

GI SPECIAL 2-4



UNCONQUERED. UNCONQUERABLE.
Shi'ia Demonstration In Baghdad (Goran Tomasevic/Reuters)

Panic At The Pentagon; New Stop Loss Order Revealed; Desperate To Keep Soldiers From Quitting The Army

January 5, 2004 By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Army is preparing to inform soldiers due to return from Iraq and Afghanistan over the next several months that they will not be allowed to retire or otherwise leave the service for 90 days after they return to their home base, defense officials said Monday.

The order, known as "stop loss," is a personnel management tool whose use reflects the difficulty the Army is having in keeping enough soldiers available to meet the Army's worldwide commitments.

The Army has not officially announced the order, although Lt. Gen. Dennis Cavin, commander of Army Accessions Command, told CNN last Friday that a new ``stop loss" order was under consideration. **Defense officials discussed some details of the new order Monday on condition of anonymity.**

It is an expansion of a ``stop loss" order imposed last November on the tens of thousands of soldiers who are scheduled to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan this year. They were told they may not leave the service during their one-year deployment abroad or for 90 days after they return.

Now the Army is applying the clamp to the soldiers who are scheduled to leave Iraq in a force rotation that begins this month and is expected to be completed by May. Temporarily prohibiting soldiers from retiring or quitting when their enlistment is up can be a hardship for those who had made plans to leave the service, but it does not extend their unit's stay in Iraq.

The order also prevents soldiers from moving to new assignments during the restricted period.

Among the first combat units to return from Iraq, beginning this month, will be the 101st Airborne Division, based at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The other major units returning this year are the 1st Armored Division, the 4th Infantry Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the 2nd Light Cavalry Regiment, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and elements of the 82nd Airborne Division.

The expanded restriction also applies to the U.S. soldiers who are due to be replaced in Afghanistan this year.

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/>

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Reservist Dies After Suffering Burns In Convoy Attack

January 6, 2004 WISH-TV, Indianapolis, Indiana

Friends and family are mourning the death of a White County soldier serving in Iraq. Luke Frist, a 20-year-old from Brookston, died Monday from severe burns he received after his fuel-truck came under attack in Iraq last Friday.

Specialist Luke Frist was a 2001 graduate from Tri-County High School. His picture hangs on the school's hero wall of fame. "They put up [pictures of] all of our youngsters who are in service now overseas are on our hero hall of fame," said Gary Vandergriff, Tri-County Principal. "We're proud of all of them and hope no one else gets hurt."

Frist was a member of Lafayette's 209th Quartermaster Company. He was deployed to Iraq nearly a year ago. **At the time, he was driving a fuel tanker in a convoy when it was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade.**

"This was his dream. This is what he wanted to do since he was little. He loved his job and he loved his country," said John Rayman, a friend.

"Just an all-around fine young man. Positive attitude, came from a very fine family and we just are all of Tri-County community and high school are very much hold him in our hearts and our minds," said Vandergriff.

Frist's parents flew to Germany Saturday to be with him and they also accompanied him to Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio when he was transferred there Sunday. Funeral arrangements are still pending.

Two US Corporation Employees Killed

January 06, 2004 skybet.com

Two French nationals have been killed and a third wounded in a drive-by shooting in the Iraqi town of Fallujah.

Diplomats said the victims were driving in a convoy in the city west of the capital when their car broke down and occupants of a passing vehicle opened fire.

They had been in Iraq working for US companies rebuilding infrastructure in and around the capital Baghdad, French foreign ministry spokesman Herve Ladsous said.

Three US Soldiers, Iraqi Prosecutor Wounded

5 Jan 2004 Dow Jones Newswires

BAGHDAD (AP)--A bomb exploded near a U.S. military convoy west of Baghdad, injuring three soldiers.

Overnight, two mortar shells exploded in the vicinity of the coalition headquarters in the southern city of Nasiriyah, causing no damage or injuries.

Witnesses reported that gunmen wounded coalition-appointed lawyer Mohammed al-Jawadi and his son in the northern city of Mosul on Monday morning. Sources at the local hospital said al-Jawadi, the general prosecutor of a newly established court to fight corruption, was in critical condition, but his son's life was not in danger.

A bomb exploded as a U.S. convoy was passing in Beiji, wounding three U.S. soldiers.

Two Brit Special Forces Men Die In Baghdad Car Crash

BBC News 1.5.03

Major James Stenner, of the Welsh Guards, and Sergeant Norman Patterson, from the Cheshire Regiment, died in the accident in Baghdad early on 1 January.

Their vehicle is believed to have struck a concrete barrier forming part of a security chicane.

The incident brings the number of British deaths since the beginning of hostilities last March to 55.

The MoD will not confirm or deny whether the men were special forces members, but the BBC has learned they were in the SAS.

Neither of their parent regiments, the Cheshire Regiment and the Welsh Guards, are currently on operations in Iraq.

The MoD will not release photographs of the dead men, nor will it **reveal what they were doing in Baghdad.**

The vast majority of the British soldiers in Iraq serve in the south of the country, particularly in and around Basra.

An MoD spokesman said the men had died in a "straightforward" road traffic accident.

TROOP NEWS

Bush Attacks Veterans Again

January 06, 2004 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer & Dale Eisman
The Virginian-Pilot

The Bush administration is considering dramatic increases in the fees military retirees pay for prescription drugs, a step that would roll back a benefit extended just 30 months ago and could alienate an important Republican constituency at the dawn of the 2004 campaign season.

