

GI SPECIAL 2#B46

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



Iraq Veterans Against The War demonstrate in front of Madison Square Garden, site of the Republican National Convention, during a protest march angrily denouncing the war in Iraq and **demanding the United States withdraw its forces** in New York, Sunday, Aug. 29, 2004.

The marchers were estimated at more than 250,000.

Kelly Doherty, a military police sergeant who served in Iraq for a year and helped establish "Iraq Veterans Against the War," said Iraqis and Americans had been "dehumanised" by the conflict.

"This is also dehumanising United States troops who are also having their sense of patriotism and loyalty perverted and used by an administration that would send our women and men to fight, die and kill for lies," Doherty said.

(AP Photo/Jennifer Szymaszek)

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL 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 in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. **Send requests to address up top.**



2004 Fred Askew Photography.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

East Chicago Soldier Killed By Explosion; "He Was Just A Little Boy"

August 29, 2004 BY KEITH BENMAN, Times Staff Writer

A 19-year-old U.S. Army private who grew up in East Chicago was killed in Iraq, the region's latest casualty in the 16-month-old conflict.

Private Luis A. Perez was a transport driver who died Thursday when the fuel truck he was driving hit a land mine, according to his family. His mother, Lisa Perez, was informed of his death when an Army officer and policeman called at her Hammond apartment, according to his aunt, Yaya Madrigal.

"He was such a tall, lanky, skinny kid," Madrigal said. "If you saw him in his uniform you would think he was playing dress up."

Perez's father, Jose Perez, is a career military man serving in the U.S. Army and is stationed at Fort Drum, N.Y.

On Saturday, everyone gathered at the Madrigal home in East Chicago's Marktown neighborhood to grieve together. Luis Perez grew up there and was raised by his grandmother, Clara Madrigal, for many years because of his father's frequent moves.

"When he was small he said 'I want to be a green man,'" Clara Madrigal said of Perez.

"I said to him, 'What's a green man?' And he said, 'A soldier, like my father.' "

Luis Perez attended McKinley Elementary School in East Chicago and later Morton High School in Hammond, Yaya Madrigal said. He graduated from a high school in New York.

He enjoyed playing video games and basketball, Madrigal said. He also liked to write poetry and had even written one about the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"It's really horrible, because right now we feel like we can't do anything," Madrigal said. "It's like a bad dream."

In addition to his father and mother, Perez is survived by two sisters, she said. In the Madrigal household, Perez grew up with Yaya and her five brothers.

The whole family was extremely concerned when Luis shipped out for the Middle East less than two months ago, Madrigal said.

"So he made promises to my mom he would return back," she added.

On Aug. 25, Perez sent an e-mail from Kuwait that he was shipping out for Iraq. **He had turned 19 just five days before.**

The family was told it will be five to 10 days before the body is returned to the United States. Perez becomes the ninth soldier from the region to die in the war in Iraq.

"I still can't believe he died in that way," his grandmother said. "Because he was just a little boy, not a soldier."



A man whose brother was killed in Iraq stands outside of Union Square after a march organized by United for Peace and Justice in New York, Sunday, Aug. 29, 2004. Bush administration opponents poured into Manhattan's streets angrily denouncing the war and demanding the United States withdraw its forces. (AP Photo/Joe Cavaretta)

Najaf

29 August 2004 Donald Macintyre, The Independent & Jason Burke, The Observer

One armed militant, Radh Hatif, 31, said of the agreement: "If it works, great. If it doesn't, we are ready to fight again and sacrifice ourselves for Allah. If the Americans want to escalate it, we are ready."

In an overt, and rare, criticism of Ayatollah Sistani, Mr Hatif added: "He will be trusted as the leader if he acts alone without the Americans and the Allawi government behind him. Otherwise he is like a robot." US officials acknowledged that they had no details on the fate of weapons rounded up by Sadr officials on Friday.

Sadr militants secured the release of a top aide to the cleric, Ali Smeissm, on Friday - in exchange for the kidnapped relative of the Defence Minister, according to Ahmed al-Shabani, another Sadr aide.

The first two weeks saw US soldiers battling tomb to tomb through the huge cemetery on the outskirts of the city. US officials claimed to have killed hundreds of Mahdi Army fighters; the true figure was far lower. 'I fought for two weeks in there and I never saw an enemy,' one First Cavalry soldier told The Observer .

Many questions remain. Will success in Najaf give way to long-term failure for the new Iraqi government?

An indication came on Friday. While being interviewed by The Observer, a Mahdi fighter spotted a group of officers from the new Iraqi police force approaching in contravention of the peace deal. Muttering 'traitors', he slid the bolt on his weapon while his friend clipped a belt into a heavier automatic. Within moments, a full-scale fire-fight broke out. Four more men, including three civilians, were being carried away, leaving trails of fresh blood in Najaf's streets.

TROOP NEWS



Steve Hausheer, an ex-Marine, makes his way towards Madison Square Garden during the anti-Bush march organized by United for Peace and Justice in New York Sunday, Aug. 29, 2004. Bush administration opponents poured into Manhattan's streets on the eve of the Republican National Convention, angrily but peacefully denouncing the war in Iraq and demanding the United States withdraw its forces. (AP Photo/Jennifer Szymaszek)

Iraq Soldier Tells Mom: Go See Fahrenheit 911

MilitaryFamiliesSpeakOut 7 Jul 2004

According to the Yahoo news (at Yahoo home page) soldiers are stressed to the max already

I have not mentioned the last time there was a close call for my son in Baghdad, it happens regularly, so many times....

