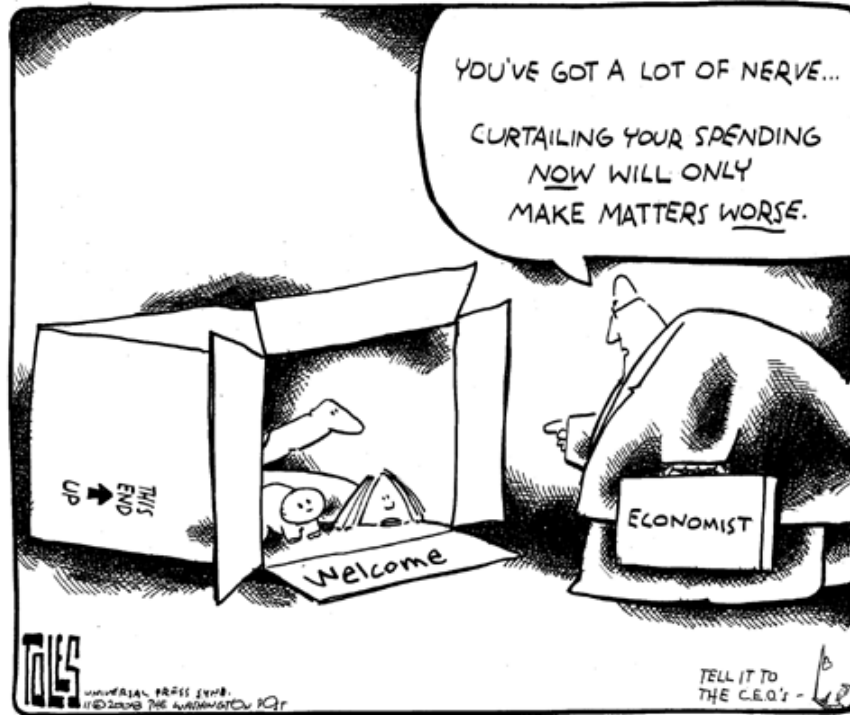


GI SPECIAL 6L2:



66,000 U.S. Troops May Be Eligible For Asylum In Germany:

“German Federal Administrative
Court Ruled In 2005 That The Iraq
War Violated International Law
And Labeled The Invasion An Act
Of Aggression”

“The Country Must Grant Asylum To Deserters If The Conflicts They Are Fleeing From Are Being Conducted In An Unlawful Manner”

[Spc. Andre Shepherd Is The Tip Of The Spear]



[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace]

“Asylum can be granted if the applicant has to take part in a conflict and commit a crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity,” Marx said.

December 1 2008 By Bertrand Benoit in Berlin, The Financial Times & By Andreas Buerger, (Reuters) [Excerpts]

An expected thaw in relations between the US and Germany following the election of Barack Obama faces an unexpected obstacle after an Iraq war deserter asked for asylum in Germany.

Andre Shepherd, 31, who served in Iraq between September 2004 and February 2005 as an Apache helicopter mechanic in the 412th Aviation Support Battalion, has been living in Germany since deserting last year.

“When I read and heard about people being ripped to shreds from machine guns or being blown to bits by the Hellfire missiles I began to feel ashamed about what I was doing,” Shepherd told a Frankfurt news conference Thursday.

“I could not in good conscience continue to serve.”

Shepherd, a US Army specialist who had been living underground in southern Germany since going absent without leave 1½ years ago, filed his application last week, he told the Financial Times in a telephone interview from an undisclosed location.

"I've done enough research to come to the conclusion that what is happening in Iraq is not the equivalent of World War II but outright massacre," Mr Shepherd said. "We are not the freedom fighters we think we are."

His application was the first such move by an Iraq war deserter in Europe.

Under a 2004 European directive, now part of German law, the country must grant asylum to deserters if the conflicts they are fleeing from are being conducted in an unlawful manner.

Mr Shepherd, 31 has been staying with German friends, often changing locations and working illegally on construction sites. He said he was reconciled to the idea that a successful asylum application would make it impossible for him ever to return to the US. "I miss my family a lot, but Germany has also become a second home" he said.

Mr Shepherd's lawyer, Reinhard Marx, said: "Legally, his prospects are looking very good."

The German Federal Administrative Court ruled in 2005 that the Iraq War violated international law and labeled the invasion an act of aggression.

But Mr Marx added: "Politically, things do not look so good. You can have doubts as to whether the government would grant asylum to a US deserter ."

"Asylum can be granted if the applicant has to take part in a conflict and commit a "crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity," Marx said.

