Douglas Smith says once you report to basic training, you are a full-fledged soldier. While Smith made clear he can't comment on Marquette's specific situation due to an ongoing investigation of the matter, he said in general, "Once you report to basic training it is harder to get out of the Army than if you ask for separation before enlisting."

And the Army confirms in a written statement that its recruiters still "lose points for those recruits that do not ship to (basic training)... Recruiting personnel are also penalized under the Recruiter Incentive Pay. Recruiting personnel must not exceed the command's loss rate in order to maintain their monetary incentive."

In the meantime, the U.S. Army says it has launched an investigation into the allegations against Sgt. Glenn Marquette:

"The recruiter against whom the allegations were made has been taken off recruiting duty pending the outcome of the investigation," the Army said.

And one final fact: The Army confirms they are also at historic lows in the Delayed Entry Program, but deny that that has had any effect on any alleged recruiter behavior.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Sadr Plays A Card

July 30, 2008 By Nicholas Spangler and Mohammed Al Dulaimy, McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — Radical Shiite cleric [translation: nationalist anti-occupation politician] Muqtada al Sadr on Wednesday offered full support for Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki's government if it refuses to sign an agreement President Bush has sought to allow semi-permanent stationing of U.S. troops in Iraq.

Sadr warned at the same time that he would oppose any agreement between Iraq and the United States.

Declaring that resistance to an occupier "is a legitimate right by human reason and in Islamic and human law," he called on Shiite clerics to "issue their fatwas against signing any agreement between the government and the occupier, even if it is for friendship or any other purpose."

But on the issue of the status of forces agreement, he offered Maliki a deal: "I call upon the Iraqi government again not to sign this agreement and I inform them I am ready to support it popularly and politically if they do not sign it," he said.

The statement sets careful limits to resistance, condemning any freelance guerilla action. It also prohibits his followers from targeting civilians and government services, and bars any resistance actions in cities.

"(The statement) isn't inflammatory. If anything, it's carefully calibrated to send a message to his followers, as well as all Iraqis, that politically he's ready for elections if they occur, and that he's reorganizing and strengthening his militia for what could be either a political or less pleasant struggle among the Shiia factions."

The statement seemed designed to push Maliki's government into a politically awkward position, Cordesman added.

Public sentiment is strongly against any status of forces agreement that would permit U.S. troops to remain on Iraqi soil, but it seems likely the Iraqi military will have to rely on U.S. airpower and military advisers for years to come. is

And as long as the occupation continues, Sadr implied, he opposes not just a security pact but the trade and diplomatic ties that would come with it.

Resistance Action

July 30, 2008 By Mohammed Al Dulaimy, McClatchy Newspapers & 7.31 (AP) & (Reuters) & Aug 1 (Reuters)

Iraqi police say a car bomb attack has killed three policemen and wounded four others near the northern city of Mosul. A police officer says the driver rammed the explosives-laden vehicle into the wall of a police station in al-Qayara area south of Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad.

Around 8:20 a.m. a roadside bomb targeted an Iraqi army convoy in the Zayuna neighborhood, killing one soldier and injuring three soldiers, 3 policemen and 4 civilians.

Insurgents using machine guns attacked a judge as he was leaving his home in Al Sideeq neighborhood in north Mosul, injuring the judge and one bodyguard and killed one policeman in Al Shifa neighborhood in north Mosul.

Three U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol guards were killed and two were wounded on Wednesday when a roadside bomb exploded near their checkpoint in the city of Samarra, 100 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed a policeman on Wednesday in the town of Tal Afar, 420 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed an off-duty soldier on Wednesday in Mosul, police said.

Insurgents shot and killed an off-duty policeman on Thursday in central Mosul, police said.

A roadside bomb killed at least three Iraqi soldiers and wounded at least one other in Rashad, southwest of Kirkuk city, police said. Kirkuk is 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad.