Today he was relieving another soldier who was sick and a large car bomb did not go off, it would have been a big one

What is being done to prevent this from happening again I asked; nothing is the answer

I knew I was extra worried There will be another attack in several days again, I hope and pray for all our children

Bush should be the one out there and his evil familiars too

My son urges me to go see Fahrenheit 911, I am familiar with Michael Moore from his tv series and cant wait to go, but as I live a "long ways off the road" it is an expedition but I am going this week

My son says it is the only way to find out what is going on

LMA

Abu Ghraib Torture Followed CIA Manual



(PG writes: Good article in GI Special 2#B14 about prison torture in Iraq, but the following claim is wrong: "Stress and duress interrogation techniques were

invented in the dungeons of the world's most brutal regimes.” Stress and duress torture methods are one of US imperialism's many gifts to humanity. See the following article:)

May 14, 2004 By Alfred W. McCoy

THE PHOTOS from Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison are snapshots not of simple brutality or a breakdown in discipline but of CIA torture techniques that have metastasized over the past 50 years like an undetected cancer inside the US intelligence community. From 1950 to 1962, the CIA led secret research into coercion and consciousness that reached a billion dollars at peak. After experiments with hallucinogenic drugs, electric shocks, and sensory deprivation, **this CIA research produced a new method of torture that was psychological, not physical -- best described as "no touch" torture.**

The CIA's discovery of psychological torture was a counterintuitive breakthrough -- indeed, the first real revolution in this cruel science since the 17th century. The old physical approach required interrogators to inflict pain, usually by crude beatings that often produced heightened resistance or unreliable information. Under the CIA's new psychological paradigm, however, interrogators used two essential methods to achieve their goals.

In the first stage, interrogators employ the simple, nonviolent techniques of hooding or sleep deprivation to disorient the subject; sometimes sexual humiliation is used as well.

Once the subject is disoriented, interrogators move on to a second stage with simple, self-inflicted discomfort such as standing for hours with arms extended. In this phase, the idea is to make victims feel responsible for their own pain and thus induce them to alleviate it by capitulating to the interrogator's power.

In his statement on reforms at Abu Ghraib last week, General Geoffrey Miller, former chief of the Guantanamo detention center and now prison commander in Iraq, offered an unwitting summary of this two-phase torture. "We will no longer, in any circumstances, hood any of the detainees," the general said. "We will no longer use stress positions in any of our interrogations. And we will no longer use sleep deprivation in any of our interrogations."

Although seemingly less brutal, no-touch torture leaves deep psychological scars. The victims often need long treatment to recover from trauma far more crippling than physical pain. **The perpetrators can suffer a dangerous expansion of ego, leading to cruelty and lasting emotional problems.**

After codification in the CIA's "Kubark Counterintelligence Interrogation" manual in 1963, the new method was disseminated globally to police in Asia and Latin America through USAID's Office of Public Safety. Following allegations of torture by USAID's police trainees in Brazil, the US Senate closed down the office in 1975.

After it was abolished, the agency continued to disseminate its torture methods through the US Army's Mobile Training Teams, which were active in Central America during the 1980s. In 1997, the Baltimore Sun published chilling extracts of

the "Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual" that had been distributed to allied militaries for 20 years.

Once the war on terror started, the US use of no-touch torture resumed, first surfacing at Bagram Air Base near Kabul in early 2002, where Pentagon investigators found two Afghans had died during interrogation. In reports from Iraq, the methods are strikingly similar to those detailed in the Kubark manual.

Following the CIA's two-part technique, last September General Miller instructed US military police at Abu Ghraib to soften up high-priority detainees in the initial disorientation phase for later "successful interrogation and exploitation" by CIA and military intelligence. **As often happens in no-touch torture sessions, this process soon moved beyond sleep and sensory deprivation to sexual humiliation.**

The question, in the second, still unexamined phase, is whether US Army intelligence and CIA operatives administered the prescribed mix of interrogation and self-inflicted pain -- but outside the frame of these photographs. **If so, the soldiers now facing courts-martial would have been following standard interrogation procedure.**

For more than 50 years, the CIA's no-touch methods have become so widely accepted that US interrogators seem unaware that they are, in fact, engaged in systematic torture. But now, through these photographs from Abu Ghraib, we can see the reality of these techniques. We have a chance to join fully with the international community in repudiating a practice that, more than any other, represents a denial of democracy.

Same Old Same Old

August 09, 2004 By Michael A. Lindenberger, The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal

"I think we should be recruiting, but I don't like the idea of them being able to recruit in the high schools," said Louisville lawyer Ken Nevitt, a leader in the Louisville Peace Action Community, a group formerly known as Louisvillians Against the War Against Iraq.

"Unfortunately, it's not the rich kids who are going off to college who are joining," Nevitt said. "I am afraid it's the kids who can't afford to go off to college, and the poor students end up doing the fighting for us."

