

GI SPECIAL 6L20:



[New York City, December 30, 2008]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Dies Of Wounds Following Baghdad IED Attack

Dec. 28, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20081228-06

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier died of wounds from an improvised explosive device explosion in northern Baghdad Dec. 28.

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

IF YOU THINK IT'S OVER, YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR MIND



An armed demonstration against the U.S. occupation and Israel's attacks on Palestinians in Gaza filled the streets in eastern Baghdad's Baladiyat district December 28, 2008. Protestors burned U.S. and Israeli flags and fired AK-47s into the air in protests across Iraq on Sunday, demanding a stronger response from Arab nations to Israeli air strikes that killed more than 270 people in Gaza. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

“When Iraqis See Those Who Came To Offer Freedom And Democracy Are Not Hiding In The Green Zone Maybe Then They Will Start Trusting The New Situation”

“Military Convoys Still Filling The Streets And Not Allowing Tens Of Cars To Approach Them Or Pass Them”

It will be a better situation when officials (all officials) start touring Baghdad with less than 20 soldiers and bodyguards and less than five military vehicles guarding them by blocking all the roads as they pass by.

December 29, 2008 By Dulaimy, Inside Iraq

Baghdad is living better days than the last three years but fear and doubt still control many.

Many friends and people that I talk to are still afraid to move throughout Baghdad yet others are traveling to neighborhoods they didn't visit for the last three years.

Yesterday, a taxi driver agreed to take me to a west Baghdad neighborhood, as we arrived he stopped his car not far away from the main street of the block and told me: "I can't, forgive me"

He explained that he has a family and don't want to take any risk. I told him I am coming to this neighborhood on daily bases with many drivers but he said he can not trust the situation.

The neighborhood was, and still for many, a fearful place after all fighting against the American troops, Iraqi troops, sectarian killings, crimes and displacement.

I had to step down and to take another taxi.

Doctors, engineers, teachers, drivers and students do not go to many places because of fear remembering the situation in Baghdad is better than the last few years.

It made me think again and again why people don't trust the new situation but how can people trust the situation enough when blast walls are still surrounding neighborhoods?

When there are more than 260 checkpoints inside Baghdad?

How can people trust the new situation when dozens of main roads, tunnels and bridges are still closed? When military convoys still filling the streets and not allowing tens of cars to approach them or pass them.

I believe people's unconscious mind will not trust the new fragile secure situation enough.

When Iraqis see those who came to offer freedom and democracy are not hiding in the Green Zone maybe then they will start trusting the new situation.

Is the new security situation better because of sending a bad guy behind bars or it's because of putting all the people and their neighborhoods behind blast walls?

Did those who fled their neighborhoods or were displaced return? When the majority will return, then I will say it is better.

It will be a better situation when officials (all officials) start touring Baghdad with less than 20 soldiers and bodyguards and less than five military vehicles guarding them by blocking all the roads as they pass by.

Imagine we have a parliament of 275 members, and a cabinet of more than 30 ministers, three members in the presidential council, advisors, provincial councils, governors,

heads of municipality, judges, deputy ministers (each ministry has several)...etc, you can do the math.

I will say Baghdad is a better place when it will be better than it was prior to 2003 in terms of security, municipality, electricity, transportation and other fields.

I will say Baghdad is a better place when people's fear is not that deep.

“We Must Continue To Treat All Iraqi Citizens With The Utmost Dignity And Honor”

Gen. Ray Odierno, U.S. Commanding General, Multi-National Force—Iraq

[Quoted By Robert H. Reid, The Associated Press, Dec 5, 2008]



December 15, 2008: Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA refuse to allow Iraqi citizens to return to their homes in Sab al-Boor near Baghdad unless they submit to retina scans. REUTERS/Erik de Castro

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two Canadian Soldiers Killed In Ismail Khail

December 29, 2008 The Sydney Morning Herald

New attacks in insurgency-hit Afghanistan that left two Canadian soldiers dead, security officials said on Sunday.

They died in a powerful car bombing in the eastern province of Khost.