If successful, Mr Shepherd's application could create a problematic precedent for the US military in Germany, home to 66,000 active-duty personnel, the largest US military overseas presence outside Iraq.

Mr Shepherd's application makes him a deserter under the US military justice code.

Yet as an asylum seeker, he now enjoys the protection of the German federal government.

"If the Americans grab him, there will be very little we can do but I assume they will respect German law," Mr Marx said.

Mr Shepherd, from Cleveland, Ohio, joined the army after college in 2004 and served on a forward operating base near Tikrit in Iraq from September 2004 to February 2005, servicing Apache helicopters, before being transferred to Germany.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Bel Air Teen Killed After Year In Iraq



Charles Yi Barnett

November 23, 2008 By Julie Scharper, The Baltimore Sun

Soon after he turned 18, Charles Yi Barnett told his mother he wanted to join the Army.

“I said ‘No, you’re not going anywhere,’” said his mother, Ipun “Yvonne” Dashiell. She forced one military recruiter to leave her home, but the teenager was determined to enlist. He left for basic training almost exactly a year ago, and in May he was sent to Iraq.

Late Thursday, military officials went to his mother and stepfather’s Bel Air home with grim news: The 19-year-old had died that day of injuries he received in Tallil in a noncombat incident.

"I knew Jesus was holding his hand," his mother said. "I knew he would be OK. I prayed for him. I never, ever thought two soldiers would be knocking on my door in the middle of the night."

Barnett was the youngest of three sons born to his Korean-born mother and American father. His parents divorced when the boys were young, and the three boys grew up very close in their mother's Sykesville home, said his eldest brother, Jason Barnett, 22, of Cheyenne, Wyo.

As a boy, Barnett loved drawing complicated scenes of fantasy characters and comic book heroes. He was an excellent student and often helped his older brothers with their homework, his mother recalled.

"He was such a sweet boy. He was always a mama's boy," his mother said, adding that he often crawled in bed with her when he was scared as a child.

He attended Liberty High School in Sykesville and, after his mother remarried, Bel Air High School, before obtaining a GED. He wanted to serve in the Army for a few years and then attend college, his stepfather, Walter "Mike" Dashiell, said.

"He was really trying to better himself," his brother said.

Just before he was sent to Iraq, Barnett visited his family around Mother's Day. He had filled out and developed muscles in the Army, his mother recalled, and his voice had deepened.

The Department of Defense has not released specific information about the circumstances of Barnett's death. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, according to the Department of Defense.

His body arrived back in the country yesterday, his stepfather said.

His mother said that it was hard to accept her youngest son had died. "I'll have to see him, and then I'll believe it," she said.

"He's too young to die."

In addition to his mother, stepfather and brother, Barnett is survived by his father, Kenneth Barnett of New Jersey, another brother, Jonathan Barnett of Bel Air, a stepsister, Lauren Dashiell of Bel Air, and a stepbrother, Walter Michael Dashiell Jr. of Bel Air. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Four U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Mosul Car Bomb Attack On Convoy

Dec. 1, 2008 (CBS/AP) & December 2, 2008 By Tina Susman, LOS ANGELES TIMES

In Mosul, a car bomber detonated his explosives as a joint U.S.-Iraqi convoy drove by in a crowded commercial area, a police officer said.

At least 15 people were killed and 30 wounded in that attack, the officer said.

Four U.S. troops and two Iraqi national police officers were wounded, according to a military statement.

“The Americans Did Not Give Us Security Or Services, So Why Are They Still Here?”

“They Will Leave Their Small Base In His Area By The End Of June 2009”

“Mr. Naji Says That Isn’t Soon Enough”

“It’s Time For Them To Go Home”

NOVEMBER 26, 2008 By GINA CHON, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

[T]he first days of the U.S.-led invasion were exciting times for Mr. Naji, 30 years old. With his broken English, he had short talks with soldiers.

When he saw troops in his northwestern Baghdad neighborhood of Hurriyah, where he lived with his family, he would ask shyly their names and where they were from, he recalls.

But after a few months, Mr. Naji started worrying about all the things the Americans weren’t fixing.

He didn’t see any improvement in basic services, such as electricity and sewage.

Mr. Naji went back to work at the ministry in the spring of 2004. He also got married that year.

His resentment grew when American soldiers searched his brother’s home for weapons. No one was home, and Mr. Naji tried to explain to the soldiers that his brother was at work, but that didn’t stop them.

“I told them I didn’t have a key and to please come back later,” he says, “but they didn’t listen.”

The soldiers broke down the door.

“It made me wish more that they would leave” the country, he says.

A year later, as part of the surge strategy, American soldiers set up a small base in his neighborhood. That only increased violence: Daily mortar attacks took aim at the U.S. troops there.