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. 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/>



Protesters march down Broadway toward the site of the Republican Convention Aug. 29.
(Reuters)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

In Western Iraq, The Resistance Rules

(THANKS TO D WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: D WRITES: The tone on this one is beyond ridiculous, though anyone with a functioning brain will find the information embedded within the propaganda useful. But here is my favorite line: "Even bombing raids appear to strengthen the fundamentalists, who blame the Americans for scores of civilian deaths." (Wow, imagine that! Bombing the shit out of people makes them turn against you - especially when they weirdly blame you for all the deaths your bombing causes!)

August 29, 2004 By JOHN F. BURNS and ERIK ECKHOLM, New York Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 28 - While American troops have been battling Islamic militants to an uncertain outcome in Najaf, the Shiite holy city, events in two Sunni Muslim cities that stand astride the crucial western approaches to Baghdad have moved significantly against American plans.

Both of the cities, Falluja and Ramadi, and much of Anbar Province, are now controlled by resistance militias, with American troops confined mainly to heavily protected forts on the desert's edge. What little influence the Americans have is asserted through wary forays in armored vehicles, and by laser-guided bombs that obliterate enemy safe houses identified by scouts who penetrate militant ranks. Even bombing raids appear to strengthen the fundamentalists, who blame the Americans for scores of civilian deaths.

American efforts to build a government structure around former Baath Party stalwarts - officials of Saddam Hussein's army, police force and bureaucracy who were willing to work with the United States - have collapsed.

In the last three weeks, three former Hussein loyalists appointed to important posts in Falluja and Ramadi have been eliminated by the militants.

The provincial police chief in Ramadi, was lured to his arrest by American marines after three assassination attempts led him to secretly defect to the rebel cause.

The situation across Anbar represents the latest reversal for the First Marine Expeditionary Force, which sought to assert control with a spring offensive in Falluja and Ramadi that incurred some of the heaviest American casualties of the war, and a far heavier toll, in the hundreds, among Falluja's resistance fighters and civilians. **The offensive ended, mortifyingly for the marines, in a decision to pull back from both cities and entrust American hopes to the former Baathists.**

Some Marine officers have said that Iraqi "scouts" working for the Americans, some disguised as militants, others working for the national guard and police, have been a source of intelligence on militant activities in Falluja, and on the location of bombing targets.

At the end of June, Mr. Berjes, a former Anbar police chief under Mr. Hussein, complained in a discussion at Camp Falluja, the Marine base, that his government was riddled with agents of the resistance. **"I can no longer trust anybody," Mr. Berjes said in a farewell meeting with L. Paul Bremer III, the departing leader of the American occupation authority. "I don't know if people are working for me, or for the resistance."**

More than three weeks after Mr. Berjes resigned, the government of Ayad Allawi, **seemingly hard put to find anyone to take the job, has yet to appoint a successor.**

<p>American commanders confess they have no answers in Anbar, and say their strategy is to curb the militants' ability to project their violence farther afield, especially in Baghdad.</p>
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Leaving the militants in control could pose a disabling threat to American political plans, which may already have been shaken more than American officials will admit by events in Najaf.



Insurgents operate openly in western Iraq, often taking cover in buildings damaged by American airstrikes, like this one near Falluja.

Resistance Blows Up Another Oil Pipeline



August 29, 2004. A pipeline exploded in south Rumaila oil field on Sunday.
REUTERS/Atef Hassan

August 29, 2004 By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BASRA, Iraq (AP) -- **Saboteurs blew up a pipeline in southern Iraq on Sunday in the latest attack targeting the country's crucial oil industry, a senior oil official said.**

The explosion occurred in al-Radgha, about 30 miles southwest of Basra, an official at the state-run South Oil Co. said on condition of anonymity.

The pipeline, which connects the Rumeila oilfields with export storage tanks in the Faw peninsula, was ablaze after the attack and emergency workers were struggling to put the fire out, the official said.

Ramadi, The Resistance Point Of View

27-Jul-04 By Wisam al-Jaff in Ramadi (ICR No. 76)

"Nothing's happening. They haven't shown up until now," the former army officer muttered into his mobile phone, keeping his eye trained on the road leading to a former palace now used as a base by the local US Marine garrison.

"We expect that at any minutes the Americans will enter," he explained. "And that's why we are now trying to protect our town. The Americans have nothing else to do here but arrest people."

After months of skirmishing with US forces, insurgents and citizens of this town say that they are preparing to drive out the Americans altogether.

They are attempting to emulate their neighbours in Fallujah, where the US Marines have essentially abandoned the town to the insurgents.

The two centres share tribal ties - both are dominated by the Dulaim tribe - as well as religious conservatism and a history of resistance to central authority that dates back to Saddam's day.

Many citizens proudly point out that Ramadi is the hometown of Mohammed Madhlum al-Alwani, a military officer who was executed for attempting to lead a coup against Saddam.

Today, however, the Americans are the enemy.

Ramadi has been a centre of anti-Coalition activity since autumn 2003, but residents told IWPR they would intensify their activity - because though sovereignty has been transferred to Iraqis, foreigners remain.

"We were patient. We waited for the handover. We told the mujahideen to be patient and to wait for June 30 [the original scheduled day for the transfer of power], but we were disappointed," said Hameed al-Fahdawi, 48, the owner of a stationary store.

Attacks, he said, "will continue as long as the Americans stay in the town."

During the past three months, Ramadi has seen numerous fire-fights between insurgents and US troops, as well as the more common roadside bombs and mortar barrages.