The attacker blew up a bomb-filled car outside local government offices in the district of Ismail Khail, also known as Mando Zayi, as local leaders were discussing security and elections due next year, police said.

Two soldiers - one with the national army and another with a pro-government militia - were also killed.

"The blast was so powerful that some of the casualties were turned into pieces," said Qayomi, who had been hosting the meeting with tribal elders.

Twelve wounded are government soldiers and three are in critical condition.

Two Canadian Soldiers Killed In Panjwayi, Four More Wounded

December 29, 2008 AFP

The Canadian military meanwhile announced that two of its soldiers were killed in a blast in southern Kandahar province on Saturday approximately 25 kilometres west of Kandahar City.

An Afghan policeman and an interpreter also died in the attack in Panjwayi district, a Taliban stronghold about 25 kilometres west of Kandahar city, Canadian military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jay Janzen told AFP.

Four other Canadian soldiers and an interpreter were wounded, he said.

Two U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Attack On Meeting With Governor In Charikar

29 Dec. (AKI) & CBC News

A car bomber on Monday struck a governor's compound north of the Afghan capital, Kabul, wounding two US soldiers. More than a dozen people were reported to have been injured in the attack that targeted a meeting between US troops and the governor of Parwan province in the local capital of Charikar.

A US vehicle was hit by the blast but American forces inside the complex were not injured.

U.S. Sgt. 1st Class Joel Peavy said two U.S. troops who were outside the compound at the time of the detonation were wounded.

A unit of U.S. troops from the base at Bagram were at the compound, which is about 60 kilometres north of Kabul, said Khalil Ziae, police chief of Parwan province. Their vehicles were parked outside the gate when the bomber detonated his explosives, Ziae said.

Australian Soldier Badly Wounded In Uruzgan

Dec 30, 2008 ABC

An Australian soldier serving with the Australian Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF) has been wounded in an attack by Taliban insurgents in southern Afghanistan.

In a statement, the Defence Department said the soldier - who is from the Darwin-based first Brigade - was shot while taking part in a patrol to support Afghan army operations in Uruzgan Province on Monday morning (local time).

He was assessed to have serious injuries and a helicopter evacuated him to hospital facilities at the Australian base in Tarin Kowt.

He was in a stable condition after treatment, the statement said.

Roadside Bombs Doubled In Afghanistan This Year; Idiot U.S. Ambassador Says Never Mind

December 30, 2008 The Canadian Press

KABUL, Afghanistan - The number of roadside bombs and kidnappings doubled in Afghanistan in 2008 from last year, the U.S. ambassador said Tuesday, grim statistics that underscore the country's deteriorating security situation.

The number of roadside bombs rose from roughly 1,000 in 2007 to 2,000 in 2008.

Insurgency spread throughout southern Afghanistan.

"IEDs don't really advance the terrorists' cause," [Ambassador William] Wood said.

The Taliban in the last year has pushed into remote areas of Afghanistan where the government has little presence and Afghan and international security forces rarely reach.

Police Commander And 35 Officers Defect To Resistance

30 Dec 2008 DPA

Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousif Ahmadi said that Shir Khan Kandahari, a police commander along with his 35 officers surrendered to their fighters near Farah city late Monday.

Ahmadi, who was speaking by phone from an undisclosed location, said that the policemen vowed to fight the Afghan and foreign forces in the country alongside the Taliban.

Defection to Taliban militants occurred among the Afghan security forces in the past, but if confirmed, this would be the first time that such a big number changed allegiance.

Pakistan Government Cuts Supply Line To Occupation Troops In Afghanistan

December 30, 2008 Reuters

JAMRUD, Pakistan: Pakistan stopped supplies going to foreign forces in Afghanistan on Tuesday, as security forces began an offensive against militants in the Khyber Pass region, a government official said.

Khyber's top administrator, Tariq Hayat, said that a curfew had been imposed and that the main road leading to the Afghan border had been sealed.