The proposal would also impose charges for drugs the retirees now receive free at military hospitals and clinics. There would be a \$10 fee for each generic prescription and a \$20 charge for brand-name drugs dispensed at those facilities.

Making the increases even more significant is a provision that calls for co-pays to be charged even when retirees use military pharmacies. Under current practice, retirees are not charged for prescription drugs from military pharmacies, and co-pays only apply when they use retail pharmacies.

All the services objected to the proposal, prepared by the Pentagon comptroller.

"You're tampering with a benefit that was earned by people putting their lives on the line," fumed James F. Lokovic, a retired Air Force chief master sergeant and deputy director of the Air Force Sergeants Association.

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. For copies on web site see:**<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>

Army Expecting More Wounded Troops

January 06, 2004 By Dave Moniz USA Today

The Army is overhauling its basic training to help recruits survive the particular dangers of missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The changes add or beef up instruction on skills that include traveling in convoys and fighting in cities.

Among the changes the Army is making:

- Increased first-aid training. Officials say it is important for all soldiers to have better lifesaving skills, because troops are traveling in smaller groups and can be ambushed without a medic or doctor nearby.**

Washington And London Regimes Plan For Continued Occupation

(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES:

So the U.S. is handing power to Iraqis but the U.S. has already decided to keep 100,000 troops in the country!)

By Kate Kelland 1.5.03

LONDON (Reuters) - British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Monday British troops were likely to **stay in Iraq for years, possibly until 2007**, to try to stabilize a country in the face of an insurgency against occupying forces.

U.S. administrators in Iraq have set a timetable to transfer power to Iraqis by the end of June but say foreign troops will stay on after the handover.

Thug Cop In Soldiers Uniform Gets The Boot + The Most Unbelievable Comment Of The Year, So Far

January 05, 2004 — [Jane McHugh](#), Army Times staff, Washington; Diana Elias, Associated Press, Kuwait City

The Army discharged three soldiers for abusing prisoners at a detention center in Iraq, a military spokesman said Monday.

The three soldiers, all from Pennsylvania, were scheduled to face courts-martial this month, but opted instead to submit to a nonjudicial hearing, in which their conduct was judged by a commander without a jury, said Lt. Col. Vic Harris. Such hearings are common practice, he said.

The general found that **Master Sgt. Lisa Marie Girman, 35, of Hazelton, Pa., knocked a prisoner to the ground, “repeatedly kicking him in the groin, abdomen and head, and encouraging her subordinate soldiers to do the same,”** Harris said.

Girman received an “other-than-honorable conditions” discharge .

“My Lisa kept a smile on her face for the family, but you could tell something was wrong,” said Carole Graff, Girman’s mother.

Girman is a Pennsylvania State Police trooper who has a lot of experience arresting people and would know better than to maltreat a prisoner, Graff told Army Times. (!)

ONLY SIX MONTHS AGO

After The War

'Major Combat' in Iraq May Be Over, But the Dying Continues. So Does the Dread Larry Syverson Confronts Knowing His Sons are Still There

by Lisa Pollak July 11, 2003 Baltimore Sun

RICHMOND, Va. - The war is over. Or so people have told him, yelling out car windows - Don't you read the paper? - as they drive past his sign.

Of course, if the war were over, Larry Syverson wouldn't be out there in the first place. He could spend his lunch hours sitting in an air-conditioned restaurant instead of standing on the sidewalk in front of the federal courthouse in the midday heat. He could stop fearing the crunch of an unfamiliar car on his gravel driveway, followed by the knock of a stranger with news about his sons.

He has four of them altogether. Two are soldiers in Iraq.

The hecklers' remarks don't entirely surprise him. **"Major combat operations" in Iraq were declared over on May 1, and the days when people were riveted by the troops' every step are long gone.** For months, Syverson has felt as if the country were shifting its focus, more interested in tax cuts and Harry Potter and Laci Peterson, less interested in yellow ribbons and rallies to support the troops.

But for Syverson, every day is still clouded with worry. Every morning's paper brings a renewed sense of dread. The end of "major combat" didn't mean an end to soldiers dying: At least 77 U.S. troops have lost their lives since May 1. Every report of an Iraqi attack is another reminder of the dangers facing his sons - Bryce, 25, and Branden, 31.

In the state office where Larry Syverson works is a little black datebook. He uses it mostly to record work-related tasks. But on April 2, there is a different sort of entry:

Branden left this morning at 3 a.m.

And, later, on April 28:

Bryce left a little after midnight.

Now Branden is in Tikrit, Bryce is in Baghdad, and their father begins his workday scouring the Internet for news. He reads about intensified Iraqi resistance. He reads about guerrilla-style attacks on American troops. Syverson's son Bryce is a gunner on a Bradley fighting vehicle with the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad. And even though Bryce's last letter mentioned a different assignment, the anxious father wondered.

Syverson, 54, has vocally opposed the war in Iraq, which sets him apart from many military parents. (Even his wife, Judy, has declined to join his protests, saying politics, like religion, is a personal issue.) But the fear and uncertainty that consumes him is far from unique. Like other parents of soldiers, he goes to work every day - in his case, with two yellow ribbons pinned to his collar - never knowing exactly where his sons are, what they are doing or if they are safe.

Some days, the only thing he can be sure of is what will happen at noon. That's when he leaves his office and goes to the car to get his sign, the one with the two 8-by-10 photographs of Bryce and Branden in their Army uniforms. He walks three blocks to the Federal Building and stands outside it for an hour, displaying the photos to all who pass by.

