

GI SPECIAL 5B7:



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[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

This Is The Price Of Bush's Escalation: And There Are Many Thousands More

From: J
To: GI Special
Sent: February 04, 2007

Just spoke to my son and they lost contact with my grandson for the past two weeks. He isn't answering his cell phone.

He is with the 1073 Brigade..

They are suppose to go to Iraq.

I sent him an e-mail. Hope that isn't where he is.

My son said he will be running the machine gun in the vehicle.

I am nervous.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Louisiana SSgt. Killed Near Taji



2.6.07: Staff Sgt. Ronnie L. Sanders, 26, of Shreveport, La., based at Fort Bragg, died over the weekend in Iraq of wounds he suffered when a bomb went off near his vehicle near Taji, Iraq. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Marine Killed In Anbar

Feb. 6, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070206-02

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq –One Marine assigned to Multi-National Force - West died Feb. 5 from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Baghdad

Feb. 6, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070206-15

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldier died when insurgents targeted a security post southwest of the Iraqi capital Feb. 6.

While manning designated battle positions in the area, the unit received small arms fire, killing one Soldier.

U.S. Headquarters In Al-Haklaniya Mortared

Feb. 5 (Xinhua)

Three mortar rounds landed on the U.S. forces headquarters in al-Haklaniya City, in the volatile western Iraq province of Anbar, local residents said.

20-Year-Old From Thousand Oaks Killed In Iraq



Lance Cpl. Anthony C. Melia

February 1, 2007 By Nancy Needham, Thousand Oaks Acorn

When five Marines in dress blues appeared on their doorstep in Thousand Oaks at 8 p.m. Fri., Jan. 26, Vicki and Mike Melia knew their son Lance Cpl. Anthony C. Melia had been killed in Iraq.

“I watched my wife die inside as she made a sound like I've never heard coming from somebody before,” Mike Melia said. “When the doorbell rang and she saw the Marines standing there, her heart, soul and spirit disappeared. She went so far down so quickly. Our life got changed.”

As soon as she saw the uniformed Marines on her porch, Vicki Melia collapsed on the entryway floor.

On Monday, she spoke of the moment she realized her 20-year-old-son was dead.

“I knew right away,” she said. “He was the light of my life.”

His father said Melia had been killed by a random bullet while searching on foot for armed insurgents in Al Anbar province. He was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif. To his family, Melia was a man of honor and dedication, fighting in a war he believed in, but on Monday afternoon the family clung together and wept as they recalled his childhood and remembered the boy who grew up in Thousand Oaks.

“He loved to watch the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the Power Rangers,” recalled his Aunt Marcy Douglas of Reno, Nev. “He liked lots of action. He also loved riding a dirt bike.”

“He never hesitated to hug and kiss his parents in public and was always thoughtful of others,” his mother said. “He was the captain of his football team at Thousand Oaks High School.”

He had also played Titan Football, was a good friend, would open doors for others, could be trusted and loved to eat his mother's homemade teriyaki barbecue beef jerky, she said.

He had lots of friends and was close to his parents; his sister, Nicole, 22; and his younger brother, Daniel, 17.

Melia's fiancée, Jamie Chunko, 18, was hoping to marry him as soon as he returned home. His stay in Iraq, which had been scheduled to end this month, was extended to April, his mother said.

Even though he was fighting a war, she said, he made sure his 3-year-old nephew, Nicholas, whom he adored, got a Spider-Man blanket from him for Christmas.

“When he wasn't fighting, he found a computer and ordered that for Nicholas,” said Vicki Melia, her eyes filled with tears.

Melia was determined to follow his heart. He had wanted to join the Marines since he was 10, so he could be “the best of the best.”

He'd begged his parents to sign the paperwork required to enlist at age 17, but his mother told him he had to wait until he was 18, old enough to take on that responsibility himself.

As the leader of four men in a special operations fire squad, Melia had been asked by his mother “to not be first in battle,” she said. But he would not promise her that. He promised her the opposite. He was a born leader who told her he would always be the one leading, she said.

Melia's group, usually on foot, would go door-to-door or wherever necessary to find and clear out insurgents, his father said.

On the day he was killed, he was on foot patrol in Al Anbar when his group came across a rocket launcher beside an abandoned vehicle.

The Americans had apparently interrupted something possibly deadly, so some of the Marines stayed to secure the premises around the vehicle. Melia and other Marines went to search for the insurgents involved.

"Anthony was walking in the field looking around when a random bullet hit him in his temple and ended his life," his tearful father said.

His father recalled the many phone calls he and his wife received from their son in Iraq.

"No matter how tired he was, when he would come in from the field, the first thing he would do before he'd go to sleep, he would call his mother and tell her he was all right," said Mike Melia. "She adored him. They had a special bond." "When he talked to me, he would tell me how horrible war is and how cruel the people he was fighting are," his father said. "He told me CNN refused to interview him because he believed in what he was doing and they only wanted to talk to people who didn't."