"Supplies to NATO forces will remain suspended until we clear the area of militants and outlaws who have gone out of control," he said. **[That should only take about 50 or 60 years, minimum.]**

The Khyber Pass runs between the northwestern city of Peshawar and the border town of Torkham and is a vital supply line for more than 65,000 Western troops battling the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan.

The U.S. military sends 75 percent of its supplies for the Afghan war through or over Pakistan, including 40 percent of the fuel for its troops, the U.S. Defense Department says.

Roster Of Foreign Occupation Troops In Afghanistan

12.30.08 Reuters Limited

Here is a breakdown showing the main foreign forces in Afghanistan as of December 1, 2008.

* UNITED STATES: 35,000**

* BRITAIN: 8,745

* GERMANY: 3,600

* FRANCE: 2,785

* CANADA: 2,750

* ITALY: 2,350

* NETHERLANDS: 1,770

* POLAND: 1,130

* AUSTRALIA: 1,090

* TURKEY: 860

* SPAIN: 780

* ROMANIA: 740

* DENMARK: 700

** Includes about 15,000 U.S. troops who are part of U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom, not under NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) command.

-- The U.S. is expected to send up to 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan by the beginning of next summer

Resistance Action:

Dec. 25 (Xinhua) & Dec 27, 2008 Associated Press & December 29, 2008 Darah Hansen, Canwest News Service & The Sydney Morning Herald & AP

A car bomber attacked a police checkpoint Saturday in southern Afghanistan, killing five three police and two civilians in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province, said local police chief Zamarai Khan. Four police and one civilian were wounded.

Four employees of a road construction company were killed as they came under rocket attack carried out by militants in Kunar province east of Afghanistan, local officials said Thursday. "A rocket fired by insurgents in Sauki district Wednesday evening leaving four employees of a local road construction company Unique Builders dead," director of the company Hasib Kulimzai told Xinhua. Kulimzai added that four more employees including two guards were injured in the incident.

A bomber killed two Afghan police officers in the Ismail Khil district of Khost, a border province north of Kandahar.

Imam Mualave Abdul Qayoum, 63, a member of the Kandahar provincial council, was shot to death at close range Sunday evening as he was saying his nightly prayers in one of the city's largest mosques. Politically, he openly supported the upcoming national election and Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

In neighboring Helmand province, Taliban militants attacked a police post late Sunday. One policeman was wounded, he said.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

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

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

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.

TROOP NEWS

All Albanian Troops Home Now; “The End Of Their Mission In Iraq”



Albanian troops that had served in Iraq at a ceremony that commemorates the end of their mission in Iraq in Tirana's main Skanderbeg square on December 27, 2008.
REUTERS/Arben Celi

Pennsylvania Guard Off To The Imperial Slaughterhouse: “The Largest Contingent From The Pennsylvania Guard To Deploy To A Combat Zone Since World War II”



Members of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, exercise at Fort Dix, N.J., Thursday, Dec. 18, 2008. The 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, scheduled to deploy to Iraq makes up the largest contingent from the Pennsylvania Guard to deploy to a combat zone since World War II. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

Deadly Ballad Burn Pit Claiming More Victims

**“I Got So Sick I Was Medevacked
Out”**

**Sampling Found Chemical In Agent
Orange, “Benzene, Known To Cause
Leukemia; And Volatile Organic
Compounds, Some That Are Known Or
Suspected To Cause Cancer”**

12.29.08 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Army staff sergeant began running long distances when she was 7 years old. A born overachiever, she made E-6 in eight years in her job as a truck driver. She ran six-minute miles and is air-assault qualified.

Then she went to Joint Base Balad in Iraq.

“I got so sick I was medevacked out,” she said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“Now I can hardly walk without using an inhaler. I’m losing my career to asthma.”

At Balad, she and two other soldiers worked as convoy supervisors for the KBR contractors who brought garbage in to be dumped in the base’s open-air burn pit.

“By midnight, the smoke was so bad you couldn’t see,” she said.

Both of the other soldiers on her shift have also been diagnosed with asthma.