He has done this for months now. He says he'll do it until the troops come home. "Might as well give up!" a man shouts from the window of a construction truck as it rumbles past the courthouse.

It's true that Syverson opposes the war. He has written his position, in its most succinct form, on the sign next to Bryce and Branden's photographs.

"Iraqi Oil," it says, "Isn't Worth My Sons' Blood."

Besides the sign with the pictures, Syverson holds a smaller sign that says "No Iran War." (It isn't hard to guess, from the pasted-on final "N," what it used to say.) A third sign, propped on the sidewalk, urges motorists to "Honk for Peace."

The periodic honking from passing cars and trucks buoys Syverson's spirits. So does the woman in the Toyota Camry who flashes a peace sign through her sun roof, the guy in khakis who pats him on the back, the couple across the street pumping their fists in the air in encouragement.

"Honk for peace!" the three protesters shout back. "Bring the troops home!"

On June 24, somewhere in Baghdad, Bryce Syverson turned 25.

That day, 11 people stood outside the courthouse. Syverson passed around a birthday card, hoping the protesters would sign their names.

He didn't expect they'd write anything more.

"Please take care of yourself and everybody else," one person wrote.

"Your dad is a bright light in Richmond, as you are there," wrote another.

"Look forward to you coming home," wrote a third.

And so on, until the card was full. Full of notes to his son from strangers who opposed the war.

To him it's worth the heckling, the heat and the indifference, because at the end of the hour, he knows he did something concrete, something more than just sitting at his desk and worrying. He has put a face on the troops. He has reminded people that his sons are at risk. He has made public, if only for an hour, the private burden he carries all day.

This afternoon outside the courthouse, no one will shout "the war is over." Maybe, Syverson thinks, people are starting to notice. Maybe the mounting casualties are getting harder to ignore.

Half-past noon, a red pickup truck in the lane closest to Syverson stops at the traffic light. The woman in the passenger seat looks out her window at the sign. When she smiles, it's hard to tell if she's conveying kindness or is merely amused.

Then the window rolls down, and the man in the driver's seat leans over.

"Are those your sons?" he asks, looking Syverson in the eye.

"Yes," says the father.

The man nods.

"I'm a retired Army guy, too," he says. "Good luck."

It's not going to get Syverson's sons out of Iraq. But at 12:30 on a sweltering afternoon, as the light turns to green and the traffic moves on, for a father who doesn't want his sons to be forgotten, it makes a difference.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The Resistance Closes In

January 06, 2004 Associated Press

Maj. Thomas Sirois, chief intelligence officer of the Army's 3rd Corps Support Command, identified these four major hotspots for guerrilla attacks on U.S. military convoys in Iraq.

- South of Baghdad: Between the towns of Iskandiriyah and Mahmudiyah, and six to 10 miles north of Mahmudiyah, along alternate highway 8, which parallels the main highway. Highway 8 travels through both towns, frequent ambush hotspots.

"We don't typically take that route because it goes through both of those places," Sirois said. "We typically drive on the (the main highway) to the east."

- **On the main roads through Baghdad:** With most north-south and east-west routes passing through the Iraqi capital, it remains a high threat area for U.S. troops and their convoys.

“There are lots of opportunities to attack,” Sirois said. “There are plenty of places to hide and conduct an attack — lots of bridges and overpasses and lots of escape routes for threat forces.”

- West of Baghdad, between the western cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, and sometimes as far east as the Baghdad suburb of Abu Ghraib. **Army convoys came under frequent attacks on the main highway, as well as the smaller highway that passes through both cities.**

“Both highways are main supply roads, and we’ve seen a lot of attacks on both of those roads,” Sirois said. **“Our convoys were getting beat up, especially in October and early November, getting routinely attacked out there, especially our fuel tankers.”**

- North of Baghdad: The main highway, as it passes between the town and former Iraqi air base of Taji, through Balad and to Samarra, has been an ambush zone for the past two months. **In recent weeks, guerrillas based in Samarra have even begun attacking U.S. convoys on the highway bypass outside the city. Previously, rebels focused their attacks on U.S. military patrols and convoys inside the city limits.**

Occupied Basra News Round-Up: Soldiers Ambushed Driving Occupation Booty, Pissed Off Iraqi Soldiers Up The Ante, Basra Head of Education Removed, Unemployed Riot at Al-Khorafi.

Occupation Watch Report By Ewa Jasiewicz

Ewa Jasiewicz, Occupation Watch, has been living in Iraq (Baghdad and Basra) for the past 6 months. You can contact her on 00965 789 5523 www.occupationwatch.org

Approximately three weeks ago, construction workers employed on short-term contracts by Kuwaiti construction giant Al-Khorafi rioted outside the company's Basra HQ. Approximately 60 men trashed and looted cars, threw rocks, smashed the office's window's and lightly injured the head of security.

Cellphones were looted from the cars and the vehicles had to be taken to Kuwait for maintenance.

The group were provoked by 'disgruntled agitators' according to a Khorafi source, who due to the job-for life logic of the Baath national socialist economy , thought they would have permanent work and were disappointed at the short-term job ruthlessness of the reconstruction industry.

Al Khorafi is the biggest subcontractor operating in Iraq, netting million dollar reconstruction contracts from KBR and Bechtel in key water purification, electrical and oil sectors.