In his neighborhood, too, Americans erected tall, concrete walls around the area.

American troops still patrol his neighborhood, but he said they aren’t needed. As part of the security pact, they will leave their small base in his area by the end of June 2009.

Mr. Najj says that isn’t soon enough.

“The Americans did not give us security or services, so why are they still here?” Mr. Najj asks.

“It’s time for them to go home.”

**BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:
ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. soldier searches the compound of a house in a village near Baquba in Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad October 23, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Soldier With Dayton Ties Is Killed In Afghanistan

November 17, 2008 Staff Writer, Dayton Daily News

Spc. Jon Stiles, a no-nonsense outdoors enthusiast with Miami Valley ties who refused medical leave after suffering injuries from a bombing attack in October, was killed Thursday, Nov. 13, in another bombing in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, the Defense Department said.

Lynn Stiles, Stiles' father who lives in Butler Twp., said his son lived in the Miami Valley from 2004-06 after he was discharged from the Marines and the Army.

He moved to his childhood home Colorado to join the National Guard. Jon Stiles, a Highlands Ranch, Colo., resident, was 38.

"He had a great, great sense of honor," Lynn Stiles said Monday, Nov. 17.

Jon Stiles was awarded the Bronze Star for an October incident that left him with vocal chord and lung damage. In that incident, a transport vehicle traveling in front of Stiles' vehicle was bombed. Stiles crawled under the vehicle to free two trapped soldiers under heavy fire, Lynn Stiles said.

On Nov. 13, an "improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle" and caused the injuries that led to his death, according to the Defense Department.

After growing up in Colorado, Stiles enlisted in and spent nearly 13 years in the Marines after high school. He then spent more than two years in the Army before moving to the Miami Valley to help with his father's printing equipment business, Miyakoshi America.

"On the day he left (the Army), he said, 'I should have stayed,'" Lynn Stiles said.

After researching, Jon Stiles joined a National Guard unit in Colorado slated for deployment to Iraq. When those plans were postponed, Stiles moved to a unit in Louisiana scheduled for deployment to Afghanistan.

Stiles was assigned to the 927th Engineer Company (Sapper), 769th Engineer Battalion, Louisiana Army National Guard in Baton Rouge, La.

His specialty, Lynn Stiles said, was "hitting very small targets from very far away." He also worked in disarming explosives.

Stiles' interests slanted heavily toward outdoors activities. One famous family photo shows Stiles fishing in 20 degree below zero temperatures.

"He would go fishing in a blizzard," Lynn Stiles said.

Stiles, who was deployed in March, was to return home in February 2009, Lynn Stiles said.

Tuesday, Nov. 18, would have been his eighth wedding anniversary, his father said.

Militants Attack Supplies For Afghan Occupation; 22 Trucks, Two Humvees, Two Cranes Burned



Afghan Occupation supply trucks hit by rocket-propelled grenades fired by militants, on the outskirts of Peshawar December 1, 2008. REUTERS/Ali Imam

December 02, 2008 By Ali Hazrat Bacha, The DAWN Media Group

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, Dec 1: Militants torched 22 vehicles, including two Humvee armoured personnel carriers, and killed two drivers after they stormed early on Monday morning a terminal on the Ring Road where trucks taking NATO supplies to Afghanistan were parked.

Witnesses said dozens of people armed with rocket-launchers and Klashnikovs broke into the Al Faisal terminal at about 1am, started indiscriminate firing, poured kerosene over 18 trucks, two cranes and two Humvee APCs and torched them.

They killed two drivers who were asleep in a truck and injured two other men.

A Peshtakhara police official said the militants had also detonated three time bombs near a terminal of Port Wart Logistics on the Ring Road on Nov 27. Also on Monday, a rocket hit Al Madina auto workshop on the PAF Road, destroying a room and damaging a car.

Another group of militants blew up a portion of the Shah Qabul police station in the old city area, injuring two people.

The SHO of the police station said two time bombs exploded at 4am, damaging three houses, two restaurants and six shops. He said the doors and windowpanes of a mosque were also damaged.

Notes From A Lost War:

“The Fate That Overtook The Russians Here May Be Relived By The Americans And Their Coalition Partners”

“‘They’ve Already Repeated All Of Our Mistakes,’ He Said, Speaking Of What The United States Has Done — And Failed To Do”

“Now, They’re Making Mistakes Of Their Own, Ones For Which We Do Not Own The Copyright”

“The Americans Are Replicating Another Of Moscow’s Mistakes: Trying To Turn The Tide Of The War By Bringing In More Troops”



Afghan fighters carried rocket shells near the Pakistan border in February 1988 as the end of the Soviet occupation neared. Robert Nickelsberg/Getty Images

“One of our mistakes was staying, instead of leaving,” he said. “After we changed the regime, we should have handed over and said goodbye. But we didn’t. And the Americans haven’t, either.”