Although insurgents in the town did not have the same street presence as those in Fallujah, pickup trucks filled with weapons, their windscreens removed to enable occupants to shoot out of the front of the vehicle, could be found on the side-streets.

For many in Ramadi, as in Fallujah, the fight is a question of religious injunction.

"Jihad [holy war] is an obligation according to Sharia law. Any man or youth who can carry a weapon must defend the town when the Americans enter," said Uthman al-Dulaimi, 38, who owns a shop for religious books.

"Americans raided mosques and arrested many imams, and defiled the holy Quran," he said. "They have no fear of God, they don't respect our religion."

For others, ejecting the Americans is a matter of pride.

"They provoke us when they enter our town. We are Arabs and we have our tribal traditions," said Khalid al-Namrawi, a former captain in the Iraqi army. "We will not allow any stranger or foreigner to enter and wander among us, even on over our dead bodies."

"Nobody can stop them. They arrest suspects at will and release them after torture and humiliation in prison," al-Namrawi claimed.

Many in Ramadi are anxious to follow Fallujah's example.

"The people of Fallujah made us raise our heads high, and became an example in resistance, and locals of Ramadi should emulate them," said Suleiman al-Asafi, 50.

"It's a disgrace to us that we do not resist the occupier when they enter the town, while our brothers in Falluja sacrifice all they have.

"We must sacrifice, and take Fallujah as an example. It's impossible to achieve our goals without sacrifice."

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The US Is Losing - For Now - The War

Selections from "An Extensive Interview With Stan Goff" 8.5.04 by Derek Seidman
For the full interview go to: <http://lefthook.org/Reviews/SeidmanGoff080504.html>

Stan Goff is a member of the coordinating committee of [Bring Them Home Now](#), a campaign of military families, veterans, active duty personnel, reservists against the war in Iraq. His books include [Hideous Dream: A Soldier's Memoir of the US Invasion of Haiti](#), and [Full Spectrum Disorder: The Military in the New American Century](#). He retired as a Master Sergeant in the US military in 1996 after serving for 26 years, most of them with Special Forces. He lives in Raleigh, NC, and can be reached at sherrynstan@earthlink.net.

Left Hook: With the occupation dragging on indefinitely, have you seen a growth in interest and activity around groups like Bring Them Home Now (and other military and military family antiwar organizations) from people serving in the military? What types of activities are you doing these days?

SG: As they said in "Fargo," oh, you betcha.

The activity coming out of the military is not like the Vietnam era GI work. So much is different, particularly the absence now of the general social turmoil that created more spaces of resistance for GIs to gravitate to as they moved out of the military. Lots of folks base their expectations now on what happened then, and some people are even attempting to organize the same models. We'll see what works best through trial and error.

What we see now is, first of all, a putative volunteer military, embedded in a society that is unlikely to exercise meaningful solidarity with GIs who resist openly, faced with draconian penalties for dissent, and not a lot of great options outside the military.

But there have been two points of vulnerability that we looked at with the [Bring Them Home Now campaign](#).

One, there is a ruling class fight taking shape between the Department of Defense and the generals. This Iraq debacle is creating very real institutional problems in the military itself that will take years to sort out. Many of the generals, who are the custodians of that institution and often genuinely devoted to it, are very unhappy with the way the executive branch is using the institution up, and with how they are making massive and often stupid changes in doctrine. They are also not particularly happy with the impacts of privatization - the contracting out of every task in the military, now including even some combat missions. This is worth exploiting. It's kind of a weird tactical alliance, but it need not be a coordinated alliance.

Second, and where we have made the biggest inroads, is among the family members. They are in a unique position, both inside and outside the institution and the war.

With the exception of the Speak Out section, which we don't edit or censor, we evade appeals to chauvinism, even if they are "anti-war" appeals to chauvinism... peace is patriotic, and shit like that. We provide an abundance of information that is de-emphasized in the media. And we punctuate with analysis that points the way to understanding the system behind the war.

The campaign itself is a kind of internet-based campaign that uses our web site to get people in touch with us, and to have them link GIs up with the web site, where all sorts of subversive information lurks. Once that contact is established, **we try and move people into one of the organizations, Veterans for Peace for vets, and Military Families Speaks Out (www.mfso.org) for the family members. Right now, the web site gets contacts almost every day from various media wanting to speak with a vet of family member who opposes the war. That's one way we plug them in locally.** And there is some one-on-one leadership development - a lot done by Nancy Lessin and Charlie Richardson who have become the globe-trotting reps for MFSO.

Recently, a new group, growing directly out of this campaign, composed exclusively of Iraq vets, called Iraq Veterans Against the War, with sixteen returnees. That's very exciting.

LH: In the last interview we did, I asked you the question, "If you were a soldier in Iraq right now, what would be going through your head?" After reading Full Spectrum Disorder as well as Catherine Lutz's wonderful study, [Homefront](#) (which you mention in your book), it seems this was a loaded question with a false assumption about the military: that it's basically homogenous. In Full Spectrum Disorder you talk about how the Left has some serious faults when it comes to thinking about and dealing with the military and the people it's composed of.