Though military officials say there are no known long-term effects from exposure to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, well more than 100 service members have come forward to Army Times and Disabled American Veterans with similar symptoms: chronic bronchitis, asthma, sleep apnea, chronic coughs and allergy-like symptoms.

Several also have cited heart problems, lymphoma and leukemia.

“A lot of soldiers in my old unit have asthma and bronchitis,” said the staff sergeant, who served in Iraq in 2005.

“I lived 50 feet from the burn pit. I used to wake up in the middle of the night choking on it.”

The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine issued a paper entitled “Just the Facts” in December about the Balad burn pit.

It states that sampling in 2004, 2005 and 2006 found “occasional presence” of dioxins, the chemical in Agent Orange; polyaromatic hydrocarbons, or benzene, known to cause leukemia; and volatile organic compounds, some that are known or suspected to cause cancer in humans, as well as throat and eye irritations.

Those reports are classified, according to the center.

But “the potential short- and long-term risks were estimated to be low due to the infrequent detections of these chemicals,” the paper states.

Kerry Baker, legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, isn’t buying it.

“It seems like most of these cases, anecdotally, are people who were exposed heavily to the burn pits and they got sick quickly,” he said, referring to the troops who have contacted DAV and Army Times.

“There must be some areas that take a hit much harder than others. Everything seems to be pointing opposite to what the Defense Department is saying.”

He said he also found 22 service members who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan who had cancer — half of whom have died.

Oddly, several had cancers that most people survive.

“You’re getting these young guys who are strong and they can’t fight non-life-threatening forms of cancer,” he said.

Though he said the problems could come from a combination of exposures, many of the people who have contacted him worked directly in the draft of the burn pit plume.

Baker is building a database of troops who say the burn pit sickened them. He can be e-mailed at kbaker22@comcast.net.

He said he would like to see the Department of Veterans Affairs notify doctors that veterans have been exposed to chemicals from fires in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as look for trends that could make such exposure presumptive evidence for some illnesses.

The “Just the Facts” paper says data from a report for air samples taken in 2007 shows particulate matter levels higher than military recommendations in about 50 of the 60 samples from Balad. Most are at least two times allowable rates, but several are at six times allowable rates.

Craig Postlewaite, a senior force health protection analyst for the Pentagon, told Military Times there are no known long-term effects from particulate matter.

The Defense Health Board sent a letter in June to S. Ward Cascells, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, asking the Pentagon:

- To rework its 2007 analysis to state that their sampling at Balad constituted a screening that would determine the need for more assessment, and that it was not a comprehensive risk assessment in itself.
- To acknowledge that “the relationship between locations and personnel-level exposure is not defined.”
- To acknowledge that the report offers “a relatively large level of uncertainty regarding actual personnel exposure levels and health risks” and the number of samples was “relatively small.”

The Real War In Afghanistan Is Between The White House “War Czar” And Special Ops Brass:

**“Commanders Are Asking For What They Think They Can Get, Rather Than What They Need”
Field-Grade Special Forces Officer Says “The Requests For Forces Generated By Commanders In Afghanistan Do Not Seem To Comport To Any Overall Plan For The Theater”**

“Short Supply Of Helicopters Has Been A Constant Problem For Conventional Forces And CJSOTF-A”

A field-grade officer in Washington who has been tracking the debate said that the “white” SOF leaders’ argument that their forces need more ISR assets and helicopters is a reflection of how Special Forces has veered from its traditional mission of “foreign internal defense” — training host nation forces to conduct counterinsurgency — in favor of the more glamorous direct-action missions.

12.29.08 By Sean D. Naylor, Army Times [Excerpts]

Defense Secretary Robert Gates’ plan to deploy three additional combat brigades to Afghanistan by the summer has superseded a contentious debate that pitted the Bush administration’s “war czar” against the special operations hierarchy over a proposed nearterm “surge” of spec ops forces to Afghanistan, a Pentagon military official said.

The National Security Council’s surge proposal, which grew out of its Afghan strategy review, recommended an increase of “about another battalion’s worth” of troops to the Combined and Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan, or CJSOTF-A, said a fieldgrade Special Forces officer, who added that this would enlarge the task force by about a third.