October 19, 2008 By JOHN F. BURNS, New York Times [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan — It is one of a flow of disarming asides that Russia’s ambassador to Kabul deploys while warning of the grim prospects that he says will doom the American enterprise in Afghanistan if the United States fails to learn from mistakes made during the Soviet occupation of the 1980s.

“I know quite a lot about the past,” the ambassador, Zamir N. Kabulov, said in polished English with a broad smile during an interview in Kabul one morning last week.

In fact, it is precisely because of a belief that the Soviet past may hold lessons for the American future that a talk with Mr. Kabulov is valued by many Western diplomats here.

“They listen, but they do not hear,” he said with another wry smile.

“Their attitude is, ‘The past is the past,’ and that they know more than I do.”

Mr. Kabulov, 54, is no ordinary ambassador, having served as a K.G.B. agent in Kabul — and eventually as the K.G.B. resident, Moscow’s top spy — in the 1980s and 1990s, during and after the nine-year Soviet military occupation.

Now he is back as Moscow's top man, suave and engaging, happy to talk of a time when the old Soviet Embassy compound was the command center for an invasion that ended in disaster and speeded the collapse of the great power that undertook it.

The compound, ransacked during the warlord turmoil of the mid-1990s and given over for a decade to refugees who squatted amid the rubble, is spanking new again, with fresh marble and sparkling chandeliers, as well as a memorial commemorating the 13,500 Soviet troops who died here.

Nearly 20 years after Soviet troops withdrew in humiliation, in February 1989, Mr. Kabulov has become a gloomy oracle, warning that the fate that overtook the Russians here may be relived by the Americans and their coalition partners.

"They've already repeated all of our mistakes," he said, speaking of what the United States has done — and failed to do — since the Taliban were toppled from power in November 2001 and American troops began moving into old Soviet bases like the one at Bagram, north of Kabul.

"Now, they're making mistakes of their own, ones for which we do not own the copyright."

The list of American failures comes quickly. Like the Soviets, Mr. Kabulov said, the Americans "underestimated the resistance," thinking that because they swept into Kabul easily, the occupation would be untroubled.

"Because we deployed very easily into the major cities, we didn't give much thought to what was happening in the countryside," where the stirrings of opposition that grew into a full-fledged insurgency began, he said.

He places that blunder in the context of a wider failure to understand the "irritative allergy" among Afghans to foreign occupation, one that every invading power since the British in the 1840s has come to rue, and which, Mr. Kabulov said, grows into a fire if the invaders, especially non-Muslims, don't pull out soon.

"One of our mistakes was staying, instead of leaving," he said. "After we changed the regime, we should have handed over and said goodbye. But we didn't. And the Americans haven't, either."

Confronted by an elusive insurgency and unable to maintain a presence in the hinterland because of a lack of troops, the Soviets, like the Americans, resorted to an overreliance on heavy weapons, especially airpower, he said.

The resulting casualties among the civilian population only worsened the situation.

"We abused human rights, including the use of aggressive bombardment," he said.

"Now, it's the same, absolutely the same. Some Soviet generals gave instructions to wipe out the villages where the mujahedeen were entrenched with the civilian population. Is that what your generals are going to do?"

Still, the ambassador spoke with irritation at what he regards as an American distortion of the Soviet record here, one that ignores the “modernizing mission” Moscow pursued from the 1950s on, with billions of rubles spent on education, advancing the role of women and building roads, dams and an industrial infrastructure. “Where, I ask, are the big American projects to match those?” he said, and answered his own question.

“I’ll tell you. There aren’t any.”

American generals, he said, have avoided contact with him.

But with Gen. David D. McKiernan, the American commander, now pushing for a major increase in the 65,000 coalition troops that he commands, he said the Americans are replicating another of Moscow’s mistakes: trying to turn the tide of the war by bringing in more troops.

Soviet troop strength in Afghanistan, he said, reached its peak in 1987 with a force of about 140,000.

“The more foreign troops you have roaming the country, the more the irritative allergy toward them is going to be provoked,” he said.

The solution, he said, is to shift the fighting as quickly as possible to Afghan troops. This is something the United States and its partners have already embarked on, with a decision this summer to double the size of the Afghan Army.

But even that, Mr. Kabulov said, will accomplish little unless the Americans turn the army into a genuine national force, with a sense among the troops that they are fighting for their country, not as “clients” of the Americans, as Mr. Kabulov believes they see themselves now.