Three Iraqi soldiers, were wounded by a series of car bombs on Thursday in eastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Two bombers detonated their explosive vests Friday wounding three Iraqi soldiers in the village of Umm Tabija near Duluiyah, some 45 miles north of Baghdad, the Iraqi military said.

GET THE MESSAGE?



Iraqi citizens burn a symbolic U.S. flag in Baghdad's Sadr City, Iraq, Aug. 1, 2008 demonstrating against the U.S. occupation of Iraq. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Obama Will Be The Next Chief Executive Of The American State - A State By, For, And Of The Business Class”

“He Will Bend The Military To The Emergencies Of Empire” “He Talks The Al-Qaeda-Babble Just As Enthusiastically As Dick Cheney, In Fact, And Has Called For A Permanent US Occupation Of Iraq”

“After He Wins The Presidency, Barack Obama - Our New Commander-In-Chief - Will Find Himself Becoming The Lyndon Johnson Of Afghanistan”

“Here Is Something That Is True About Afghanistan Though. Guerrilla War Against Outsiders Has Always Succeeded There. And It Is Succeeding Now Against The US And NATO”

Catastrophe: n.

1. A great, often sudden calamity.
2. A complete failure; a fiasco: The food was cold, the guests quarreled—the whole dinner was a catastrophe.
3. The concluding action of a drama, especially a classical tragedy, following the climax and containing a resolution of the plot.
4. A sudden violent change in the earth's surface; a cataclysm.

[Greek *katastroph*, an overturning, ruin, conclusion, from *katastrephein*, to ruin, undo : *kata-*, *cata-* + *strephein*, to turn.]

For years now, I have been accused by sisters and brothers from right to left of being “catastrophist.”

There is an energy crisis coming.

“Catastrophist.”

The housing bubble will devastate the economy.

“What housing bubble, catastrophist?”

The war in Southwest Asia constitutes a strategic defeat of the United States government, now tied down in a two-front war.

On the first two, I can pretty much rest my case.

As to closing the case on that last assertion about the war, the main obstacle is a Chinese Wall of twittering ignorance that defines American culture. American culture is trained by media monopolies; and for them, the war is an entertainment commodity.

For the time being, the war-commodity serves best as background for that quadrennial personality contest that we call the general election.

That's how this “commander-in-chief” issue is being used to bewilder the public about the war itself.

In the seemingly endless horse-race analysis of the upcoming elections, we can't escape the ersatz erudition of public opinion-makers on the subject of whether John McCain or Barack Obama will make a more suitable Commander-in-Chief.

Every echo-chamber is attuned. The blogosphere is abuzz.

The blanket has been thrown over the war, but this commander-in-chief thing has become the media Big Ten top-model competition of public affairs.

What we generally hear from the chattering classes on this topic seems to be intentionally clueless, so I feel impelled to do some of my own chattering. I should warn you that my chatter on this matter is... well, catastrophist.

Before laying out the argument, there are some assumptions smuggled into the info-media drivel that need correcting.

First assumption: Military service makes one more suitable for the position of commander-in-chief.

This one is universally attractive not simply on account of the American idealization of all things military, but because so many liberals latched onto the highly-gendered and ultimately irrelevant “chickenhawk” criticism of George W. Bush.

This critique of Bush, even coming from the left that should have known better, implicitly accepts the assumption that military service translates into suitability to be a President... since Congress long ago ceded its war-making prerogative to the executive branch, making every US president now a de facto independent warlord.

There is the de jure command given in the Constitution; but then there is the reality that Congress has not only ceded the authority, they won't even cut the purse strings to an unpopular war like Iraq.

So the position of commander-in-chief is not only real and powerful, it concentrates the consequential impact of military adventures on that one person.

Having military experience might afford that person some potential insight into the military; and having been involved in a war does provide the opportunity to learn something about war. I emphasize “potential,” because it is not frequently actualized.

Plenty of people can serve in the military, and even participate in one capacity or another in war, and still not have enough sense to pound sand.

Conversely, plenty of people who have no military experience can attend to the strategic (read: politico-economic) goals of conflict, and delegate the tactical details to the lumpen-intelligentsia of the armed forces officer corps.