SG: That's the paradox of the military. It actually IS homogeneous in one sense. That's both a strength and a weakness. The institutional imperative of the military is to impose homogeneity on a heterogeneous population. By the same token, almost every GI retains a strong sense of identification with his or her cultural roots. **The longer people stay in the military, the more homogeneous they become, but that still doesn't mean they are robots. That's the caricature I get wrought up about.**

I am definitely, more than anything else, a product of military culture, because I stayed in it for so long. My sense of place is stronger by orders of magnitude in Fort Bragg than it is in Raleigh or Hot Springs, Arkansas, or St. Charles, Missouri. But we are not transformed into machines, any more than someone who spends her whole life working for IBM (no pun intended).

Actually, the message to the left to drop the generalizations seems to have taken hold. I see less and less of it all the time. It's a point that I wanted to make with some force, but it seems its being made now, with the exception of a very few but stubborn idealists who are interested in establishing their moral superiority.

Left Hook: Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" recently passed the hundred million dollar mark in the box office. Some people on the Left have been very critical of the film for various reasons, while others have emphasized the broad, positive impact it's having as a conveyer of progressive ideas and impulses to a mass audience. Of course, appreciating the film and being critical of it are not necessarily opposed to one another.

What's your take on the film and its impact? Anything we could or should learn from this Michael Moore here?

Stan Goff: Sure, there are a lot of "we"s and a lot of learning to do. I'd start by making a qualitative distinction between the different political currents that seem to get shoehorned together as "left." Putting liberals, class-absent populists, class-conscious populists, social democrats, and several varieties of revolutionaries along some kind of linear spectrum, running right to left, is a pretty significant conceptual error. The point of unity between these different currents right now is their opposition to the actions of the current United States government - not the US state, and not capitalism, but the Bush-Cheney government.

The post-9/11 drive to expand the power of the security state domestically and to accelerate the international plan to restructure the global accumulation regime by military force set off alarm bells among all those currents, then the build-up to the March 2003 ground offensive against Iraq became the catalyst for a very big tactical alliance that we started referring to as an anti-war movement. But all the distinctions - and they are pretty heavy distinctions - within that polyglot remained.

I'm not anti-war and neither are a lot of other people in this movement. We are anti-imperialist. I don't oppose the war in Iraq. I oppose the US occupation. To say I simply oppose the war- as war- is to deny the Iraqi's the right of resistance. I'm sure the Bush administration now opposes the war. They want the resistance to stand down. In this, they share a goal with pacifists, who say no one should fight. As long as there is a US occupation, I must defend the Iraqi's right, even duty, to resist.

Anyway, now there is a spate of documentary films coming out from several of these currents. Moore's film was well financed, because he had the money from his class-populist bestseller, "Stupid White Men," and a rep from "Bowling for Columbine" and "Roger and Me." Moore has finessed that money, that rep, and his in-your-face style into an extremely effective form of publicity. His clash with Disney over distribution hooked the capitalist media like a brown trout. Moore is from Michigan, where fishing is very popular.

Whomever "we" is, some of us seem to be learning how to make incursions into mass media, and to break down the confidence of people in what they usually get from mass media. There's a lot we need to learn from that.

I don't think it makes much sense - aside from advancing a critical analysis among socialist intellectuals of the ideological current that Moore represents - to burden the film with unrealistic expectations. When we know Moore is thinking of his old neighbors in Flint as his audience, and we have heard Moore say things that show clearly he is not going to attack Zionism or embrace what he considers the coffee-house intellectual left - a straw man, but one he believes in - then why would we expect his film to depart from his populist formula?

This tendency of thought, of constantly crying about the world not conforming to our wishes, is a symptom of a deep malaise among socialists. There's good reason for that malaise. We've been getting our asses kicked for a long time, and we're still trying to

learn some hard lessons from history. **But history is moving into a period right now where we are needed, and not as a bunch of whiners. We have to break that habit, which can provide excuses for not organizing and teaching the way we need to. And the masses don't respect it.**

There is a desperate need to refound the so-called left, and trying to refound it on ideological lines will not work.

The masses don't follow just well-articulated ideas in a crisis. They follow those who can organize an effective fight. That's why Moore's in-your-face style, even as it presents ideas that are not well developed, is very attractive to people. We identify with that anger, and we identify with that combativeness.

And a lot of the kind of knee-jerk criticism was about what the film did NOT do. That's kind of a critical fallacy in looking at a two-hour film. The list of things any film does not do is infinite. The question is, in my mind, what did the film DO - beginning with the understanding that Moore is coming at this as a class-populist, and having no illusions about that perspective? And what I mean is, what impact did the film have on its mass audience, and who was that audience?

Because, while there is no linear continuum from right to left that mechanically defines the diversity of social positions or ideas about politics, there are definitely conjunctures and events that raise important questions that have the potential to shake up ideological categories and cause people to question aspects of their own world views.

LH: Do you know how the film has been received in Fayetteville and Fort Bragg, especially with regard to reaching folks in the military and their families?

SG: I don't live in Fayetteville, and I haven't for almost nine years. But my son and grandson are there, and we visit often. There is also a very energetic group associated with the Bring Them Home Now (www.bringthemhomenow.org) campaign of [Vets for Peace](#) and [Military Families Speak Out](#), and they were impressed with the impact the film had. It was massively attended, and massively attended by military personnel and their families, who came out with a lot of doubts about the war that weren't there before they walked into the cinema.