One emblem of the American approach, he says, is the decision to re-equip the Afghan forces with NATO weaponry.

Mr. Kabulov said this would mean retraining Afghan soldiers to fight with American M-16 rifles, in place of the Kalashnikov assault rifles that have been ubiquitous here for decades.

“Afghans have been very adept at using Kalashnikovs for 30 years, as we know only too well, and now you’ll send them to Pakistan to be melted down into scrap?

“I ask you, how much sense is there in that?”

TROOP NEWS

All Troops Home Before Christmas:

South Korean Forces Getting Out Of Iraq

Dec 1 2008 AFP

South Korea has officially ended its four-year military mission to Iraq and plans to bring back all remaining troops before Christmas, officials say.

The unit would start pulling out on Wednesday, along with troops from an air support unit based in neighbouring Kuwait, the statement said.

The withdrawal was due to be completed before December 20.

AWOL Afghan War Vet From Ft Drum To Surrender: He Left In Search Of Mental Health Care

December 4, Thursday, @1:00 pm
Different Drummer Internet Cafe, 12 Paddock Square,
Watertown, N Y

[Press Advisory From Citizen Soldier]

Sp/4 Trevor L. 22, of Austin, TX served 15 months in Afghan combat with the 3d Brigade, of the 10th Mountain Division. Upon returning to Ft. Drum in 2007 he was unable to obtain adequate treatment for mental health issues. This caused him to leave the base in search of effective treatment.

He is returning with a psychological evaluation prepared by a trauma specialist which concludes that Trevor suffers "from a severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and a Major Depression, Severe." He also has a detailed treatment plan which was prepared by his current therapist in Austin, TX.

Tod Ensign, a lawyer, and co-coordinator of The Different Drummer internet cafe, will discuss the project's plans to support Trevor in his struggle to receive an administrative discharge from Ft Drum.

More info: Tod Ensign, Citizen Soldier, (212) 679-2250 or (917) 647-5676

MORE:

AWOL Afghan War Vet To Appear At Ithaca Common Council's Meeting

On Dec. 3d To Seek Backing For His Resistance: Iraq War Veterans Will Attend To Offer Their Support

**December 3, 2008, 6:30 Pm,
Public Meeting,
Ithaca Common Council,
City Hall, Ithaca, N Y**

[Press Advisory]

Pvt. S. Trevor L. formerly of Ft Drum, NY will speak at this meeting requesting the Common Council's active support when he returns to the base to potentially face criminal charges for being AWOL.

On October 1st, the council unanimously proclaimed Ithaca to be a "Community of Sanctuary"..."which respects the right of its residents to support lawfully and proactively military personnel... who are organizing to stop the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Trevor L., 22, of Austin, Texas served 15 months in combat in Afghanistan with a unit of the 10th Mountain Div. While serving there he suffered serious mental and physical injuries. Upon returning to Drum, his efforts to obtain mental health care were frustrated and eventually caused him to leave the base in pursuit of adequate health care.

He will return to Drum with a psychological evaluation prepared by a Houston trauma specialist which concludes that he suffers "from a severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and a Major Depression, Severe"

Tod Ensign, a lawyer and Dir., Citizen Soldier, a GI/veterans rights advocacy group based in NYC, will also formally request that Ithaca's Common Council extend broad support to war resisters like Trevor consistent with its "Community of Sanctuary" resolution.

Other Iraq War veterans and anti-war activists will also attend this meeting to offer their support for soldiers who resist further service in these wars.

More info: Tod Ensign, Citizen Soldier (212) 679-2250 (O) or (917) 647-5676

Obama's SecDef Says No End To Stop Loss:

“Asked If He Could Foresee An End To The Policy In 2009, He Replied, ‘No. No, I Don’t’”



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

Dec 2, 2008 By William H. McMichael, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

[T]he Army program known as “stop-loss” that forces soldiers on deployment orders who are close to their end-of-service dates to stay on duty, he said, will continue through 2009.

“I’ve pressed on stop-loss ever since I got this job, because I don’t like it,” said Defense Secretary Robert Gates, speaking to Pentagon reporters a day after President-elect Barack Obama named him as his choice to continue in the job he’s held the past two years.

But when asked if he could foresee an end to the policy in 2009, he replied, “No. No, I don’t.”

Stop-loss, much despised in the ranks, prevents troops on deployment or mobilization orders within 90 days of their end-of-service date from walking away. According to the Army, 12,204 troops were affected by the policy as of Sept. 30: 6,714 active Army troops, 4,025 National Guard troops and 1,465 Reservists. At its March 2005 peak, 15,758 soldiers fell under such orders.