Several sources said that the “SOF surge” proposal originated with Lt. Gen. Doug Lute, the socalled “war czar” whose official title is assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan policy and implementation.

The rationale behind deploying more special ops forces to Afghanistan was that any decision to deploy more conventional brigades to Afghanistan would take at least several months to implement, whereas special ops units could be sent much more quickly, the Special Forces officer said.

To those in favor, the proposed deployment of additional Special Forces A-teams — the 12-man units also known as operational detachment-alphas — represented proof that the Bush administration was willing to take immediate action to reverse negative trends in the Afghan war, the Pentagon military official said.

However, the proposal sparked a fierce high-level debate, with special operations officers charging that Lute and his colleagues were trying to micromanage the movement of individual Special Forces A-teams from inside the Beltway, and countercharges that Special Forces has strayed from its traditional mission of raising and training indigenous forces and become too focused on direct-action missions to kill or capture enemies.

Most major special operations commands were opposed to the proposal, special operations sources said. The sources identified U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Command and the office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities, headed by Michael Vickers, as all resisting the initiative.

Special operations sources said that those opposing the “SOF surge” were generally against the idea on two grounds: that the commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, Gen. David McKiernan, has not requested them, and that the CJSOTF-A does not have enough “enablers” — such as helicopters and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets — to support the forces it has in-country now, let alone another battalion’s worth.

An administration official denied Lute was trying to interfere with the theater commander’s prerogatives.

But the field-grade Special Forces officer said that the requests for forces generated by commanders in Afghanistan do not seem to comport to any overall plan for the theater.

“Commanders are asking for what they think they can get, rather than what they need,” he said.

[T]he field grade Special Forces officer acknowledged that the NSC proposal had run up against stiff opposition among the special ops brass, including Vickers and leadership of SOCOM and US-ASOC.

The officer said the brass did not want to deploy more forces without additional “dedicated enablers,” including helicopters, ISR assets such as Predator unmanned aerial vehicles, and “more dedicated forward operating bases, more money for (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles), the whole package.”

The short supply of helicopters in Afghanistan has been a constant problem for conventional forces and CJSOTF-A, the “white,” or unclassified, task force in-country.

Unlike the secretive, “black,” Joint Special Operations Command task force, which is directly supported by elements of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, “white” Special Forces groups do not have their own dedicated aviation units and have to compete for helicopter support with the rest of the U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan.

CJSOTF-A is commanded by a colonel, whereas the other organizations are all commanded by flag officers.

The Pentagon military official said that the planned deployment of an additional 20,000 conventional U.S. troops, including three brigade combat teams, to Afghanistan would also include a lot of “enablers” that the special operations forces could use.

The Pentagon plan includes more helicopters being sent to Afghanistan, as well as the possibility of a one-star special operations flag officer to command “white” SOF forces in country, which would obviate the need to have “O-6s arm wrestling with O-7s and O-9s,” he said.

Special Forces Mission Debate

A field-grade officer in Washington who has been tracking the debate said that the “white” SOF leaders’ argument that their forces need more ISR assets and helicopters is a reflection of how Special Forces has veered from its traditional mission of “foreign internal defense” — training host nation forces to conduct counterinsurgency — in favor of the more glamorous direct-action missions.

The officer said Lute believes that special operations forces, particularly Special Forces, “are the right force” to send to Afghanistan because of their skills at teaching foreign internal defense.

This might explain the special operations hierarchy’s opposition to Lute’s surge proposal, the field grade-officer in Washington said.

“This is an implicit criticism of what SOF has done for the last five years,” he said. “They haven’t been training indigenous forces. That may be what SOCOM is objecting to, is it’s implicitly a critique of SOF’s overfascination with direct action.”

He noted that Special Forces A-teams in Afghanistan are partnered with Afghan commando units, not regular Afghan National Army battalions.