The reaction was a good example of what Moore's film DID do. It undermined confidence in the mass media. It exposed what superficially looks like cowardice and hypocrisy among Democrats. It undermined the sort of unspoken faith in the political omniscience of heads of state. It exposed - again, a sectoral reality - the war profiteering associated with the war in Southwest Asia.

It gave many people their first look at real images of the effects of war, and of the kind of sadistic transformation that happens to the young people who are tasked to carry the war out. And it highlighted class relations in the war. **The other thing it did, which is something we really need to learn, is it connected with people's affective lives. It hit people in the gut emotionally.**

LH: In your latest book, [Full Spectrum Disorder](#), (reviewed [here](#)) you often invoke the concept of "the initiative" in military and political struggle. Can you define what you mean by it, and how would you assess the current situation in Iraq through this perspective?

SG: In any open strategic conflict, whether it is chess game, a boxing match, a social movement, or a war, there are actions and reactions.

Those actions are based on decisions. Each decision is the culmination of a decision cycle. Military theorist John Boyd described this as an OODA loop, meaning we observe the situation, we orient to what is significant for us in that situation, we decide what action to take... observe, orient, decide, act - OODA.

That action then changes the direction of the unfolding situation, and the cycle begins again. The initiative is when you have moved "inside" your opponent's decision cycle and disrupted his ability set the terms of the next move. It is basically when you are making the decisions to which your opponent must now react, meaning he no longer has the ability to adequately observe and orient.

In games with rules and predetermined end-points, we technically have a standard for that result, for who wins. But in conflicts where this cannot be resolved in a linear way, we can only at any given point assess the progress. We can only ask who is winning... for now. Who is in control of the tempo, time, and place of the conflict? Not who is killing the most people, the body count method, or even who controls so-called strategic terrain. Who has the initiative?

In war, we have to take that a step further. Military outcomes are not determined in the final analysis by tactical outcomes, but by political outcomes. War is a political activity, not a football game. If we look at Iraq and Afghanistan right now, we have to ask what are the political objectives and what are the political costs? Moreover, what are those goals and costs not just in-theater, but internationally, and domestically?

Using these criteria, the US is losing - for now - the war in Southwest Asia.

The US military has long attempted to use Boyd's discoveries to reconfigure the military. But neither the institution of the military nor the US state can really adopt Boyd's principles of tactical agility. Boyd worked his principles out in aerial combat, and they are principles for conscious actors. The military is too bureaucratic, foreign occupiers have difficulty "orienting" accurately, and the political goals of the US state create and amplify their own resistance.

And the ruling class is stuck in its own thought process. They reduce everything to a technical problem to "solve." That's how Rumsfeld's so-called Revolution in Military Affairs came about. They take a concept like tactical agility, and they try to apply it with a digital thought process.

But strategic conflict is not ultimately resolvable through technology. Technologies change the framework, but strategic conflict is a contest of consciousness, and war is political, again subject to human agency.

That's why I haven't been able to share the anxiety of many allies about US military invincibility, or even about the attempt to create a panopticon society here. We're better off focusing on understanding their vulnerabilities, so we can fight them. We have to consciously reject internalizing their gaze, as Foucault might say.

In fact, Boyd's principles contained a strong dose of chaos theory. Every action creates a cascade of consequences that are unpredictable and often momentous... the butterfly effect. That's precisely why tactical agility is achieved with minimal long-term planning and the refinement of the intuition in order to go through the OODA cycle faster than your opponent. This makes an ally of that so-called chaos, instead of an enemy. **Look at Iraq right now, and tell me who is reacting to whom.**

The Rumsfeld doctrine was one that was applied in Iraq to "solve the problem" of how to establish these "lily pad" forward bases through the region in order to facilitate rapid projection of a highly technological, highly lethal force. So the goal of the invasion was not to nation-build and all that.

It was very simple. Get the bases. All the other bullshit is ideo-mystificatory window dressing.

They asked themselves, can we force our way in with these bases and hold them? They answered themselves, yes. But the reality was not that simple, and the actual post-invasion situation confronted the Bush administration with a political problem... and consequently a military failure.

When we measure the tactical success or failure of this operation at the end of the road, we have to look at that. Do they have the bases? Yes. Can they keep them? Well, that's still open, isn't it?

But the ultimate test is still political.

My assessment of Iraq right now is that it has the US state tied up in a war it cannot leave and it cannot win. My question is what can we do with that? What do we observe? What are the aspects of this conjuncture that we need to orient upon, specifically emerging vulnerabilities? What are we going to do? And when we do it, let's take stock as often as we can of how what we are doing is changing the dynamic.

LH: There's a lot of speculation being thrown around about the possibility of a military draft in the not-so-distant future. With the recent call-ups, the transferring to Iraq of troops stationed in South Korea, and the crunch in numbers that the occupation is taking and will continue to, it seems there is certainly cause for this speculation. What do you think about it all?

SG: I hope they do bring back the draft. Bush has put himself out on a limb on troop strength, and **Kerry is painting himself into a corner on it by promising to become the Lyndon Johnson of Iraq.**

It's a vulnerability. We'll eat their asses alive with the draft. The person who seems to understand this most keenly, and for whose intelligence I generally have

little respect, is Donald Rumsfeld. He is violently opposed to the draft, even as he conducts a backhanded draft through stop-loss orders that indefinitely extend troops' service obligations beyond their discharge dates.