Mike Stewart, 42, an unfazable easygoing good-cop-like former soldier with over 20 years experience in the forces explained to Occupation Watch that there were elements involved in the riot who were not even Basra residents or contracted on Khorafi projects. Stewart explained that prior to the attack, Khorafi, trade union leaders and laid-off worker representatives met and agreed to pay a group of acutely disgruntled workers a month and half's wages as a goodwill payment and promised to re-hire them for new project works. Khorafi were surprised to find these same workers returning after their payment to demand more. 'Leaders of the demonstration and some of the union leaders came to us after the riot and apologized for the behavior of some of their number. We did everything we could to accommodate them and they recognized that'.

Occupation Watch arranged meetings between Al Khorafi representatives and the head of the Southern Oil Company Union to promote the employment of unionized workers in the company and for the union to act as an arbiter and advocate for workers in conflicts arising with the company. Plus also to: a) give weight to the union as a collective bargaining tool and b) to prevent people un-involved in disputes with the company from exploiting existing tensions and negotiations which would undermine other workers already engaged in struggle with Khorafi.

Initially Al-Khorafi had a bad start in Basra. Workers from the Southern Oil Company Union at Bergeseeya exports station in Iraq's biggest and most crucial Southern Oil Company physically threw out imported Indian and Pakistani labourers who were supplanting Iraqi workers, 70% of whom are unemployed in the governorate.

Ma'qal port workers staged a two-day walk out culminating in protests outside the company's HQ and threats from tribal leaders to bomb their offices if they didn't start employing more Iraqi workers. Now, boasts Bill Cravens, Al-Khorafi's Texan Construction Manager, 'Al Khorafi is paying higher wages than anyone else in the area - \$125 per month (over three times the minimum state-enterprise employee wage (\$40) as decreed by Paul Bremer the Third's wagetable and is employing more Iraqis than any other subcontractor'. Kuwaiti labour he says, 'Is used in emergencies only'.

Al-Khorafi is currently wooing the Southern Oil Company trade union headed by the no-shit-taking or talking Hassan Ju'ma, branded a communist by Da'awa party devotees and a Da'awa party member by communist party loyalists.

The SOC union tightly controls all access to the company's locations. No journalists, no foreign workers, no KBR, Halliburton or any other foreign corporate interference and no NGOs are permitted. Occupation Watch has been the only organization granted access to SOC locations, including the most sensitive sites, ugly gnarled suction stations, far-flung in dustbowl desert.

Khorafi sees SOC as their 'ultimate client' and the Union, rightly, as a force to be reckoned with. As a result they've donated wheelchairs, blankets, computers, and desks to the Union and renovated a private hospital for Khorafi employees to use.

Appeasement of and capitulation to, the demands of Iraqi workers for the means of organisation and empowerment for their unions and communities seems to be the key to not just corporate success but corporate tolerance and survival in Basra – on pain of strike action and physical violence.

Despite Al-Khorafi re-spinning itself into 'Al Iraqi National' (akin to the Occupation Administration governed former Iraqi Media Network, now restyled into Al Iraqiya) to appeal to Iraqi national pride and patriotism, nothing can hide the fact they are led by foreigners. Their profit is creamed from nearly a century of Iraqi resources and generations and is being gambled and maneuvered around the blood-drenched global geo-political chessboard.

CONVOY ATTACK

6 US soldiers were bazooked to death last Friday December 26th as they accompanied a convoy of unknown goods from Kuwait to Taji US Military Camp. The attack, which also seriously injured an American private security guard, occurred on the notorious Nassiriyeh highway. This highway is incomplete at the point where it reached Samarra which means vehicles must slow down when they reach the highway's cut-off point, making them easy targets for bandits and resistance fighters. An unknown quantity of RPGs were launched at the convoy, with a missile hitting a Cherokee jeep carrying two civilian contractors, injuring one seriously and devastating it in the process.

Last Monday morning saw discharged soldiers from the dissolved Iraqi army stage what could be their last formal protest outside CPA South HQ. Crowds ranging from 150 to 700 former troops have been holding regular and increasingly antagonistic demonstrations involving tire burning, rock throwing, physical assaults and angry abuse, aimed at anyone associated with the occupation including foreign contractors, journalists, and Iraqi workers from within the Palace.

British troops have responded by firing heavy rounds of live ammunition. Such action is a violation of the UN's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms By Law Enforcement Officials which require state officers to exercise restraint and act proportionally to the seriousness of any offence. Such use of live ammo has injured five and killed one bystander in the past five months of the ex-soldier's campaign, according to the demonstrators. **'We do not bring guns to the demonstrations, we never have arms, we don't shoot', say protestors.**

May's Iraqi army liquidation saw 60,000 freshly sacked soldiers in Basra governorate alone. The former officers have received three payments from the CPA since the beginning of the occupation. 100,000 ID (\$60) and \$20 in May, \$50 in August and a final \$150 in November. Now they are demanding a regular monthly survival payment of \$15 per month, to be assured and met within 10 days. 'If they don't give us our money we will teach them a lesson they won't forget for the rest of their lives' swears Sami Samawi, echoed by throngs of Zahkaaan (Fed Up) and desperate looking men.

One approaches me and says blankly, in broken English, '34 years in army. Why no money? Where I go? I have family, baby. Two months without babymilk', he stalls, looks down, says thank you' and then moves away quietly. 'This is their last chance', says another, vibrant with anger, 'How much does a British soldier get per day!?!?' about 50 quid (\$75) I tell him, provoking a small uprising of exasperated gestures and shouts, 'We don't care about our lives! All we care about is our dignity', yells another.