The senior special operations staff officer acknowledged that SF A-teams in Afghanistan do not routinely partner with conventional Afghan units, but said some of the blame lies in the fact that “the advisory mission is separate from the SF mission. That’s the fundamental problem with Afghanistan.”

As a result, he said, “our ODAs are not being effectively employed.”

Under the Defense Department plan for Afghanistan, Army brigade combat teams and Marine regimental combat teams would be responsible for “mentoring” Afghan National Army units, but “white” special operations forces would also have a role in tougher training missions, according to the Pentagon military official.

“The framework is going to look a lot more like the framework did in Iraq over the last couple of years,” the Pentagon military official said.

Part of the debate over the feasibility of a special operations surge revolves around the perception by some surge proponents that special operations leaders are not making as many of their forces available as they might.

“Lute for a long time has been talking about his deeply held belief from his time as the J-3 (director of operations on the Joint Staff) that the SOF are withholding a lot of their assets in order to preserve their op tempo and their retention numbers,” said the field-grade officer in Washington who has been following the debate.

This claim was flatly rejected by the senior special operations staff officer. Special Forces’ deployment ratio was less than a full day home for every day deployed, which is busier than the op tempo of conventional forces, who have at least a 1:1 ratio.

However, it’s not clear that any SOF surge would be made up entirely or mostly of Special Forces units. CJSOTF-A now includes a Marine Special Operations Command element in western Afghanistan, which is likely to grow, the field grade Special Forces officer said.

“The term that’s being bandied about is ‘ODA equivalents,’ ” he said.

The senior special operations staff officer scoffed at such talk. “There’s only SF,” he said. “There’s no SF equivalents. That’s idiocy. SEALs are not SF. MARSOC are not SF and SF are not SEALs. ... Those people who are throwing that (term) around certainly don’t understand what they’re talking about.”

Canada: Some Reservists “Who Lose A Limb Under The Current System Receive Less Than Half The Compensation Of A Career Soldier”

December 28, 2008 The Canadian Press

New figures prepared for the Defence Department show the number of wounded Canadian soldiers totalled more than 360 in the past three full years of fighting in southern Afghanistan.

The wounded, some of whom have lost limbs or suffered other severe trauma, far outnumber soldiers killed in action.

It is the combat deaths and sombre repatriations that get the most public attention, while those who survive with bodies that have been punctured, deformed and burned receive little mention outside the military.

Reservists, who make up over 20 per cent of the 2,500 troops deployed in Kandahar, do not receive the same benefits as members of the regular force.

For example, some who lose a limb under the current system receive less than half the compensation of a career soldier.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action:

26 Dec 2008 DPA & Dec. 27, 2008 AP & Dec 28 (Reuters)

Three Iraqi soldiers were killed and four were injured Friday when a bomb exploded in Baladruz district, east of Baquba, a security source said. The bomb was detonated on the main street in Baladruz, targeting a vehicle of the 5th brigade of the Iraqi army, the source told Voices of Iraq (VOI) news agency.

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol wounded four policemen and two civilians in Zaafaraniya district, southeastern Baghdad, police said.

An Iraqi soldier and two other people were killed when a car bomb exploded as they were trying to defuse it in Musayyib, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, according to local police. The two nonmilitary victims were members of the local awakening council, also known as Sons of Iraq, a U.S.-allied group. Ten other people were wounded in the blast.

A car bomb exploded near a police patrol, killing a policeman, and wounding 5, near the eastern entrance to the city of Falluja, 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

An Iraqi soldier opened fire on and wounded a local provincial council member and killed his bodyguard in Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, on Saturday, police said.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS</p>
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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



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

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

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

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Happy Anniversary December 31, 1948; Honor To The 60,000

Peace History December 25-31 By Carl Bunin

Sixty thousand Puerto Rican men refused to register for the draft. Eight were prosecuted.

Happy Anniversary

December 31, 1970

The Day The Lie Was Repudiated

Peace History Dec 31 - Jan 6 By Carl Bunin

The U.S. Congress repealed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which in 1964 authorized a dramatic increase in U.S. military involvement in Vietnam in response to an attack on U.S. forces that was later revealed to be fictitious.