Stupid Lie By Command Nailed Flat

Nov 26, 2008 By Pepe Escobar, Asia Times [Excerpt]

Maliki goes for the jugular; if the pact is not approved, US forces will be constrained to an "immediate withdrawal from Iraq".

Not surprisingly, the US State Department is on the same wavelength.

Plus, of course, the Pentagon - which in a surreal twist has been threatening to evacuate 150,000 troops from Iraq in a flash in case the pact is knocked out; this when the Pentagon had been insisting non-stop that withdrawing within president-elect Barack Obama-proposed 16 months is unrealistic.

Troops Invited:

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

While Soldiers Died: War Profiteers Got \$300 Million For Cheating And Faking Work In Iraq; One Got \$4.1 Million "Although Nothing Was Built"

11/17/2008 By Matt Kelley, USA TODAY [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon spent about \$600 million on more than 1,200 Iraq reconstruction contracts that were eventually canceled, nearly half of them for mismanagement or shoddy construction, government investigators say.

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) found that 42% of canceled contracts were terminated because the contractor either failed to deliver or performed poorly.

The report, which analyzed contracts since 2003, detailed seven projects in which the U.S. paid total of \$172.2 million for work that was substandard, unfinished or never built.

The canceled projects include:

Headquarters for two Iraqi military units. The Air Force paid Ellis Environmental Group of Florida \$101.2 million, although one project was never started and another was 85%

complete. A \$31.9 million contract was canceled because of land disputes and the other for \$69.3 million after the government determined "the contractor ... was performing well below standards," the report says.

Two prisons in Iraq. The Pentagon paid Parsons Global Services of California \$62 million before canceling the contracts with less than half of the work completed because of delays and rising costs.

Headquarters for an Iraqi military battalion in northwestern Iraq. The report says the U.S. canceled a contract with Colorado-based CH2M Hill because of cost overruns and paid \$4.1 million although nothing was built.

Increasing Numbers Of Welsh Soldiers Coming Home Deaf: "Damage Sustained To Your Hearing Is Usually Permanent"

Dec 1 2008 by Gregory Tindle, Western Mail

AN increasing number of Welsh soldiers returning from war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq are seeking medical help for deafness and damage to their hearing.

Exposure to the blast of road- side bombs or the constant eardrum battering of rifle fire has seen a mini-epidemic of young servicemen seeking help for hearing problems.

One hearing expert said he was seeing at least one soldier every two weeks who has suffered from hearing damage for which there is no cure apart from issuing a hearing aid.

Some weaponry can produce sound levels of around 160 decibels, 55 decibels more than the level which can significantly damage hearing after exposure for longer than 15 minutes.

Kevin Thomas, a registered hearing aid audiologist in Cardiff, said he was now seeing at least one soldier, usually in their 20s, every two weeks for a hearing check.

"Often it is the left ear that receives the most damage, as this is the ear that is not protected by the rifle butt which is held close to the right ear. It will emit a noise of 120 decibels which is very high.

"My advice to those fighting in Afghanistan or any other conflict zones would be to treat hearing protection as they would other protection devices worn in battle.

"Damage sustained to your hearing is usually permanent, so it is important to take all precautions available.

“Some hearing loss and ringing in the ears may be relieved by a hearing aid.”

Australian Navy Shuts Down; Not Enough Sailors

November 18, 2008 Los Angeles Times

Australia's navy has been ordered on vacation for two months over Christmas, with military chiefs saying the shutdown is the best way to deal with chronic staff shortages, the government announced today.

Navy commanders had ordered all ships not on overseas operations to return to port over the holiday period, while docked vessels would be manned by only skeleton staff to maintain on-board security.

The navy faces serious staff shortages, with 2,020 skilled vacancies and a 27% yearly recruitment shortfall, exacerbated by 11% of staff quitting the service each year.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Resistance Action Intensifies: Double-Bombing At Police Academy; Major General Attacked At Home;

November 27, 2008 Aswat Al Iraq & 11.28 McClatchy Newspapers & Dec 1 (KUNA) & DPA & (CBS/AP) & December 2, 2008 By Tina Susman, LOS ANGELES TIMES & (Xinhua) & (Reuters)

At least 16 people were killed and 46 wounded in a nearly simultaneous double bombing near a police academy on Palestine street in city centre Baghdad.

The blasts occurred between the academy and the Iraqi water resources ministry on a stretch of road that had been reopened only two months ago after being closed for two years following an attack.