Mike Melia was also saddened at the many terrible scenes his young son had to witness in defending his country, he said.

"War is not pretty, but I believe the majority of Americans want to get the job done and then bring them home," Melia said.

In the room where he sat, there were still boxes of boots Vicki Melia had collected to send to her son and his friends in Iraq.

She'd also organized others to collect a small mountain of socks to send to them after Anthony told her he was getting blisters from not having any socks to wear. His aunt said Anthony always appreciated how quickly his mother would respond with abundance whenever he mentioned needing something.

The community has closed ranks around the family, trying to help meet the Melias' needs. People have anonymously decorated the Melias' front yard on Roundup Circle with flags, candles and balloons.

Councilmember Jacqui Irwin, Anthony's coaches and others who knew him have offered support, his mother said. "I've heard they are going to retire his No. 6." "It means a lot to us that no matter how some might feel about parts of the war, I'm glad people are rallying around us and showing support for our troops who are doing what they believe in," Vicki Melia said.

The public is invited to attend the memorial service at 10 a.m. Monday at Calvary Community Church, 5495 Via Rocas in Westlake Village.

“We Lost A Brother And A Friend”



Jan 31, 2007 By Keith Eldridge, KOMO-TV

A Fort Lewis Stryker brigade soldier who just wanted to help the new Iraqi Army get on its feet was killed by a sniper's bullet in Baghdad. Staff Sergeant Hector Leija was memorialized at the base on Wednesday.

Leija had been stationed at the base in quite awhile. He helped form the 3rd brigade and so a lot of people knew him. Now a lot of people miss him.

“With his passing we didn't just lose a fellow soldier, we lost a brother and a friend,” Staff Sgt. Michael Bloom told the memorial service.

The memorial is a world away from the fighting Iraq. But all thoughts are with the soldiers of the 3rd brigade as they continue to battle insurgents in Baghdad.

Last Wednesday Sgt. Leija's unit was helping the new Iraqi Army try to regain control of Haifa Street. As fellow soldiers went on the offensive a sniper's bullet hit Sgt. Leija in the head. He died later from his wounds.

Sgt. Leija was not married and had no children. He leaves behind his mother and father and three brothers in a small town near Houston, Texas. His family says he passed up a chance to play major college football in order to join the Army.

“He's made such a big impact on most of us that his memory will stay with us for the rest of our lives,” Bloom said. When we think of him and we think of the fun times we've had with him it will be okay to smile because that's what he would want.”

OIF: Operation Iraqi Fuckup Tet Times “A Couple Hundred Percent”?

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes: **BUSH SAID THE FAILURE OF OPERATION FORWARD TOGETHER WAS LIKE TET. NOW THEY WANT TO MULTIPLY THAT BY A COUPLE HUNDRED TIMES?**

Feb 4 (Reuters)

A U.S.-Iraqi campaign to stabilize Baghdad will begin soon and the offensive against militants will be on a scale never seen during four years of war, American officers said on Sunday.

“The expectation is the plan will be implemented soon thereafter,” Colonel Doug Heckman, senior adviser to the 9th Iraqi Army division, said at a U.S. military base in Baghdad.

“It's going to be an operation unlike anything this city has seen. It's a multiple order magnitude of difference, not just a 30 percent, I mean a couple hundred percent,” he added, referring to previous offensives that failed to stem bloodshed.

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



12.1.06 US soldiers at the site where a car bomber attempted to ram a joint US-Iraqi patrol in the northern oil city of Kirkuk. (AFP/Marwan Ibrahim)

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket containing the remains of Marine Cpl. Mark D. Kidd at a cemetery in Brighton, Michigan February 03, 2007. Kidd was killed in Iraq by a sniper's bullet at a checkpoint. REUTERS/Rebecca Cook

SENIOR CALL-UP APPROVED! Bring The Yougin's Home, NOW!



FreakingNews.com

The Purple Pacemaker has replaced the Purple Heart. George W. Bush changed the medal's name after hearing older recruits will now be accepted into military service. [Picture by Keb of Independents]

1/8/2007 Veterans For Peace Discussion

A number of us Old Foggie 'Nam Vets have tried to Re-Enlist, not to mention the 'Raging Grannies.' Now with the escalation we can save the little chimps butt, before we indict the whole bunch!

LIFER CONDEMNS OFFICERS FOR SENDING TROOPS INTO BATTLE WHILE THEY SIT IN OFFICES



Iraq Veterans Against The War at Ft. Lewis Gates Feb. 5, 2007:
Photo by Raia Englehart

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who spotted this one, and wrote the headline.

[Van Sweringen better watch his mouth: the Army and National Guard are full of officers of who do exactly what he condemns. You know, the ones back here in the USA who write those oh-so-deeply-caring press statements when one of their troops gets killed in Iraq? Them.]

2.6.07 By Daisuke Wakabayashi, Reuters

The U.S. government began its case against an Army officer being court-martialed for refusing to fight in Iraq by accusing him on Tuesday of making “disgraceful” statements and abandoning his unit.