How The Tonkin Gulf Lie Launched Vietnam War

July 27, 1994 By Jeff Cohen and Norman Solomon, Media Beat

Thirty years ago, it all seemed very clear. "American Planes Hit North Vietnam After Second Attack on Our Destroyers; Move Taken to Halt New Aggression", announced a Washington Post headline on Aug. 5, 1964.

That same day, the front page of the New York Times reported: "President Johnson has ordered retaliatory action against gunboats and 'certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam' after renewed attacks against American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin." But there was no "second attack" by North Vietnam -- no "renewed attacks against American destroyers."

By reporting official claims as absolute truths, American journalism opened the floodgates for the bloody Vietnam War. A pattern took hold: continuous government lies passed on by pliant mass media...leading to over 50,000 American deaths and millions of Vietnamese casualties.

The official story was that North Vietnamese torpedo boats launched an "unprovoked attack" against a U.S. destroyer on "routine patrol" in the Tonkin Gulf on Aug. 2 -- and that North Vietnamese PT boats followed up with a "deliberate attack" on a pair of U.S. ships two days later.

The truth was very different.

Rather than being on a routine patrol Aug. 2, the U.S. destroyer Maddox was actually engaged in aggressive intelligence-gathering maneuvers -- in sync with coordinated attacks on North Vietnam by the South Vietnamese navy and the Laotian air force. "The day before, two attacks on North Vietnam...had taken place," writes scholar Daniel C. Hallin. Those assaults were "part of a campaign of increasing military pressure on the North that the United States had been pursuing since early 1964."

On the night of Aug. 4, the Pentagon proclaimed that a second attack by North Vietnamese PT boats had occurred earlier that day in the Tonkin Gulf -- a report cited by President Johnson as he went on national TV that evening to announce a momentous escalation in the war: air strikes against North Vietnam.

But Johnson ordered U.S. bombers to “retaliate” for a North Vietnamese torpedo attack that never happened.

Prior to the U.S. air strikes, top officials in Washington had reason to doubt that any Aug. 4 attack by North Vietnam had occurred. Cables from the U.S. task force commander in the Tonkin Gulf, Captain John J. Herrick, referred to “freak weather effects,” “almost total darkness” and an “overeager sonarman” who “was hearing ship’s own propeller beat.”

One of the Navy pilots flying overhead that night was squadron commander James Stockdale, who gained fame later as a POW and then Ross Perot’s vice presidential candidate. “I had the best seat in the house to watch that event,” recalled Stockdale a few years ago, “and our destroyers were just shooting at phantom targets -- there were no PT boats there.... There was nothing there but black water and American fire power.”

In 1965, Lyndon Johnson commented: “For all I know, our Navy was shooting at whales out there.” But Johnson’s deceitful speech of Aug. 4, 1964, won accolades from editorial writers. The president, proclaimed the New York Times, “went to the American people last night with the somber facts.” The Los Angeles Times urged Americans to “face the fact that the Communists, by their attack on American vessels in international waters, have themselves escalated the hostilities.”

An exhaustive new book, *The War Within: America’s Battle Over Vietnam*, begins with a dramatic account of the Tonkin Gulf incidents. In an interview, author Tom Wells told us that American media “described the air strikes that Johnson launched in response as merely ‘tit for tat’ -- when in reality they reflected plans the administration had already drawn up for gradually increasing its overt military pressure against the North.”

Daniel Hallin’s classic book *The ‘Uncensored War’* observes that journalists had “a great deal of information available which contradicted the official account; it simply wasn’t used. The day before the first incident, Hanoi had protested the attacks on its territory by Laotian aircraft and South Vietnamese gunboats.”

What’s more, “It was generally known...that ‘covert’ operations against North Vietnam, carried out by South Vietnamese forces with U.S. support and direction, had been going on for some time.”