Asked why they don't join the new Iraqi army, of which over a third of new recruits have quit due to poor pay (\$60 per month) and the enormous risks they face, crowd-members answer, randomly, 'We have no relation with it. We don't believe in the cause of this new army...We don't want to join....It's from the occupation, we don't want it. We are waiting for the chance to form our own army...We want to wait until we're an army, a real army and then we'll drive out them (occupiers) out'.

Following negotiations with soldier representatives the CPA rejected the \$15 demand. Since this, plus a massive bomb threat (more on that later), **British troops have had a higher and heavier presence on the streets, with tank and jeep units seen with in creasing frequency rather than the average 2-jeep patrol. Heavily armored camouflage troop carriers have also been seen cruising the streets for the first time ever during the entire nine months of occupation. Black uniformed and ski-masked snipers, unseen in the past two months have also been seen riding erect in the standard Landrover jeeps.**

Basra residents say that these are Daawa party members with knowledge of Baath-loyalists, now collaborating with British forces and hiding their faces to avoid revenge attacks. The word on the street is that the Baath are still strong, still organising, and co-ordinating secretly, but no longer really feared. Or not to the panic-trauma collective social psychosis-producing levels they were before.

Unknown assailants mounted a drive-by machinegun attack on a British patrol in Basra on Tuesday evening. The attack took place in the town centre off Arbhatash Tamooz street at around 8pm. An eyewitness who drove through the incident reported seeing one soldier injured in the shoulder but could not report any more due to having to flee the crossfire. Wednesday morning saw two cars packed with explosives found at Sa'ad Square - located at the entrance to Basra from Safwahn, Kuwait and Um Qsr.

Threats written on paper were left thrown in the surrounding streets demanding for 'major attacks on the British'. British bomb disposal experts managed to neutralize the devices which had the power to totally blow up Sa'ad Square - a space of 50 by 50 metres. Informers were responsible for alerting the Occupation Authorities to the carbombs. No group claimed responsibility for the thwarted attack.

Two weeks ago, Ahmad Maliki, Chief of the Education Department in Basra, was arrested and beaten by Occupation troops for refusing to leave his position. Maliki was not elected into his position. Maliki issued an order for the hejab to be compulsory wear for girls in schools, colleges, universities and institutions, with any disobedience resulting in dismissal and expulsion for both students and teachers.

Maliki, a former Daawa Party member, also demanded tax payments from teachers, removed Baathists 'as he liked', cancelled new years day holiday in

Basra, and declared himself head of the Basra Education Workers Union all unilaterally and without approval from or election by any teachers, local council or trade union members. He has since been released.

OCCUPATION REPORT



UNEMPLOYED IRAQI SOLDIER TASTES THE JOYS OF LIBERATION AFTER DEMONSTRATING FOR BACK PAY IN BAGHDAD (AFP/Ramzi Haidar)

Unemployed Soldiers Shot

6 Jan 2004 ITV.com

Iraqi police fired into a crowd of protesting former soldiers from Saddam Hussein's disbanded army in the southern city of Basra, killing one and wounding three **during a protest over unpaid wages**, according to relatives of the victim and hospital sources.

Hundreds of men gathered in front of three banks in Basra after being told their salaries had not been received.



**Liberation Basra Style:
Brit Soldiers vs. Iraqi Ex-Soldiers**

They said they have not been paid since September, when they received a \$150 one-off payment for three months' wages.

British troops were pelted with stones as they tried to quell the disturbance. Iraqi police fired on the crowd, injuring at least four people.

Ahmad Abdul Aziz, a former army officer, said: "We are bread-earners and have families and want to feed our families.

"Which is better, armed conflict or getting our rights peacefully?"

Witnesses said the four injured were taken to hospital and British army tanks took up position near the banks.

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

Desperate CIA Fools Plans To Revive Plan That Failed Completely In Vietnam

Julian Coman Telegraph (United Kingdom) 1.4.04

Nine months after the demise of Saddam Hussein's regime and his feared mukhabarat (intelligence) operatives, Iraq is to get a secret police force again - courtesy of Washington.

The Bush administration is to fund the new agency in the latest initiative to root out Ba'athist regime loyalists behind the continuing insurgency in parts of Iraq.

The force will cost up to \$3 billion (£1.8 billion) over the next three years in money allocated from the same part of the federal budget that finances the Central Intelligence Agency.

Its ranks are to be drawn from Iraqi exile groups, Kurdish and Shi'ite forces - **in addition to former mukhabarat agents who are now working for the Americans.** CIA officers in Baghdad are expected to play a leading role in directing their operations. **(An old story. The classic was Germany after World War II. Both the Russian Empire and the U.S. Empire recruited Nazi secret policemen to make sure their occupations had total power. Who better than the killers and torturers of the former regime?)**

Former CIA officials compare the operation to the Phoenix programme in Vietnam, which was launched in 1967. That programme sought to destroy the civilian infrastructure supporting the Vietcong through assassinations and abductions secretly authorised by Washington.

Vincent Cannistraro, a former chief of CIA counter-terrorism, said: "They're clearly cooking up joint teams to do Phoenix-like things, like they did in Vietnam."

(Everybody knows who won that war. Not one major power has succeeded in occupying and holding on to a less developed country since 1941. The Bush idiots are proving again that it simply doesn't work. They've already lost this war too. They're just too blind, stupid, and corrupt to admit it, no matter how many soldiers die for Bush's Failed Imperial Oil Dream.)

He said that small units of US special forces would work with their Iraqi counterparts, including former senior Iraqi intelligence agents, on covert operations.