“The accused sat comfortably in his office while the soldiers in his unit deployed to Iraq,” said Capt. Scott Van Sweringen, the prosecuting attorney.

MORE:

***And Here They Are!
Condemned As Despicable Scum By
Watada's Prosecutor!
Arkansas Guard Adjutant General &
Command Sgt. Maj. Spend A Whole
Week In Iraq,
Then Go Back Home To Sit In Their
Offices***

Feb 6, 2007 Staff report, Army Times

The adjutant general of Arkansas visited some of his deployed troops in Iraq last week, according to a state Guard press release.

Maj. Gen. Ronald S. Chastain and Command Sgt. Maj. Deborah Collins, Chastain's senior enlisted adviser traveled to Camp Striker, Iraq, to see 875th Engineer Battalion at work.

He returned from the weeklong trip Saturday.

The battalion is about one-third through its yearlong deployment supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The unit has about 400 Arkansas National Guard soldiers and another 100 from the National Guards of Indiana and Vermont.

"You've got a dangerous mission here," Chastain told to the battalion's commander, Lt. Col. Patricia Anslow and her staff.

"I'm really proud of you all. I just congratulate all of you on a job well done, you're all representing us really well, and I appreciate it." **[OK, gotta go now, got to get back to that office back home. See ya. I'll write some neat shit when you get killed, or lose a leg or two.]**

Chastain also visited soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 131st Engineer Company and 142nd Fires Brigade.

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

Ft Drum Officials Continue To Harass Afghan War Combat Vet Diagnosed With PTSD: "They Have Refused To Provide Him With A Winter Uniform And Have Forbidden Him To Leave His Barracks Without A Military Escort"

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Citizen Soldier Press Release: More info: Tod Ensign, CS, (212) 679-2250 (O) (917) 647-5676 (cell)

Press Conference

10:00 a.m. Thursday, February 8, 2007

**Different Drummer Internet Cafe
12 Paddock Arcade, Watertown N Y**

Mrs. Emily Afuola, mother of E/3 Matthew Afuola, Newark, N J, will describe her unsuccessful efforts to obtain mental health treatment for her son both during his combat tour in Afghanistan with the 3d Brigade of the 10th Mountain Division and after he returned to Ft Drum.

E/3 Matthew Afuola was re-admitted to the Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown on February 6, where he is currently being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Following a mental breakdown and altercation with his estranged wife in November, 2006, Afuola was admitted to the Samaritan Medical Center since there is no equivalent facility on Ft Drum.

Following a ten day evaluation, Afuola was discharged with the diagnosis; “post-traumatic stress disorder.”

Louis Font, Afuola's civilian attorney, from Brookline, MA, will discuss his defense of Afuola in light of his PTSD.

He will also expose a campaign of harassment of Afuola by Ft Drum officials since he returned to the base.

Instead of providing this soldier with compassionate mental health care, they have refused to provide him with a winter uniform and have forbidden him to leave his barracks without a military escort.

This has meant that when an escort is not available, Afuola has had to choose to either walk long distances to meals or go without food.

Tod Ensign, Director, Citizen Soldier (sponsor of the “Different Drummer” internet cafe) will place Afuola's case in the context of a growing national crisis of inadequate mental health care for returning combat veterans by both the military and the VA.

Out of 1.4 million veterans who've already returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, over 73,000 have already sought treatment from the VA for mental problems

One Iraq vet, Jonathan Schulze, 25, of New Prague, MN committed suicide on January 16, 2007 after he was denied hospitalization of suicidal ideation at a VA facility.

Font and Ensign have proposed that the Senate Veteran Affairs Committee, chaired by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) conduct public hearings on this issue and that Emily and Matthew Afuola be called as witnesses.

Ignored Iraq Combat Vet Gets 10 Months Prison For Turning Against The War; Refused Second Deployment

[Anybody out there ever heard of this case? Anybody in the anti-war movement give a shit? Oh, he's not an officer. T]

Feb 6, 2007 The Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado — A soldier who went absent without leave before his second deployment to Iraq said he expects to be sentenced to less than a year in prison under a pretrial agreement with military prosecutors.

Spc. Mark Wilkerson, 23, said he agreed to plead guilty to desertion — a more serious charge — and missing a troop movement in exchange for a sentence of up to 10 months, The Gazette newspaper reported Tuesday.

He will be sentenced at a Feb. 22 court-martial.

Wilkerson was deployed to Iraq at the start of the March 2003 invasion. He said he applied for conscientious objector status after he returned because his views of the war had changed.

His request was denied, and he was told his appeal would not be considered until his unit returned from another deployment starting in January 2005. He said he fled in December 2004.

He surrendered in August 2006 in Texas, saying he needed to face his crime so he could move on with his life.

Wilkerson said he expects to receive a dishonorable or bad-conduct discharge.

“What comes out of it, I'm just going to have to look at what I can still do,” he said.