Again, the important thing to understand about all this is not how wicked and powerful they all are. They are just doing what they do.

This whole adventure, which is scaring the bejeezuz out of the technocratic element of the American political class, is accelerating the crisis which it is intended to interdict.

They are not operating from a position of strength, but of incredible weakness.

The technocrats didn't oppose invading Iraq. They opposed doing it in a way that undermined the US state's legitimacy. But the conquest of Southwest Asia is, in the final analysis, a necessity from the standpoint of the capitalist class. The entire restructured accumulation regime that developed beginning from the Nixon administration to the present is in eminent danger of collapse.

LH: In your book you write: "Their [the neocons] true weaknesses are ruling class myopia and astonishing hubris. They are constitutionally incapable of understanding history as a process that involves the masses." I thought this was one of the most insightful lines of the whole book. Can you flesh it out?

SG: The key word is constitutionally. This myopia is not a character defect, but the reflection of their lived experience, as a class.

As owners and rentiers, they see the masses as a thing to be exploited and manipulated, and their position requires them to see themselves as inherently superior. Institutionalized as the state, they must see the masses also as a perennial threat and therefore a potential enemy, and themselves as the custodians of order. Their concept of history is the one we learn in school, a history of great individuals with human agency, directing the masses without agency, or at best a dangerous and irrational agency.

This leads to amazing errors, like believing you can conduct a military conquest in a place where people are determined to resist. I didn't see that as an original insight, just one that applied to the Bush-Cheney clique with special force. The international anti-war movement blind-sided them. The Turkish parliament blind-sided them. Then the Iraqis blind-sided them. Then the Spaniards. These boys are not fast learners.

LH: John Kerry just finished his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention. I was a little surprised, actually. It was a little more aggressive than I thought it would be. He'll probably get many people—including some on the Left—behind him more adamantly now. How do you think we should assess and respond to the upcoming elections, especially with regards to the Democrats?

SG: The election has done us one service. It has exposed the fault lines in our so-called anti-war movement. We can see how many of our allies among the chattering class are running back to cling to the skirts of the Democratic Party.

That said, I don't think it serves us well to decomplexify elections as a phenomenon. I will not vote for John Kerry, nor will I vote for my oily, manipulative Democrat Congressman, David Price. They are both cheap fucking zookeepers in my opinion, who have pissed all over our legs then told us it's raining.

I am enjoying watching the Republicans confront John Kerry with his untenable so-called position on the war. Here's the technocrat trying to weasel-word his way past the electorate on the war, and the Republicans are the ones taking him to the woodshed. It's hilarious in a gallows-humor kind of way.

Not voting Kerry or Price is more than just a protest. I don't see the point in expressive politics. This is instrumental.

The form of imperialism is unstable right now. Neoliberalism is in a serious crisis. It is a monetary-military system, and the war in Southwest Asia is wrecking the myth of American military invincibility upon which the current system depends. The neocons are stepping on the gas to try and leap the gorge, so to speak, and the technocrats like Colin Powell, Jimmy Carter, John Kerry, et cetera, want to stop the car, get out, and recon for a way around the gorge.

Just as important for the so-called left is that we continue to promote any activity that deepens the political polarization of the United States and grow the revolutionary left while deepening its connections to concrete struggles.

The elections can do that through organizing around the Nader-Camejo challenge, but I don't overestimate the impact of that.

The election phenomenon is ephemeral. Once the elections are over, and I'm personally impatient to see this distraction pass, then we will have a better opportunity to get back to the business of building and strengthening the social movements... and pulling them away from the non-profit NGO sector, by the way, where they are currently being contained. That's a book that needs to be written, but not by me.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Zombies for Kerry

August 28 / 29, 2004 By ALEXANDER COCKBURN, Counterpunch

Didn't John Kerry ever read about rope-a-dope?

Karl Rove must be kicking his heels with merriment at the way the horse-faced son of Boston is tangling himself up in the Swiftboat comedy. Are there any skins thinner than those belonging to Democratic loyalists-for-Kerry?

The other night CounterPunch co-editor Jeffrey St Clair, found himself to a gathering of antiwar activists in downtown Portland, touting our new book, *Dime's Worth of Difference, Beyond The Lesser of Two Evils*.

There were about a hundred souls assembled, and Jeffrey's seasoned eye assayed the political temper of the throng. Sure enough, at least a score had that fixity of gaze and tensed naso-labial musculature that betrayed the presence of Zombies-for-Kerry.

Here they were, so deeply committed to voting for Kerry that they could not even bear to hear a discussion of his conduct in Vietnam, let alone sit still for a reasoned discussion of Kerry's pledges to keep the troops in Iraq. My in-box overflows with furious denunciations from Zombies-for- Bush as a "draft-dodger" and fervent testimonials to Kerry as a "war hero".

The calculation in the Kerry camp is obviously that the liberal-progressive part of their base will put up with anything, and they seem to be correct in making that assumption. **Last weekend one of these aides took the opportunity, in a debate on CNN, to emphasize that Kerry supported "96 per cent" of the Patriot Act and indeed wrote some of the language of the Act.**

John Kerry announces that even if he'd known the allegations of Saddam Hussein's WMDs were spurious, he'd had attacked Iraq. There's scarcely a quiver in the ABB loyalists. Kerry was issuing these endorsements of Bush's war on Iraq at the same moment that two senior Republicans , Rep Doug Bereuter of Nebraska (number 2 on the House Intelligence Committee) and Rep Jim Leach of Iowa, were saying the war was a disaster launched on fraudulent pretexts. At the Iowa State Fair Leach said the US should get out by the end of the year.