Sectarian Lunacy

David Rennie Sunday Morning Herald (Australia) 1.2.03

Cleveland, Ohio - Christian missionaries in the United States have declared an urgent "war for souls" in Iraq, telling supporters that the formal end of the US-led occupation this June will close a historic window of opportunity.

Organising in secrecy, and emphasising their humanitarian aid work, Christian groups are pouring into the 97 per cent Muslim country, bearing Arabic Bibles, videos and religious tracts designed to "save" Muslims from their "false" religion.

The International Mission Board, the missionary arm of the Southern Baptists, is leading the assault.

John Brady, the board's head for the Middle East and North Africa, appealed last month to the 16 million members of his church, the largest Protestant denomination in the US. "Southern Baptists have prayed for years that Iraq would somehow be opened to the gospel," his appeal began. That "open door" for Christians may soon close. "Southern Baptists must understand that there is a war for souls under way in Iraq," his bulletin added, listing Islamic leaders and "pseudo-Christian" groups also flooding Iraq as his chief rivals

Occupation Retreats From Two Stupid Moves

Security Eased Around Village

[USA Today, January 6, 2004, Pg. 4]

The Army is about to remove razor-war fence put up around Awja, where Saddam Hussein was born. Army troops will conduct spot checks instead of searching every person and vehicle entering the area.

U.S. Frees Journalists

[New York Times, January 6, 2004]

The U.S. military released three Iraqi employees of the Reuters news agency and an Iraqi cameraman working for NBC who were detained last week.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Bankrupt Empire Lurches Towards The Cliff

Wall St. Journal 1.6.03

NEW YORK: The dollar tumbled across the board as the first full week of 2004 got under way, setting an all-time low against the euro, and hitting a three-year low against the yen despite apparent intervention.

With U.S. interest rates at 45-year lows, bond markets are finding it increasingly difficult to attract enough foreign investment to finance the massive U.S. current-account deficit and keep the dollar from falling.

War Profiteers Want More

[Bloomberg.com, January 5, 2004]

Lockheed Martin Corp.'s F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is expected to cost \$5.1 billion or 17 percent more than budgeted, forcing a one-year delay and a cut in the number of aircraft produced.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Blast Kills Eight In Afghan City Of Kandahar

[New York Times on the Web, January 6, 2004]

Eight people died and several more were wounded when an explosion ripped through an area near a military base in Kandahar, the former stronghold of Afghanistan's ousted Taliban, which has declared a holy war on foreign and government troops and aid workers.

Resistance Attacks U.N. Agency

[Washington Times, January 6, 2004, Pg. 13]

Gunmen attacked the U.N. refugee agency office in Kandahar, throwing a grenade and firing shots but causing no injuries.

Received: DISCUSSION ARTICLE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESISTANCE INSIDE THE ARMIES (RITA) AS A FUNCTION OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION

(The following article - an "update" about Resistance In The Army was initially a paper given at a Marxist conference, University of Wollongong, in December 1999 and published in "Australian Socialist" 1/2000.

I hope it will be followed by an analysis of the present importance of RITA and support work for the resistance inside the armies.

Max Watts, 22 September 2003. Comments to: rosiek@bigpond.com)

ABSTRACT:

During the Vietnam War widespread resistance movements appeared in the United States army and played a significant, though even today little known, part in the American defeat. At first it seemed that this Resistance was a "localised and temporary" phenomenon, linked to, indeed caused by, the Vietnam War. However, it soon became apparent that quite similar "modern" resistance movements had developed inside many other militaries, although at this time these armies were not, or no longer, engaged in active warfare. Furthermore, resistance activities, including attempts at unionisation, have continued in the US army after the end of the Vietnam War.

Detailed studies of such movements showed that **SOLDIER** resistance is encountered in many, indeed most, countries above a certain **threshold of capital accumulation**, countries where the price and value of **labor power** (wages, standard of living) is relatively **high** (eg. USA, Western Europe). Below this threshold resistance, where it appeared, was initially an **OFFICER** phenomena, though under certain conditions it could and did spread to the soldiers (eg. Portugal, Papua New Guinea).

Countermeasures by the ruling classes of the highly capitalised, above the threshold countries, such as the complete or partial phasing out conscription (National Service) and the amelioration of the quality of soldier life, have reduced and altered, but not abolished these resistance movements. In these "rich" countries soldier behaviour has changed quite dramatically and apparently permanently. (It would be difficult to engage the Australian military in a prolonged, unpopular, colonial war, for instance to recapture and hold the Panguna mine in Bougainville).

Even in "poorer" nations the native ruling classes and their foreign allies can no longer count on the **unthinking** obedience of their armies. The successful revolt of the Papua New Guinea "Defence Force" against the Sandline mercenaries, the rapid politisation of the rank and file soldiers and their subsequent alliance with "the left" against the Chan government are a particularly striking example. It can be compared with similar developments in Portugal between April 1974 and November 1975.

These phenomena have been widely ignored by the left – unhappy with "militaries" per se and – of course - unpublicised by the right, horrified by the very concept of the thinking soldier.

=====

RITA - The Resistance Inside the Armies - tends to be an unhappy, avoided, subject for the left (1,2) I personally have some difficulty in taking "Marxists", "revolutionaries" – indeed anybody seriously attempting to change class structures – seriously – as long as they ignore military matters.

My personal involvement with RITA began more or less by accident. In the mid-sixties I was living in Paris and a member of PACS, the Paris American Committee to Stop-the-war, the war in question of course being the Vietnam War.