VA Wants To Double Prescription Drug Costs For Veterans And Turn The Money Over To Bush:

“Why Are We Asking Veterans To Suffer In Order To Finance A War?”

Feb 6, 2007 Rick Maze, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

In a major change of strategy, the 2008 Department of Veterans Affairs budget submitted to Congress yesterday separates the fate of proposed fee increases from the VA health care budget.

Under the plan, any money generated from a proposed increase in prescription drug co-payments and a new enrollment fees of up to \$750 for priority category 7 and 8 veterans would go into the U.S. Treasury, not directly into the VA’s budget.

The plan is explained in the fine print of the 2008 budget documents.

Sen. Daniel K. Akaka, D-Hawaii, the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee chairman, said he isn’t likely to approve fee increases under the new arrangement.

“The doubling of drug co-payments for veterans — who make as little as \$28,000 a year — seems particularly cruel.

“Take the example of a veteran living on Oahu, where the cost of living is so high, who takes seven different prescriptions each month: his out-of-pocket cost goes up by \$600 a year.”

The fact that the fees would go to the U.S. Treasury rather than the VA budget didn’t persuade him, either.

“Why are we asking veterans to suffer in order to finance a war?” he asked. “This administration consistently fails to consider the cost of caring for veterans as part of the cost of war.”

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

05 Feb 2007 Reuters & (VOI) & Reuters 06 Feb 2007

A deputy to the governor of Mosul was wounded after a roadside bomb exploded near his convoy, police said. Three of his bodyguards were also wounded.

Guerrillas killed a policeman and wounded another in Samawa, 270 km (170 miles) south of Baghdad, a security source said.

Guerrillas killed Basim Abdul-Hussain, a director of land transportation at the Transportation Ministry, in a drive by shooting in central Baghdad, and killed a policeman, wounding another in Samawa.

A policeman was killed and another wounded in an attack by unidentified insurgents on Sunday night in central Samawa, the capital city of the Shiite province of al-Muthanna, 270 km south of Baghdad, an eyewitness said on Monday.

Two policemen were killed and a third was wounded on Monday when guerrilla fighters attacked them near Baaquba, a security source said.

Police clashed with guerrillas in eastern Mosul. One policeman was killed and three wounded, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Support GI Resisters!”



Ivy Nightscales, a supporter of 1st Lt. Ehren Watada holds a sign near the gates of Fort Lewis Army Base, DuPont, Wash., Feb. 5, 2007. (AP Photo/John Froschauer)

“Not Only Who Wants To Be Last To Die For A Mistake But Who Wanted To Be The First?”

From: Billy Kelly [Vietnam Veteran]
To: GI Special
Sent: February 06, 2007
Subject: Last to Die For A Mistake

Xin Chao Anh Tom,

Greetings from 'a peaceful & happy' Viet Nam. Ironic!!

I always thought Kerry had it only half right.

Not only who wants to be last to die for a mistake (Is that a 'euphemism' for a lie?), but who wanted to be the first, or anywhere in-between, to have already been killed for that very same lie?

“Now it is not good
For the Christian's health
To hustle the Aryan brown,
For the Christian riles
And the Aryan smiles
And he weareth the Christian down;
And the end of the fight
Is tombstone white
With the name of the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear,
A fool lies here
Who tried to hustle the East.”
--Rudyard Kipling

I am a combat Veteran For Peace.
I am not an OXYMORON!!!!

Hoa Binh,
BillyKelly

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, 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.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

Petraeus! Is Baghdad Burning?
“Defeat Is Failure To Achieve The Political Objectives Of A War. This Happened Long Ago”
“The Surge Is A Criminal Last Stand That Will Cost The Lives Of Soldiers On Both Sides Of This Occupation”
“The Surge Would Inject Fewer Troops Than Are Required To Maintain One Camp”

The principle aim of The Surge is to break the power of Muqtada al-Sadr. Sadr not only has the seats in the Potemkin parliament of Iraq that put Maliki (a leader in a relatively small Shiite party, the Dawa) into power against the SCIRI (the largest parliamentary faction); he commands the ferocious loyalty of two and a half million people and has an 80,000-strong militia concentrated a stone's throw from the U.S.-protected Green Zone in Baghdad.

Jan 12, 2007 By Stan Goff, Truthdig.com [Excerpts]

Stan Goff is a retired veteran of the U.S. Army Special Forces. During an active-duty career that spanned 1970 to 1996, he served with the elite Delta Force and Rangers, and in Vietnam, Guatemala, Grenada, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru, Somalia and Haiti.

He is a veteran of the Jungle Operations Training Center in Panama and also taught military science at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Goff is the author of the books “Hideous Dream—A Soldier’s Memoir of the U.S. Invasion of Haiti,” “Full Spectrum Disorder—The Military in the New American Century” and “Sex & War.”