John McCain flew airplanes and dropped bombs. The only thing he commanded was an instrument panel.

He did that 23 times in combat, before he was shot down and captured by the same Vietnamese he had been bombing.

Before that, he was injured in a ship fire aboard the USS Forrestal. He had some harrowing (not synonymous with heroic) experiences, but there is no historical evidence that suffering automatically leads to increased intelligence or even empathy for others who suffer.

Ulysses Grant was a real commander of armed forces and a mediocre commander-in-chief who followed closely on the heels of Abraham Lincoln - a lawyer and career politician who had zero direct military experience... but who did win the bloodiest war in history at that time by directing Grant and others.

Franklin Roosevelt steered the US through the greatest military conflagration in history - with no military experience of his own - bobbing and weaving to let other nations take the brunt of the war, and positioning the US to climb onto the heap of 48 million bodies as the globe's newly predominant nation... a position the US has held to this day.

Not making any moral points here. Lincoln and Roosevelt were as ruthless and cynical as any chief executive. They succeeded, is all I'm saying, as commanders-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces.

The hoopla about McCain's suitability as commander-in-chief might make a bit more sense if he had spent a real career in the military and become a flag officer, I suppose. But Wesley Clark - a sycophant who rose through the ranks, like Colin Powell, as a successful bureaucrat - makes me hesitate to say even that.

The point is, the military is one arm of the state; and before a former military person can employ the military intelligently, he (they are all he's so far) has to get hold of the fact that military outcomes are determined not in the local, tactical context, but by strategic-political factors.

This is why the general analysis of the tactical trends and dispositions in Iraq right now are both deceptive and self-deceptive.

Commentators are either not at liberty to or capable of explaining the macrotrends that define the boundaries of political (and therefore military) action in Southwest Asia... and the world.

One of the better ideas embodied in the Constitution of the United States is the idea that civilian authority should be in firm control of the military.

("Civilian" is also supposed to imply a sovereign people, and in money-run elections reported by ruling class media, there is no sovereign people.)

The reason for that rule is that history taught past generations that military leaders who are successful in war are often brutal as well as stupid - a winning combination when the goal is simply to tear things up using a vast technological advantage.

It's the machismo... a synonym for brutal stupidity.

Military stewardship of nations has a disastrous historical record; which is why the media's focus on this aspect of the presidency is not only off the mark with regard to John McCain. His own "service" - the real or the idealized - is largely irrelevant. **The media focus also cops to the most dangerous accomplishment of the Bush administration: the publicly-accepted idea of a "global war on terror."**

Smuggled assumption Two.

There is no such thing, of course.

There is a war to control Southwest Asia and its strategic resources. The “global war on terror” (GWOT) is a legal pretext that apparently slipped right past all those fine lawyers in Congress.

What GWOT does is consolidate US executive control over both domestic and foreign policy, by redefining the entire planet as a battlefield. This “global battlespace” justifies actions that are only sanctioned by international law on the battlefield.

“The whole world” cannot be shoehorned into any definition of a “battlefield” embodied in international law on the issue of war. That’s one of several reasons the US won’t sign onto the International Criminal Court.

The GWOT is simply rhetorical cover for a naked political power-grab.

And this suits a Democratic executive just as nicely as it does a Republican one... as Congress has demonstrated in its perpetuation by word and deed of the GWOT myth.

That is why - even though its not a sexy issue - debunking the GWOT assumption of a “global battlespace” is one of the most crucial debates we can have about the war... it goes way beyond just Iraq, and set the stage for Guantanamo, rendition, et al.

The lawyer running against McCain is play-acting at having missed this pretextual fiction, too; because he talks about winning this GWOT himself. That commits him whether he likes it or not.

That is why after he wins the Presidency, Barack Obama - our new commander-in-chief - will find himself becoming the Lyndon Johnson of Afghanistan... and the US will continue sending troops to die for control of strategic resources through his entire term.

Meanwhile, the world and the nation will grow poorer and meaner.