Such criticism on the Democratic side was virtually inaudible with only Robert Byrd and Russell Feingold of Wisconsin, publicly criticizing Kerry's stance on the war.

The Democratic power brokers have even gone so far as to try to squelch anti-war protests at the RNC convention. They want to present the image of a loyal opposition, with the message, *Oppose Bush but not the war.*

After argument with an ABB-er the other day, I asked him about his long-term political perspective . Here he was, I said, beating the drum for a man who stood for everything he opposed: war in Iraq, war in Colombia, war on drugs, war on the deficit, war on teen morals. **Oh, he said, the day after we elect John Kerry we'll go to war on him.**

Yeah, right! Back in the early and middle 1990s the liberals and progressives were exactly as indulgent to Clinton as they are to Kerry now. After almost four years of Bill Clinton, Washington's liberal advocacy groups, foundations and public interest networks resembled the Vichy French after six years of Nazi occupation.

Pressed for explanations for their pusillanimity, the liberal advocates explained that the Republican hordes who swept into Congress in 1994 were so barbaric, as was the prospect of a Dole presidency, that they had no choice but to circle the wagons round Bill Clinton.

So the Democratic Party, from DLC governors to liberal public-interest groups mustered around their leader and marched into the late Nineties arm in arm along the path sign-posted toward the greatest orgy of corporate theft in the history of the planet, deregulation of banking and food safety, NAFTA and the WTO, rates of logging six times those achieved in the subsequent Bush years, oil drilling in the Arctic, a war on Yugoslavia, Plan Colombia, a vast expansion of the death penalty, re-affirmation of racist drug laws, the foundations of the Patriot Act.

The serious rebellion took place in the streets, in Seattle right at the end of 1999, and the insurgents most certainly didn't come from the progressive/ liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

There's a strong case for arguing that the importance of these presidential contests is disastrously exaggerated.

As always, a monocular obsession with getting behind the Democratic nominee means quitting vital battlefields. In the 1996 and 2000 campaigns the AFL-CIO pulled many of its field organizers off its issue campaigns, to work for Clinton and Gore, the very architects of the Agreements that these labor organizers had spent the previous three years fighting.

Only weeks ago Andy Stern, head of the SEIU, blurted out to Dave Broder of the Washington Post at the Boston convention that a Kerry victory might well demobilize labor. He had a strong point, even though he swiftly recanted. So we see Stern sending his SEIU organizers out across Oregon, in an effort to keep Nader off the ballot, who's done a lot more for SIEU members in substantive terms than Kerry ever has or will.

Rope-a-dope can mean tiring out your opponent. It can also mean getting your brains beaten in, and shuffling along as a Zombie.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three Americans, Two Afghans Killed In Kabul Blast

Aug 29, 2004 KABUL By Sayed Salahuddin (Reuters)

At least three American nationals involved in the training of Afghanistan's new police force were killed Sunday in a powerful blast in Kabul that also killed at least two Afghans, a defense ministry official told Reuters.

The official who declined to be named said that two Afghan policemen were killed in the explosion in front of the Interpol Police office and six other local police were injured. He said there were some casualties among civilians too.

He added that the explosion was caused by explosives hidden in a car in front of the Interpol Police office. The blast in the Shar-i-Naw area of Kabul, where dozens of aid agencies are located, also destroyed six vehicles.

The Taliban militia claimed the Kabul bombing

Taliban spokesman Abdul Latif Hakimi said the bomb was detonated by a Taliban fighter using a remote control device. "A few minutes ago he phoned our chief to say that he finished his mission and is alive," Hakimi said.

CLASS WAR NEWS

More Americans Uninsured, Living in Poverty

(Aug. 26) By GENARO C. ARMAS, AP

The number of Americans living in poverty increased by 1.3 million last year, while the ranks of the uninsured swelled by 1.4 million, the Census Bureau reported Thursday.

It was the third straight annual increase for both categories. While not unexpected, it was a double dose of bad economic news during a tight re-election campaign for President Bush.

Approximately 35.8 million people lived below the poverty line in 2003, or about 12.5 percent of the population, according to the bureau. That was up from 34.5 million, or 12.1 percent in 2002.

The rise was more dramatic for children. There were 12.9 million living in poverty last year, or 17.6 percent of the under-18 population. That was an increase of about 800,000 from 2002, when 16.7 percent of all children were in poverty.

Nearly 45 million people lacked health insurance, or 15.6 percent of the population. That was up from 43.5 million in 2002, or 15.2 percent.

(The money has to go for what's really important. If the people can't afford a doctor or kids go hungry, well, too fucking bad for them. For what's really important, see next item:)

Blood Money

(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: What about the soldiers and the Iraqis???)



This photo released by the Center for American Progress and Project Billboard shows a billboard unveiled 25 August counting the cost of the Iraq war. The clock started at \$134.5 billion and will increase at a rate of \$177 million per day, \$7.4 million per hour, & \$122,820 per minute. (AFP/HO/US NEWSWIRE/Anders Krusberg)

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