**“Jodl! Is Paris burning?”
—Adolph Hitler
Aug. 25, 1944**

The United States makes up about 5 percent of the Earth’s population, but as an aggregate we burn more than 25 percent of its fossil energy. That’s roughly true of all three main forms of fossil energy — oil, natural gas and coal.

The reason I lead into a discussion of the Bush administration’s military “surge” plan for Iraq by talking about fossil fuels is that neither the government nor the media seem inclined to talk about the subject.

The problem we have is that our nation’s transportation fleet is almost completely dependent on that other store of ancient sunlight, petroleum. Neither natural gas nor coal can feasibly run fleets of tractor-trailer trucks, trains, airplanes and a quarter-billion passenger vehicles (around 98 million of which are SUVs and larger). Neither coal nor natural gas can run ships, tanks and attack helicopters either.

The other thing we need oil for is food ... more than people realize. In Michael Pollan’s “The Omnivore’s Dilemma,” he traces the U.S. food chain back to the oil fields through corn, which is now the basis of most of our other foods, then back to the oil field. It is widely known that each calorie of food consumed in the world today represents an expenditure of 10 calories of fossil energy, but Pollan’s remarks while observing a cattle feed lot, where the beef-on-the-hoof was being force-fed corn produced by Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland, are more to the point than any statistical review:

I don’t have a sufficiently vivid imagination to look at my steer and see a barrel of oil, but petroleum is one of the most important ingredients in the production of modern meat, and the Persian Gulf is surely a link in the food chain that passes through this (or any) feedlot. Steer 534 started his life part of a food chain that derived all of its energy from the sun, which nourished the grasses that nourished him and his mother. When 534 moved from ranch to feedlot, from grass to corn, he joined an industrial food chain powered by fossil fuel—and therefore defended by the U.S. military, another never counted cost of cheap food.

The desperation of the coming escalation of criminal lunacy is based not on some fantasy but on a real and coming competition between the U.S. and basically everyone else for these energy stores, even as most honest experts agree that world production of oil has now peaked and will begin an inexorable and irreversible decline. The reason for attempting to implant permanent U.S. military bases in the Persian Gulf area and install compliant governments (the real reason for the war from the very beginning) has everything to do with securing control over the region.

The surge plan is a painfully twisted military option, but what is twisting it is not well understood. Stability in Iraq could be achieved relatively easily, even now, in conjunction with a precipitous redeployment of Anglo-American military forces. The strange attractor — strange mostly because the media never mention it—is Iraq’s “first postwar draft hydrocarbon law,” which would “set up a committee consisting of highly

qualified experts to speed up the process of issuing tenders and signing contracts with international oil companies to develop Iraq's untapped oilfields."

This law, which is tantamount to privatization with an Anglo-American franchise in perpetuity, is the bottom line for the U.S., as evidenced by the fact that this is the one, absolute, bottom-line point of agreement between the Bush administration and the so-called Iraq Study Group. The rhetorical scuffle between these two entities is not the what, but the how.

The population of Sadr City, the "neighborhood" under the leadership of Sadr, is approximately that of Brooklyn.

Before any assessment of the balance of forces in Iraq can be undertaken from a purely military perspective (never possible, since military success is always measured against political objectives), it is essential to survey the major Iraqi military and political actors on where they stand with regard to the proposed Iraqi "oil law."

If the top priority is to salvage U.S. access to future hydrocarbon mining in Iraq, then the fundamental requirement is a comparatively "stable" Iraqi government that supports this access. The fundamental show-stopper is any leader or set of leaders who reject this plan.

The catch for the U.S. is that, as we shall see, the Iraqi leaders who support the hydrocarbon law have no legitimacy upon which to establish stability, and the leaders who have the popular legitimacy to establish stability support neither the occupation nor the hydrocarbon law.

When the situation is looked at in this way, we can bypass all the chatter from government and media mystigogues about regional stability for the sake of the people, democracy, terrorism, et cetera.

These rhetorical smoke screens are concealing two inescapable facts: (1) The U.S. has lost the Iraq war and (2) the best retrenchment position possible now is to salvage the draft hydrocarbon law.

The Shiite "Government"

This explains, to a large degree, why the U.S. is harassing Iranian diplomats, even as it courts Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), as Dawa Party leader and putative Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's replacement.

Hakim, after all, is practically an Iranian citizen.

Why would the Bush administration court the most pro-Iranian leader among the diverse Shiite factions as successor in the event that Maliki fails to live up to U.S. expectations?

Hakim has been a consistent and strong supporter of the hydrocarbon law.

The Shiite leader who has most vehemently opposed this law, and the U.S. occupation, has been Muqtada al-Sadr.

The press has frequently portrayed Sadr as pro-Iranian, and nothing could be further from the truth.

The SCIRI has been most aggressive in the demand to divide Iraq into a very loose federation and transform southeastern Iraq into an Iranian rump state.

Sadr has called for Iraqi unification, left the door open to Sunnis for an anti-occupation alliance, denounced the hydrocarbon law, and modeled his political and military leadership on Hezbollah.