It may even be during Obama’s first term that the debt ledge, public and private, snaps off (catastrophically).

As the ledge plummets into the abyss with all of us tumbling behind, so his popularity will plunge down with us as inexorably as Bush’s has. The war didn’t destroy Bush’s ratings; losing it did.

Obama will not only be caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of Wall Street and a pissed-off public; he will be trying to win an unwinnable war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

All he will do is shift the center of gravity from Iraq to Afghanistan, which is already shifting as the Taliban expands its power into the interstices of the current NATO occupation.

I know, I know.

You've heard the media say Obama wants to leave Iraq. That's because they don't listen and don't want you to.

Obama has never called for a withdrawal from Iraq.

He talks the al-Qaeda-babble just as enthusiastically as Dick Cheney, in fact, and has called for a permanent US occupation of Iraq, linguistically disguised as "overwatch" with Special Operations on call.

Any withdrawals (that is, troop draw-downs) remains contingent on "the Iraqis." This means the squabbling cliques inside the Green Zone, not most Iraqis.

The trigger for discontinuing the occupation, then, is the "government of Iraq" taking measures that they are unlikely to take, and over which the US has nearly no control... meaning these redeployment triggers will never be pulled.

This bait-and-switch worked for Bush, and it will work for Obama until our sheer exhaustion with the war and the domestic economic crisis force a change on the Obama administration.

Obama started his campaign for commander-in-chief with the easy - and false - critique that the Bush administration was killing the wrong people.

It's not Iraqis we need to kill, but Afghans.

His popular deception is not that Iraq is responsible for 9-11.

His implication is that Afghanistan did 9-11 because bin Laden was there.

Again, not true, but why let that hold you back.

The Taliban government of Afghanistan tried to give the US Osama bin Laden before 9-11. Since the US had invasion plans on the table, they didn't want to lose the bin Laden pretext, and they refused.

The attacks of 9-11-01 were conducted by 15 Saudis, one Egyptian, one Lebanese, and two citizens of the United Arab Emirates. No Afghans. No Iraqis.

Here is something that is true about Afghanistan though.

Guerrilla war against outsiders has always succeeded there.

And it is succeeding now against the US and NATO.

The loss of a US perimeter base near the Pakistani border last week is just a foreshadowing of where the war there is headed.

This is the war that Obama wants to fight?

Yet he seems to have trapped himself in it already. He says that Afghanistan is being lost because there are too many US troops tied down in Iraq.

Does he propose then that the current institutional trend lines in the military be maintained? More expensive recruitment and lower recruitment standards, falling morale, an unsustainable operations tempo, the reward of criminality and incompetence in the leadership, and reliance on \$180,000-a-year mercenaries to take up the slack?

Obama claims that he is going to fight terrorism by attacking Afghans instead of Iraqis, as well as maintain an “overwatch” presence of tens of thousands of troops in Iraq.

Where will the troops come from?

Well, he has stated that he wants to expand the ground forces by 93,000 (both Army and Marines). Lyndon Johnson started out like this, nickel-diming, and eventually found himself with 500,000 American troops occupying Vietnam. Several years later, the last US troops were literally driven out of Vietnam at gunpoint. Johnson didn't run that war; the war ran him.

That's where Obama is headed right now; and for the record, that does not mean there is no difference between him and McCain, or that I am encouraging electoral abstinence. Those are red herrings.

It means the war has in many respects escaped the calculable control of the American state no matter who the President is.

Obama will be the next chief executive of the American state - a state by, for, and of the business class. That's the job description.

That business class depends on the larger economy which is materially dependent on massive and unceasing throughputs of fossil hydrocarbons. That same economy has been overrun by rentier capitalists who have driven the global economy over a cliff.

Competitors are on the horizon, China, Russia, India, Brazil... but mostly Western Europe. The war is one central drama in a multiply-determined crisis that also includes immanent food shortages, water famines, radical climate shifts, and the general decay of inter-class stability.

Obama did not inherit Bush's war, except in the details.