PACS, most definitely a middle-class and mostly middle-aged organisation, had no problems in supporting American Draft Resisters and/or Draft Dodgers, then pullulating in France and many Western European countries. There they usually lived quite legally, often as students. The Draft Dodgers/Resisters came almost entirely from the same or similar classes as the PACS members, though these were usually several decades older. Here there was "no problem."

But "soldiers", GIs, (3) were another matter entirely. When, in December 1966, an American GI showed up in Paris, stating "I don't mind burned bonzes, but I hate fried drivers" – that he had no objection to Vietnamese bonzes burning themselves as an anti-war action but that he, a "gas" (petrol) truck driver, didn't want to die slowly after having been burned by a mine in Vietnam - most of the respectable PACS leaders were thrown into a tizzy of inaction. The GI, who had come from the US Army in Germany, was settled in France; he was first seen as an exceptional, isolated individual, but others, many others, dozens, scores, hundreds, soon followed. "Desertion" (actually often AWOL, absent without leave) was a becoming a mass phenomenon. In fact, according to official Army figures, 432,000 American GIs legally deserted during the Vietnam War period 1964-1973.

But things soon became much more complicated for the anti-war, peace, movements in the USA and in Europe. As more American soldiers began to resist, and as after 1967 these **RITAs** no longer found themselves isolated within their units, they now tended not to leave, but to stay "inside" and fuck the army up (**FTA** all the way !) where they were. They were only occasionally linked up with left-wing, or rather new-left, organisations, but tended to "do their own thing", in their own way.

One of these, important as an easily visible indicator, was the "**GI Newspaper**" often printed on base, sometimes with civilian help. In our books (4, see also 5, 6) we listed

over 400 (American) GI papers published during and immediately after the Vietnam War; obviously this is an incomplete total.

1.3/ As the GI resistance grew, the peace movements could no longer ignore it, but relations were often complex. Many American peaceniks were students, and opposed the draft. Faced with resister soldiers, most of whom had volunteered (7) – the New Left students became confused. Often they attempted to impose their ideas on the GIs. They had difficulties envisaging "on base" resistance, organising, and initially tried to tell the soldiers that "desertion is the only solution", later modified to "in the end, desertion is the only solution".

Struggles around bread and butter issues (8) such as hair length, mess hall food or housing conditions, and above all against "harassment", failed to impress the student peaceniks who spoke of imperialism and – in Europe – Communism. I remember the utter confusion of a well-meaning French Leftist when told by a GI activist: "Communism sucks, I live inside a Communist conspiracy, the United States Army, where you have no freedom, no private initiative; they issue you clothing, medical treatment, etc. That's Communism, but no way, that's what we are against."

But perhaps the biggest surprises came later, as the Vietnam War wound down and – for the US Army - ended in January 1973. The Draft, as in Australia, was abolished. The American Peace movement "faded", the American GI resistance diminished as the now all-Volunteer US military was reduced from its maximum of approx. 3.7 million "members" to about 2.1. Most RITAs, sometimes specifically targeted and offered "early outs", went home.

"We" had once assumed that **RITA**, the Resistance inside the – then only one studied – American Army was a specific American phenomenon, directly linked to the hated Vietnam War. It was "localised" and would, we assumed, disappear after the Vietnamese victory.

It didn't. It only changed its forms. During the middle 1970's there was a serious attempt to unionise the US Army, only ended when the civilian organising union (9) – panic-stricken by the - for them - unexpected hostility of the military and political establishment, ran away. (5). Other forms of action also continued, though now "far from the Left", which had its own problems.

But another enormous surprise, quite unexpected and still almost totally un-reported, was the emergence, sometimes at the same time as in America, sometimes somewhat later, of a new, modern, form of RITA, resistance inside the armies, in militaries of nations where there was no Vietnam war, in fact no then ongoing war of any kind.

The Dutch soldiers, in many ways pioneers, unionised an official, recognised, conscript union, the VVDM, which in a few years utterly changed conditions inside their army. French soldiers – quite illegally – demonstrated in garrison towns in Germany and France; Italian conscripts and (volunteer, professional) NCOs marched in their thousands. In Switzerland (where we had been told "this can never happen in our totally accepted militia military") soldiers formed

"Soldatenkomites" and published their GI newspapers, almost identical apart from the language with American or Swedish.

In the mid-seventies David Cortright and I studied the then available data – and strengthened a "THRESHOLD THEORY" which I had initially suggested in the early seventies (4).

From our observation we noted that

1/ a new form of soldier resistance (RITA) had appeared after the mid-nineteen sixties in a number of countries.

2/ the countries where this soldier resistance developed – when ranked by Gross National Product per Capita – were (almost) all **above** a certain **economic THRESHOLD, a certain degree of CAPITAL ACCUMULATION**. (The two exceptions: South Africa and Portugal have specific conditions explaining their situation).

Amongst the countries above the threshold there were initially three groups where we could not observe "soldier" resistance:

2a/ OPEC countries, whose inclusion amongst highly ranking nations is due to a statistic rather than cultural development.

2b/ Countries of the Australian – Japanese – British group, where the all-volunteer military is relatively much smaller than in nations with mass armies. However, later observation has shown that tendencies towards RITA also exist in these countries, although its forms are different.

2c/ Countries such as Israel, where there may be widespread national consensus in "the mission" as perceived by the dominant elements in society. However, here too RITA has appeared despite this countervailing trend.

3/ At or just below the threshold resistance tends to appear first in the "more educated" technical services, the navy and air force, rather than in the (terrestrial) army.