Here is where we come to the nub of The Surge, and why it is probably the political death knell of Nouri al-Maliki.

The principle aim of The Surge is to break the power of Muqtada al-Sadr.

Sadr not only has the seats in the Potemkin parliament of Iraq that put Maliki (a leader in a relatively small Shiite party, the Dawa) into power against the SCIRI (the largest parliamentary faction); he commands the ferocious loyalty of two and a half million people and has an 80,000-strong militia concentrated a stone's throw from the U.S.-protected Green Zone in Baghdad.

Baghdad has about 6 million people; New York City has 8 million, just by way of comparison. The population of Sadr City, the "neighborhood" under the leadership of Sadr, is approximately that of Brooklyn.

To realize this helps in understanding the considerations that go into planning a military operation.

We need some kind of comparative scale to really comprehend the dangerous lunacy of The Surge.

There is, in reality, no such thing as an Iraqi government now.

There is this formation inside the Green Zone. Maliki cannot leave the Green Zone without an escort of armored vehicles and attack helicopters.

If anyone can explain how this constitutes governance, I'm all ears.

Congressional and media accounts constantly refer to the Iraqi government as the entity that requires U.S. military assistance to become the guarantor of Iraqi security.

But the Maliki government — or any other government that relies on U.S. military protection to survive for a week — commands the loyalty of only a fraction of the armed actors in Iraq, and it positions itself tactically against most other armed actors.

The armed forces being trained for that “government” are themselves loyal to factions with agendas, and these forces are filled with opportunists and infiltrators.

Consider these facts:

Seventy percent of Iraqis now are asking for an end to the Anglo-American occupation (that number goes up dramatically when the Kurds are subtracted).

And the Iraqis themselves are not merely Sunni or Shiite (as simplified accounts have it) but are identified with three major armed Shiite factions, two major Sunni armed factions, or a Kurdish militia of 100,000 that resides in the north and itself is divided into two camps. In light of those realities there is no possibility of one faction gaining the acquiescence of the whole Iraqi population and the various armed expressions of populations.

The Bush surge plan is designed to eliminate Maliki’s Shiite opposition inside Baghdad, i.e., Sadr and his Mahdi Army.

That Baghdad has become the concentrated focus of most U.S. military efforts in Iraq now is material evidence of the scale of the U.S. defeat there; it is also an indication of exactly how desperate the surge notion really is.

While the U.S. gross troop numbers are about 130,000 (with around 25,000 mercenaries as an augmentative force), the actual number of combat troops is about 70,000.

Before we can begin to subdivide these forces for any possible operation to slaughter and raze Sadr City, we have to account for basic operations and force protection at nine major permanent U.S. bases across Iraq, at least five large contingency bases, and an unknown number of smaller forward operating bases.

Camp Anaconda in Balad alone has at least 25,000 troops.

According to Globalsecurity.org:

The base is so large it has its own “neighborhoods”. These include: “KBR-land” (a Halliburton subsidiary company); “CJSOTF” which is home to a special operations unit, the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force and is surrounded by especially high walls that is, according to The Washington Post, so secretive that even the base Army public affairs chief has never been inside.

There is a Subway sandwich shop, a Pizza Hut, a Popeye’s, a 24-hour Burger King, two post exchanges which sell an impressive array of goods, four mess halls, a miniature golf course and a hospital. The base has a strictly enforced on-base speed limit of 10 MPH.

The Surge would inject fewer troops than are required to maintain one “camp.” If the entire surge figure of 21,400 troops is compared with the number of hostile residents in Sadr City, the ratio is about 112 hostiles for every American.

There is another calculation associated with these kinds of “surge” operations: the aftermath.

Muqtada al-Sadr has been effectively demonized in the U.S., but he is wildly popular and influential in Iraq, especially in southeastern Iraq, which has heretofore shown the least resistance to the Anglo-American occupation.

In an attack on Sadr City, according to powerful rumors, Kurdish peshmerga troops will be used to do some of the fighting, an insane political gambit.

If the Americans proceed with what appears to be a cruel and mindless plan (surely emanating from Dick Cheney’s lair) there will be a possibility of igniting the Mother of All Tactical Nightmares for the U.S.: a general armed Shiite uprising in the southeast.

Maliki, of course, knows this, and has objected strenuously — only to be blown off like a gnat by the Bush administration and its fresh coterie of compliant generals.

Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, author of yet another U.S. military manual on counterinsurgency (none of which has ever worked—ever), is the designated paladin for this disgraceful enterprise; he’s getting his fourth star for this, making him a real general.

“Petraeus is being given a losing hand,” notes former Gen. Barry McCaffrey. “I say that reluctantly. The war is unmistakably going in the wrong direction. The only good news in all this is that Petraeus is so incredibly intelligent and creative.... I’m sure he’ll say to himself, ‘I’m not going to be the last soldier off the roof of the embassy in the Green Zone.’ “

This is the most encouraging thing that can be said by a colleague?

McCaffrey’s main concern, of course, lies with a number of other generals.