He inherited a business class's war that was inevitable (though not in its present form).

The United States was going to reposition its international military after the Cold War in any case; the old disposition for “containing” the Soviet Union was obsolete after all.

And given the most obvious of considerations, the place to seek permanent and fully operational military bases abroad was in Southwest Asia. That's where the hydrocarbons are; and when you have the hydrocarbons, you have the competition on a nose ring.

Following through with this is Obama's job after the election. (We get to participate in the elections for which wealth-selected candidate will be the CEO; but we are not, alas, on the board of directors.)

Obama is a very smart guy - a genuine intellectual - who has jumped through a rare political window of opportunity, but there's a punji-pit on the other side.

Bush's approval numbers are abysmal in the face of a four-sided crisis: a bursting bubble of fictional value, skyrocketing fuel prices, an interminable unpopular war, and the collapse of ecosystems. Bush (ahistorically) gets all the blame. That's the window of opportunity.

Obama has also run a brilliant and even technically audacious campaign (his policy pronouncements are anything but audacious).

I suspect he is going to win, and win big.

In other circumstances, he might win to become a brilliant CEO for the business class, and even make enough of the rest of us comfortable enough to remain complacent.

But he is inheriting problems that are already - as they have been for the Bush administration - supra-political, impermeable to intervention by the actually-existing political system in which we live.

He is inheriting a complex and world-historic impasse for the world and the US state.

And he will be the commander-in-chief for the United States Armed Forces.

He has already committed himself to the emergent consensus of that system.

Southwest Asia will be secured for the US, by military force if necessary; or there will be a phase shift in American economics and politics that will sideline the entire system (and consensus).

There is not a shred of evidence (except in the public's ever-hopeful imagination) that he intends to be anything more or less than other commanders-in-chief.

Like the others, he will bend the military to the emergencies of empire - that is, secure the continuity of the existing system.

Maybe McCain will win, and none of this will matter to Obama. It will go the same way for McCain, and worse still if he elects to vicariously relive the pre-capture glory days by ordering bombing runs over Qom. He'd be the commander-in-chief. He can do that as commander-in-chief. And Congress will not stop him. Neither will we.

The “antiwar movement” has always been more an anti-Bush movement and an anti-defeat movement (nudged along by competing leftist cadres without their own popular bases); and it has shown no ability to employ anything except 60s-70s tactics and techniques, even though the ruling class has long ago adapted to them.

Neither Congress nor the people-at-large will stop McCain or Obama from war-mongering.

That’s one reason there has been so much emotional investment in Obama’s change rhetoric. A general election (a new king) is the current limit of our cultural imagination and the limit of our collective political will.

This in no way means the system will continue along. It simply means that these creatures of the system will not be the agents of its undoing. The weeds have been in the wheat for quite some time now, but pulling the weeds will kill the wheat. The harvest has to come before we can winnow and start fresh.

Making McCain out a devil does not make Obama a rescuing angel.

Obamas’s mature, articulate confidence is certainly reassuring after eight years of a Yale frat-rat smirking in the foreground of serial disasters; but there is such a thing as misplaced confidence... even feigned confidence.

Obama’s foreign policy is likely to be warmed-over Brzezinski-ism; and it was Brzezinski who was the architect of the conditions that put the Taliban in power in Afghanistan in the first place.

Brzezinski, paradoxically, is warning Obama of exactly what’s been said here, citing the Soviet experience in Afghanistan.

“We have to be careful...” Brzezinski warns Obama,

“...not to overestimate the appeal of the democratic Afghan elite, because we run the risk that our military presence will gradually turn the Afghan population entirely against us.

“I realize that in an electoral campaign you don’t want to antagonize large groups which are highly motivated. This is a very dangerous period of time with very unpredictable consequences. You have three countries (Iran, Israel and the U.S.) doing a kind of death dance on the basis of confusion, division and fear.

“If we end up with war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, (and) Iran at the same time, can anyone see a more damaging prospect for America’s world role than that? That’s the fundamental foreign policy dilemma at the back of this election. A four-front war would get us involved for years . . . It would be the end of American predominance.”