An attacker detonated his explosives vest packed with ball bearings at the entrance to the academy, then a car bomb exploded about 150 yards away, apparently aimed at those responding to the initial blast, the U.S. military said.

The blasts occurred within minutes of each other on Palestine Street, according to police and witnesses.

Bloodied police uniforms and a military boot left by victims were scattered with the crumpled metal hulk of the car bomb on the charred street in the aftermath of the bombing, according to Associated Press Television News footage.

Those killed included five policemen and 11 recruits, while the wounded included 11 policemen and 35 recruits, according to police and hospital officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information.

Monday a senior Defense Ministry official was seriously wounded in a roadside bomb attack outside his home as he was leaving for work that killed one of his bodyguards and wounded another, Iraqi military spokesman Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi said. The blast occurred in the Sulaikh neighborhood, a mainly Sunni area in northern Baghdad.

The wounded official, Maj. Gen. Mudhir al-Mola, is in charge of affairs related to the guards known as the Sons of Iraq who have joined forces with U.S. troops and works on Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's national reconciliation project. Insurgents consider them traitors for working alongside U.S. and Iraqi forces.

"An explosive charge was detonated this morning targeting an Iraqi army vehicle patrol in al-Qahera neighborhood in northern Baghdad, killing a soldier and injuring three," a source told Aswat al-Iraq.

A booby trapped house, 6 miles south of Baquba, exploded as Iraqi army soldiers raided the house early this morning, two soldiers were killed and three were injured.

A policeman was killed and four were injured on Monday when a bomb targeted a police patrol in Mosul, 400 kilometres north of Baghdad, a security source said. The blast took place in Akedat neighbourhood in the capital of Nineveh province, the source told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

A car bomber in the afternoon struck a checkpoint manned by policemen and Iraqi army soldiers in the town of Tal Afer, 70 km west of the city of Mosul, the source told Xinhua

on condition of anonymity. The attack resulted in the killing a policeman, and the wounding of four security members, the source said.

A roadside bomb targeting an army patrol killed five soldiers in Hilla, south of Baghdad, police and an eyewitness said. "It hit the first vehicle. The whole thing exploded and burnt to the ground," eyewitness Ali al-Jubouri told Reuters.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS

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**

**"When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, "No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country."
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

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

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

Death Notice

December 01, 2008 Cat's Dream

After a long illness and a protracted vegetative state, the U.S. anti-war movement finally died today; the joy to see president-elect Barack Obama appointing Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State and Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense was fatal.

Its peace achievements have been impressive; its stature is best measured by its indefatigable support of the Democratic Party; its understanding of the peace business has been an invaluable asset to Mr. Obama.

Funeral services will be held on 20 January, 2009 in Washington, D.C.

December 2, 1914: Courage In The Face Of The Enemy; One Member Of The German Parliament Votes Against Imperial War



Karl Liebknecht

Carl Bunin Peace History Dec 26 - Dec 3

Karl Liebknecht was the only member of German Parliament to vote against war with France and Britain.

He was arrested shortly thereafter and conscripted into the German Army. Refusing to fight, Liebknecht served on the Eastern Front burying the dead.

From: Spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk:

Karl Liebknecht, the son of Wilhelm Liebknecht, was born in Leipzig on 13th August, 1871. His father was one of Germany's leading socialists who helped form the Social Democratic Party in 1891.

Liebknecht studied law and political economy at Leipzig and Berlin where he was converted to the ideas of Karl Marx.

After serving with the Imperial Pioneer Guards in Potsdam (1893-94), Liebknecht worked as a lawyer in Westphalia before moving to Berlin in 1898.

Liebknecht became involved in smuggling socialist propaganda into Russia. He also defended others in court who had been arrested and tried for this offence.

Liebknecht also wrote extensively against militarism and this resulted in him being imprisoned for eighteen months in Glatz, Silesia.

In 1912 Liebknecht was elected to the Reichstag. On the left-wing of the Social Democratic Party, Liebknecht was one of the main opponents of the party's conservative leadership.

Liebknecht was opposed to Germany's participation in the First World War and at the end of 1914 joined with Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches, Paul Levi, Ernest Meyer, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin to establish an underground political organization called Spartakusbund (Spartacus League). The Spartacus League publicized its views in its illegal newspaper, Spartacus Letters.

In January, 1915, Liebknecht, like the Bolsheviks in Russia, began arguing that socialists should turn this nationalist conflict into a revolutionary war.

He was arrested and then conscripted into the German Army. Refusing to fight, Liebknecht served on the Eastern Front burying the dead. His health deteriorated and in October, 1915, he was allowed to return to Germany.