The war in Iraq is lost, but the outcome of that loss has also been the severe degradation of U.S. ground forces in the Army and Marine Corps.

The last Baghdad “surge” was in August, when 10,000 troops were re-positioned from elsewhere in Iraq to put the lid back on the city, and U.S. casualties increased.

Troops there now are being extended, and troops on rest-and-refit cycles have been called up for early redeployment.

Morale has been steadily ground down; divorce rates are up; National Guard troops have just been told that the president has overwritten their 24-month combat deployment limit; and material across the board is being used up or seriously overused.

The reason that neither the public nor many of the troops themselves see this defeat is that we have been indoctrinated to see defeat as synonymous with surrender. It is not.

Defeat is failure to achieve the political objectives of a war. This happened long ago.

The surge is a criminal last stand that will cost the lives of soldiers on both sides of this occupation and the lives of countless civilians, and it very well could lead to scenes as humiliating as that at the Saigon Embassy in 1975.

On Aug. 25, 1944, crushed between the Red Army smashing across the Danube and the Free French, American and Senegalese troops marching through the Champs Elysee,

Hitler knew the end of the Third Reich was approaching.

He had given the order to Gen. Dietrich von Choltitz, the German “governor” of Paris, to destroy Paris rather than let it fall into the hands of the Allies. As word of the Allied entry into Paris reached Hitler, he is reputed to have called his chief of staff, Gen. Alfred Jodl, and demanded: “Jodl! Is Paris burning?”

I can almost hear the echo now from Cheney’s office, the curtains pulled, the malignant presence glowering in the dark, “Petraeus! Is Baghdad burning?”

How Charles Manson Kept Me Out of Vietnam; “I Will Shoot The First Officer That Gets In Front Of Me When I Have A Loaded Gun”

February 6, 2007 By ALAN CABAL, CounterPunch

In 1971, the Vietnam war spilled over into Laos and Cambodia. President Nixon had reduced American troop strength there to 196,000, the lowest level since 1966, but the war was clearly an unmitigated disaster and the Harris Poll reported that 60 per cent of Americans now opposed the war.

Americans were walking on the moon, an American named Ray Tomlinson sent the first email over what was then called “ARPAnet” and an American named Charles Manson was convicted of a particularly heinous series of murders in California.

The New York Times published the Pentagon Papers, exposing the pretext for American involvement in Vietnam's civil war as a complete fraud.

I turned 18, making me eligible for the military draft.

I had no intention of going to college. I'd barely graduated from high school. I hated school, so the student deferment was out.

I was 5'11" tall, weighed 125 pounds, and was skidding blindly over the high side into a moderately severe amphetamine psychosis owing to my reckless youthful overindulgence in crystal meth and various hallucinogens and deliriants over the preceding three years.

"Conscientious Objector" status was really tricky to obtain and entailed establishing a religious conviction and affiliation opposed to war in general. I had no such convictions, I simply thought the Vietnam war was an unconstitutional scam and wanted no part of it.

They used a lottery system to determine who got drafted in those days. Each day of the year had a randomly assigned number. The assumption was that a number under 200 would get you drafted, and a number under 100 was a sure-fire ticket to Nam. My number was 38.

I couldn't even conceive of living in exile in Canada, although I'd done some volunteer work with a group called the Philadelphia Resistance assisting others in doing just that. I was fairly frantic about the whole issue by the time I had to register with the local Selective Service office in my home town of Camden, NJ.

I smoked a lot of weed to steady my nerves for the registration process.

As I was filling out the form, rethinking the whole Canada concept, it came to me like a diamond through my forehead.

There was a small margin, maybe a quarter-inch, around the edge of the form.

After I'd completed the thing, I wrote in the margin, in tiny letters: "I have taken LSD over 200 times I will shoot the first officer that gets in front of me when I have a loaded gun FREE CHARLES MANSON!!!"

I handed it to the little old lady staffing the desk. She looked at it, blanched, turned beet-red, and gave me a look that could cut glass.

"Get out of here," she snarled.

And that is how Charles Manson kept this American out of Vietnam.

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR;

RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



2.6.07: An Iraqi citizen prays as foreign occupation soldiers from the US Army, under the command of the U.S. military dictatorship that controls Iraq, throw around her belongings during a search in the Shaab neighbourhood of northern Baghdad. Citizens of Iraq have no legal right to resist these home invasions by armed foreigners, and can be killed or wounded if they do so. They are required show obedience by kneeling on the floor while the armed foreigners are present. (AFP Photo/David Furst)

[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?]