In fact, a two-front war is already contributing to the same thing.

What’s a commander-in-chief to do?

Welcome to GWOT world. Want that catastrophe with one lump or two?

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. Phone: 917.677.8057

August 1, 1944: Dishonorable Anniversary; Stalin Betrays The Polish Resistance Movement And Helps Hitler Destroy It

Carl Bunin Peace History July 30-Aug 5

The Polish Underground Army began its battle to liberate Warsaw, the first European city to have fallen to the Germans in World War II.

BBC.co.uk/onthisday:

The battle for control of Warsaw lasted 63 days and ended with surrender by the Poles on 3 October 1944.

A German counter-offensive began on 5 August 1944. Orders were given to round up civilians and shoot them. Women were used as human shields for the German tanks.

During the uprising, the civilian population of Warsaw was kept in touch with newspapers published mostly by the Home Army and a local radio station.

General Bor had planned for the liberation of Warsaw to take about a week. But he received no help from the Soviets, who ceased their offensive towards the capital.

They also refused to allow the Allies to use Soviet bases to take-off and land. So the pilots were forced, instead, to fly up from Italy.

Without fighter escorts many were lost and many of their supplies ended up in the wrong hands.

Final casualties were over 15,000 dead or missing, 5,000 wounded, and 200,000 Polish civilians dead. On the German side there were an estimated 16,000 dead and 9,000 wounded.

[Although close enough to come to the aid of the Polish Resistance, Stalin ordered the Russian Army to do nothing for weeks so the Nazis could wipe out the Polish resistance.

[The last things Russian imperialists wanted was a fighting force in Poland able to stand up to the occupation of Poland by Stalin's Russian empire. T]

[From the BBC, 1944:]

"To the north of the city, Soviet troops are advancing north-westward to Warsaw, with the River Vistula on their left flank.

"Soviet troops are now said to be fighting within 10-12 miles of Praga, the suburb on Warsaw's right bank."

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR;

RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



An Iraqi housewife watches as a foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. throws her belongings on the floor during an armed home invasion in Baghdad's Sadr City early July 11, 2008. REUTERS/Damir Sagolj

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

One of the squadron's great successes over the past year, says Lt. Col. Kolenda, has been weaning less-committed local boys away from the hard-liners through jobs, schooling and support for the elders.

He says the young men of Mirdish village, for instance, joined the insurgency because a couple of years ago American troops kicked down some doors and searched some homes.