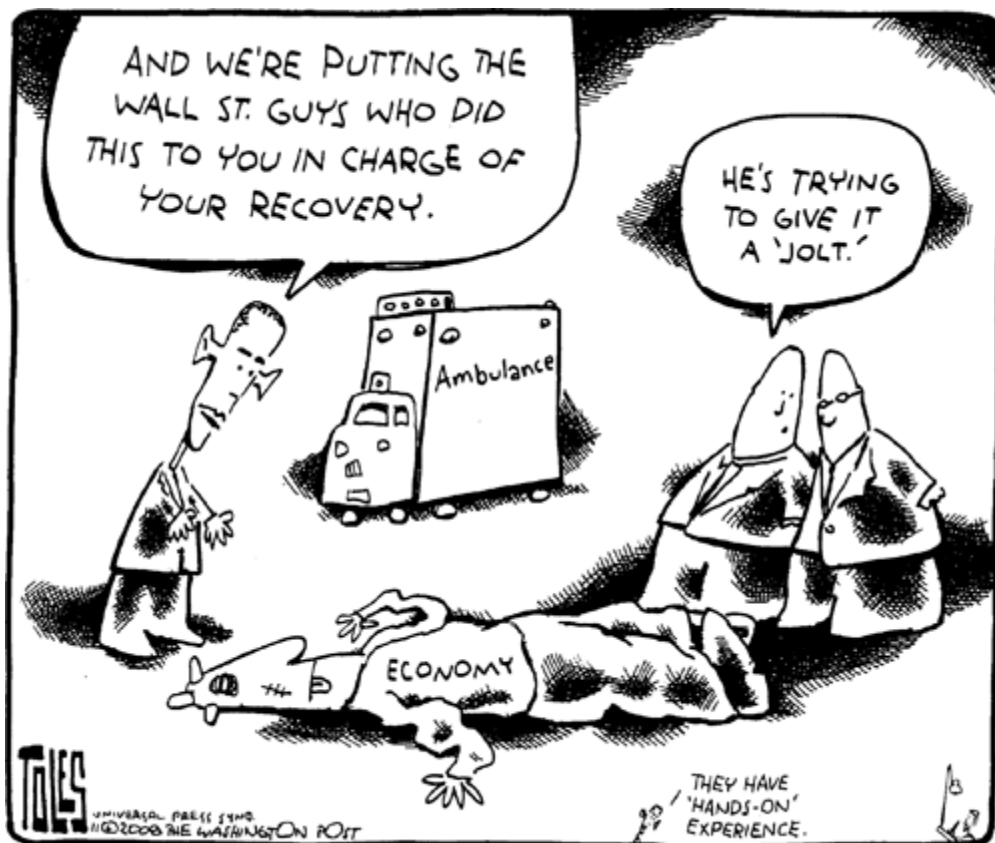
On 1st May, 1916, the Spartacus League decided to come out into the open and organized a demonstration against the First World War in Berlin. Several of its leaders, including Liebknecht were arrested and imprisoned.

They were not released until October, 1918, when Max von Baden granted an amnesty to all political prisoners.

In January, 1919, Liebknecht joined with Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches and Clara Zetkin in the Spartakist Rising that took place in Berlin. Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the Social Democrat Party and Germany's new chancellor, called in the German Army and the Freikorps to bring an end to the rebellion. By 13th January the rebellion had been crushed and most of its leaders, including Liebknecht were arrested.

Karl Liebknecht was executed without trial on 15th January, 1919

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**There Is No “Betrayal”
Obama Is Keeping His Word:
He Will Protect And Serve The U.S.
Empire And Kill Anybody He Pleases In**

Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Etc. Etc. Etc.

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project & Clancy Sigal.]

December 2, 2008 By JEREMY SCAHILL, CounterPunch [Excerpt]

There is not a single, solid anti-war voice in the upper echelons of the Obama foreign policy apparatus. And this is the point: Obama is not going to fundamentally change US foreign policy.

He is a status quo Democrat. And that is why the mono-partisan Washington insiders are gushing over Obama's new team.

At the same time, it is also disingenuous to act as though Obama is engaging in some epic betrayal.

Of course these appointments contradict his campaign rhetoric of change.

But move past the speeches and Obama's selections are very much in sync with his record and the foreign policy vision he articulated on the campaign trail, from his pledge to escalate the war in Afghanistan to his "residual force" plan in Iraq to his vow to use unilateral force in Pakistan to defend US interests to his posturing on Iran.

"I will always keep the threat of military action on the table to defend our security and our ally Israel," Obama said in his famed speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee last summer.

"Sometimes, there are no alternatives to confrontation."

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

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

Got an opinion? 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 unless you request identification published.

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