In the absence of independent journalism, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution -- the closest thing there ever was to a declaration of war against North Vietnam -- sailed through Congress on Aug. 7. (Two courageous senators, Wayne Morse of Oregon and Ernest Gruening of Alaska, provided the only “no” votes.) The resolution authorized the president “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.”

The rest is tragic history.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“We Are Against ‘Israel’ Because We
Are Jews”
“Judaism Condemns Zionist Atrocities In
Gaza”**

[New York City, December 30, 2008]

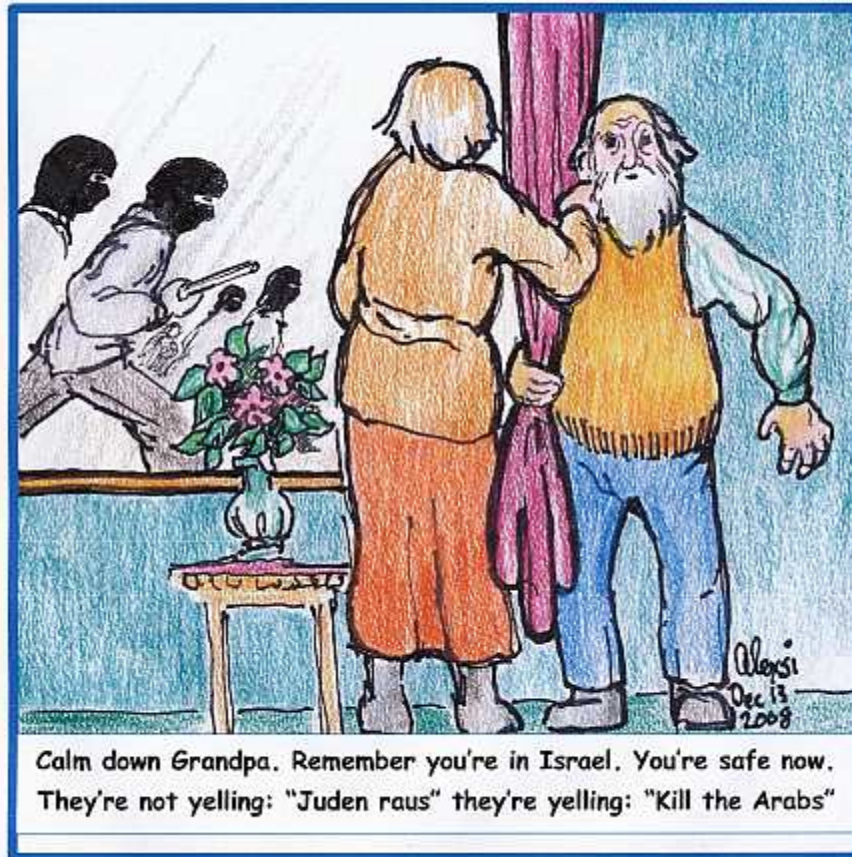




Unconquered; Unconquerable



Palestinian youths throw stones at Israeli border police at Shuafat refugee camp near Zionist occupied Jerusalem, Palestine, in protest of the Israeli attacks on Gaza December 29, 2008. (Photo: Ammar Awad/Reuters)



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

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

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

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POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT THE BLOODSHED

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;

Coming Soon To GI Special: A New Feature: Traitors' Gate



[Wikipedia]

The name Traitors' Gate has been used since the early seventeenth century, prisoners were brought by barge along the Thames, passing under London Bridge, where the heads of recently executed prisoners were displayed on pikes. The prisoners were shocked by the sight of the heads of the recently executed stuck on spikes on the stone gate houses.

Nominate your candidate(s) for traitors' gate:

Eligibility requirements:

Opposed Imperial War while Bush was President, but after he leaves, come up with all kinds of bullshit excuses to defend the Obama regime's refusal to bring all U.S. troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq now.

And/or

Hate organizational democracy and do everything they can to make sure their anti-war organization is run from the top down by self-appointed leadership impossible for the members to remove.

Some refuse to allow members to elect their own organizational leadership, and/or they protect the leadership of organizations whose members are not allowed democratic control from below.

Please feel free to send in your nominations.

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