-- Michael M. Phillips, Wall St. Journal, 7.18.08

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's

raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

CLASS WAR REPORTS

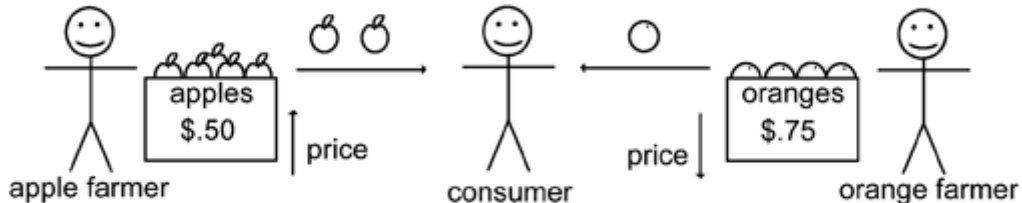
TOM *the*
DANCING
BUG

by
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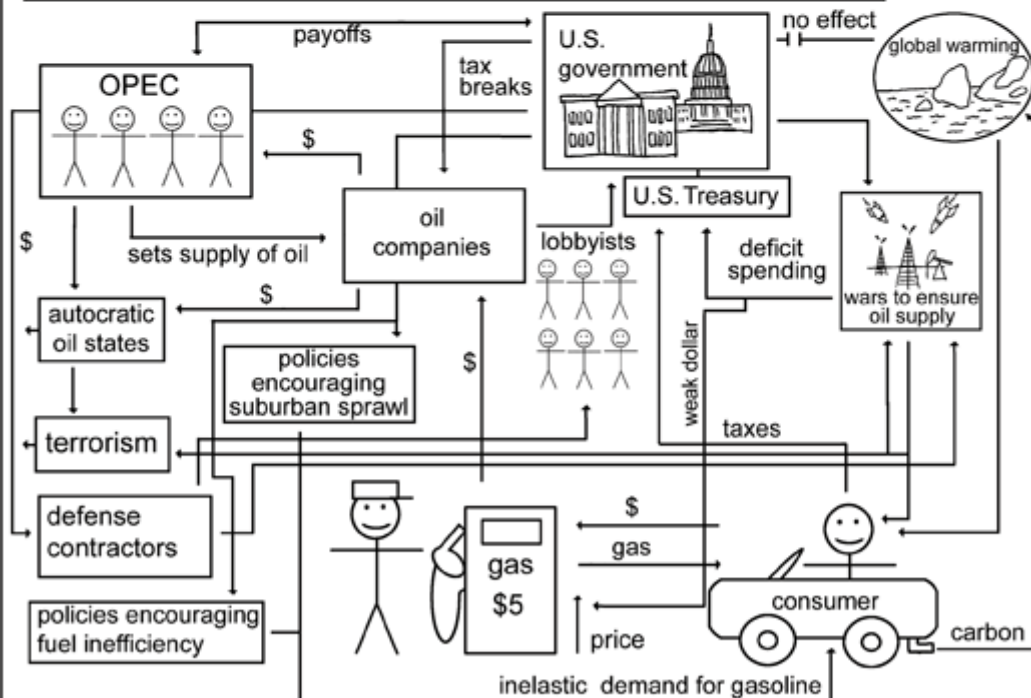


"It's interesting what the price of gasoline has done, it has caused people to drive less.
The marketplace works."
- President Bush, 7/15/08

See, the free market sets the supply, demand and price of goods.



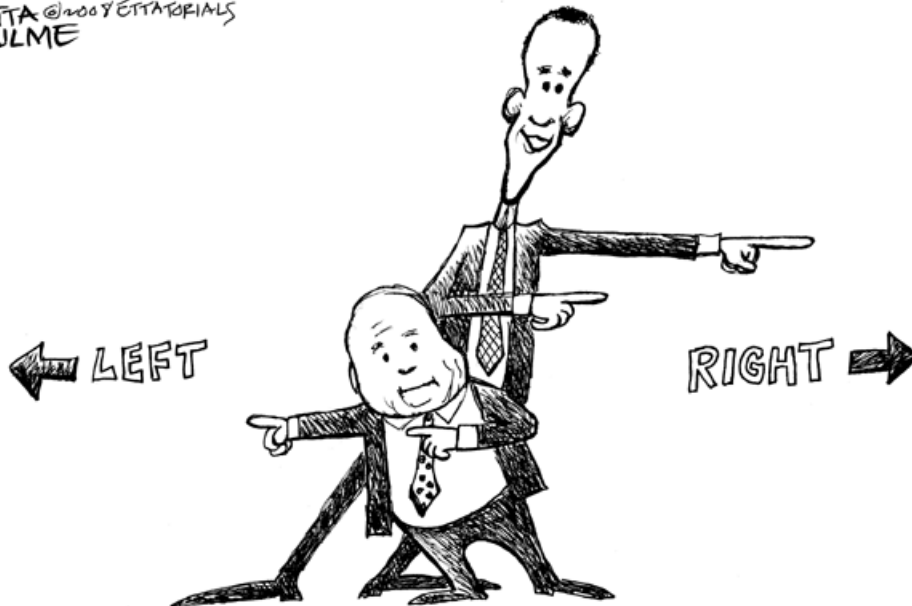
And it's just that simple with gasoline (with just a few extra arrows).



Next week: The elegant simplicity of the free market in the banking industry (with just a few more arrows)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

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OBAMA AND MCCAIN REFINE POSITIONS

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BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

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