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

Thieving CIA Rat Gave Himself Iraq Water Contract

February 6, 2007 By KATHERINE SHRADER and ALLISON HOFFMAN, Associated Press Writers

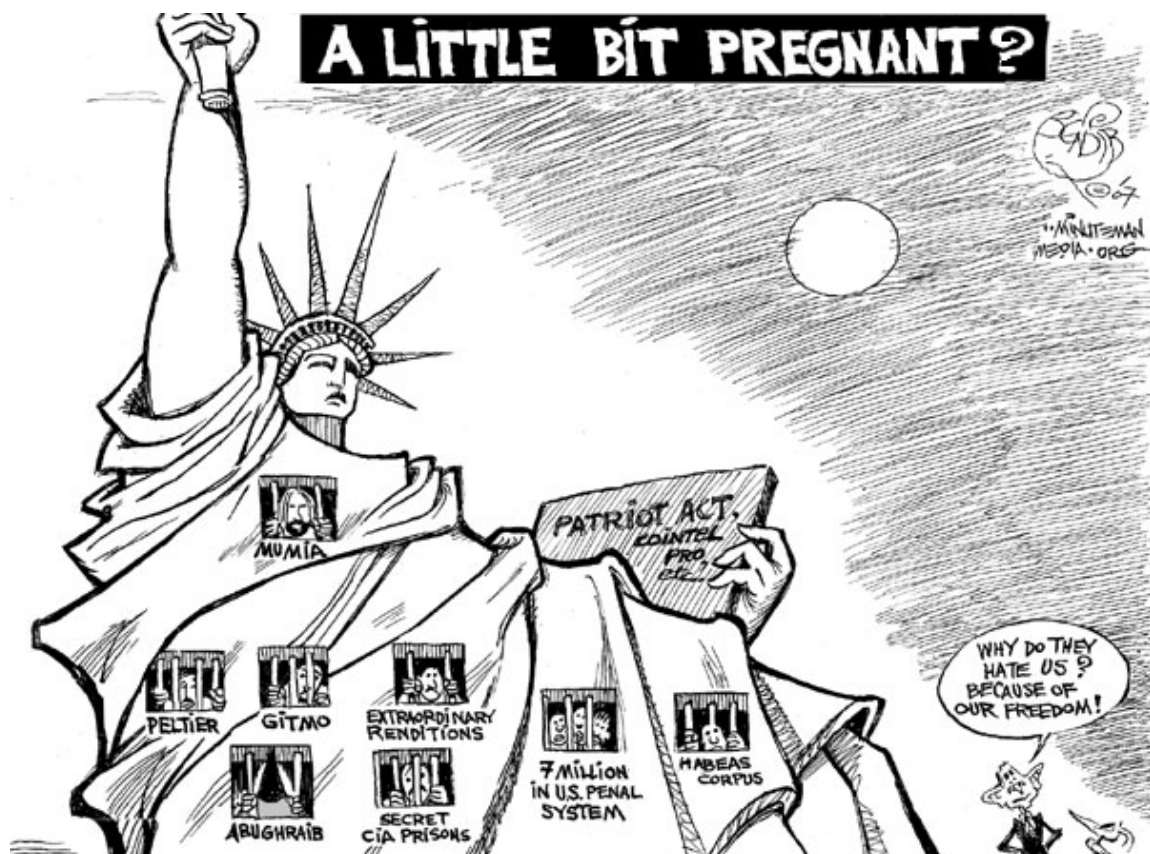
CIA officers operating in northern Iraq bought drinking water from a bottling plant there for years prior to the 2003 invasion that ousted Saddam Hussein.

That changed soon afterward. A CIA officer handling logistics for the Middle East and other regions recommended that an American company provide water and other supplies, according to former government officials.

The U.S. contractor that benefited from the multimillion-dollar deal wasn't just anyone. The company had personal ties to the officer, Kyle "Dusty" Foggo, who would soon leave his logistics post in Frankfurt, Germany, and move to Washington to become the CIA's third-ranking official.

In at least one written communication, a Baghdad CIA officer complained about the no-bid contract. According to one official, the officer believed the deal was simply unnecessary because safe water was available commercially but he was ignored.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

The Traitor Bush Proposes Cutting Medical Care For Americans \$78 Billion To Make Us Pay For His Imperial War

[Thanks to Katherine GY, who sent this in.]

February 6, 2007 Ewen MacAskill in Washington, The Guardian

President George Bush is proposing to slash medical care for the poor and elderly to meet the soaring cost of the Iraq war.

Mr Bush's \$2.9 trillion budget, sent to Congress yesterday, includes \$100bn extra for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars for this year, on top of \$70bn already allocated by Congress and \$141.7bn next year. He is planning an 11.3% increase for the Pentagon.

The huge rise in military spending is paid for by a squeeze on domestic programmes, including \$66bn in cuts over five years to Medicare, the healthcare scheme for the elderly, and \$12bn from the Medicaid healthcare plan for the poor.

Spending on the Iraq war is destined to top the total cost of the 13-year war in Vietnam.

The Vietnam war cost about \$614bn at today's prices. According to the Congressional Research Service, the Iraq war has so far cost \$500bn. About 90% of the spending on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars goes to Iraq. In addition to the spending on Iraq and Afghanistan this year and next, Mr Bush is seeking \$50bn for 2009.

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.net)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

<http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>;

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