4/ **below** the threshold left-wing military resistance, if it occurs, tends to be limited to **officers**.

5/ There seems to be a negative correlation between capital accumulation and the officer ranks in which resistance appears, i.e. the poorer the country, the higher the ranks in which left-tending resistance may first appear.

=====

Although these observations can hardly be contested, they can be countered by two (obvious) questions:

6/ Is this RITA really a new phenomenon, only found in modern armies, or has it occurred periodically already in the past ?

7/ Even if RITA took this form for the first time in or after the 1960's, was it not temporary and has it not – in part as a result of its own successes in changing military life, in part because of countermeasures applied by the ruling classes - already disappeared ?

We attempted to study these questions in "Left Face (5) and believe that the answer to both is a qualified **"NO"**. However, an updated analysis of these points requires much further study, which we are now no longer in a position to conduct. Such a study should be done in the first place by serving soldiers and their associates.

We believe that the threshold theory, first formulated in the early 1970's, has been confirmed by subsequent events. The Chilean disaster of 1973, the Portuguese revolution of 1974-75, gave good examples of "below the threshold" military behaviour. (See 5). The counter-measures applied by the ruling classes of the "highly capitalised" capitalist countries – in the first place the downgrading or abolition of conscription, its replacement by much smaller volunteer militaries - have changed the character of RITA in these countries, but do not seem to have abolished it. In the formerly socialist dictatorships (Eastern Europe, ex-USSR) – economically at, near, or below the threshold - whose armies were only discussed summarily in "Left Face" – very similar trends towards RITA have emerged.

RITA does not mean that soldiers will resist any and all missions, but rather that if a mission is repugnant to the rank and file, it can no longer be carried out unconditionally. It is, for instance, quite possible to use the Australian army for – un-armed - Peace Keeping on Bougainville; but even its volunteer soldiers would probably perform very badly if sent against the Bougainvillian BRA to capture Panguna for Rio Tinto.

In East Timor there is no doubt that the Australian soldiers see themselves as "useful" and positive and perform not only well, but very well.

The revolt of the PNG army in March 1997 is also a good example of what we call "induced" soldier resistance. With remarkably few exceptions the PNG "DF" soldiers fought their brothers, villagers in Bougainville, for 8 years without any developed resistance. This – in accordance with our threshold observations – is "normal" for below the threshold societies, where a volunteer soldier does not see military service as a drop in his quality of life. Here the "three hots and a cot" are an "improvement" on village life; "below the threshold" his education and training do not seem to produce, as in highly capitalised nations, a self-developing resistance movement. But although in such armies soldiers seem to accept much without beginning to resist, once their officers start such movements they can become "fast learners".

In PNG, once General Singirok had decided to stop the mercenaries, which in fact meant an end to the war against Bougainville, he quickly needed and obtained the active cooperation of mid-level officers. These, too, soon had to obtain the support of the rank-and-file soldiers. But as in Portugal, at a certain point the officers, almost afraid of their success, called a halt to their movement, and, as in Portugal, the now mobilised rank and file now said: "Sorry Sir(s), these orders are a betrayal of our cause, of our "allies". And – in decisive moments – these previously passive soldiers carried their action forwards, even against their "left" officers (10).

In – far below the threshold - Indonesia the soldiers of the TNI have, so far, shot Timorese, students, Aceans, workers, as ordered. There is little sign of an independent

soldier resistance. However, it is quite probable that at a certain point some senior officers, Majors, Colonels, Generals, will "resist", will try and move the – till now solidly reactionary – army towards the left. Their success will surely depend on their ability to link up with a civilian left and also to "induce" RITA amongst their – till now obediently passive – rank and file.

=====
(1) Many "old left" communist parties, parties which are no longer really with us, but who were once important players (particularly in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal), tended to concentrate on officers, and – by the Vietnam War, New Left, period, to ignore and "disconsider", even oppose, "soldier resistance"(2).

(2) Soldiers, of course, are not officers, nor are officers soldiers, though for purpose of simplicity here the term "soldier" is extended to cover the rank and file of all services (army, marines, navy and air force).

(3) American soldiers of course, those of other nationalities were not yet in the picture.

(4) Cortright, David. *Soldiers in Revolt: The American Military Today*. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1975. OP. Xerox copies available from Max Watts (A\$ 40)

(5) Watts, Max. *US-Army Europe: Von der Desertion zum Widerstand in der Kaserne, oder wie die U-Bahn zur RITA fuhr (From desertion to on-base resistance, or: how the Underground Railway led to Resistance Inside the Army)*. West Berlin: Harald Kater Verlag, 1989. DM 10/ A\$ 10 in German, English text (without illustrations or Appendixes: A\$ 10 from Max Watts.

(6) Cortright, David and Watts, Max. *Left Face: Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies*, ISBN 0-313-27626-9. Greenwood Press, Westport CT, USA, 1991 US 59.95

(7) According to our calculations, the highest proportion of (all male) draftees in the US military during the Vietnam war was approx. 17%; in the Australian military I believe there were never more than 10% conscripted National Servicemen, no women.

(8) except "racism". The civilian peaceniks rarely tried to impose their ideas on the black brothers... and when they did, didn't get far.

(9) *The AFGE – American Federation of Government Employees* – see also *Left Face* (6), ch. 3

(10) I have discussed the PNG Officer and Soldier RITA in a number of papers, the most recent is: RN3204 MLOC: A review of Mary-Louise O'Callaghan's "Enemies Within" (Max Watts)

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited."