

GI SPECIAL 3A13:



**"Don't Worry, You're A
Civilian. You Won't Get
Hurt."**

**Marine Brings The War Home With
Him;
Kills And Is Killed By Cops**

[Thanks to John Gingerich and Diane Rejman, who sent in this material. Diane writes: And everybody is saying, "I don't know what happened to him. He was such an easy going guy until he came back from Iraq."]

[Shit - they don't WANT to know what happened! Wake up, America! War is horror. If he DIDN'T change, he might not have been human. Wage peace.]

January 12, 2005 Meredith May, Matthew B, Stannard, San Francisco Chronicle & (CNN) & January 11, 2005 By Patrick Giblin, Modesto Bee Staff Writer

Ceres, Stanislaus County -- Marine Lance Cpl. Andres Raya told his mother that he wanted just one thing for Christmas, relatives say -- to stay in Ceres instead of returning to military duty in Iraq.

The 19-year-old Marine's holiday wish now haunts his family and friends, who believe his reaction to the war may have played a role in his shooting Sunday night of two Ceres police officers, one of whom died.

It also alarms military mental health experts, who say Raya may have been suffering from post-traumatic stress in the days before the incident, which ended when police shot him to death.

Raya was a driver in the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment -- an element of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, much of which is serving in Iraq.

According to the Marines, he had been awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Andres Raya was scheduled to report back to Camp Pendleton, near San Diego, on Sunday after a weekend leave.

Instead, police said, he went out with a semiautomatic rifle and drew officers into an ambush outside a liquor store in Ceres, a town of about 35,000 next door to his hometown of Modesto.

Ceres police spokesman Jason Woodman said Raya had walked into the store and "was pacing around, acting strange."

He walked back outside, fired a shot with his rifle and went back inside, telling employees he had been shot and to call police.

"As he saw the officers, he immediately engaged in gunfire with them," Woodman said. He said Raya chased the officers as they pulled back, still firing his rifle.

"It's very evident that he was intent on engaging these officers in gunfire, and that he was not concerned with the bullets that were going to be flying in his direction," Woodman said.

Ceres police Sgt. Howard Stevenson was killed almost instantly when he arrived at the scene, said Art de Werk, the city's director of public safety.

Another officer, Sam Ryno, was in serious condition at a Modesto hospital Monday evening.

Homicide investigators said Raya apparently had been intent on dying at the hands of police when he went to a liquor store armed with a semiautomatic rifle.

"By the statements the suspect made at the scene, it was clear he wanted to die and take as many cops down as he could in the process," said Lt. Bill Heyne, lead investigator for the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department.

He said that as Raya ran from police, he was telling residents, "Don't worry, you're a civilian. You won't get hurt."

Raya wounded Officer Sam Ryno and shot Stevenson twice in the head, killing him. Stevenson, 39, the first officer killed in the line of duty in Ceres, leaves behind a wife and two daughters, ages 19 and 13, and an 18-year-old son.

For Raya's friends and relatives left behind, it's hard to fathom why a teenager they said had never been in trouble with the law could turn so violent.

"It's awful what happened, and we don't want to make excuses because it's a double tragedy," said cousin Araceli Valdez, 23. "But we do know one thing. That man on the liquor store surveillance cameras wasn't our cousin. He wasn't Andy anymore."

Raya's lifelong friend Lalo Madrigal said Raya "just wasn't the same after the war - he couldn't hold a conversation anymore."

Raya was eager to graduate from Ceres High School in 2003 so he could join the Marines, said his recruiter, Staff Sgt. Robert Tellez. He pegged Raya as a possible career Marine, based on his family support and his participation in Marine activities before he left for boot camp.

But when Raya returned to his family last fall, he was questioning the purpose of the war and encouraging his relatives to see Michael Moore's anti-war movie, "Fahrenheit 9/11," said his 24-year-old cousin, Alex Raya.

"He showed us pictures of this guy's hand hanging off," he said. "He told us about going into homes and shooting them up, and he said he wouldn't pull the trigger a lot because he didn't want to kill anyone."

At Thanksgiving, he told his family he had seen Marines commit suicide rather than continue fighting in Iraq.

"He kept saying it was a war that had no point, that it was all for oil, and it made no sense that we were after (Osama) bin Laden but went after Saddam Hussein instead," Alex Raya said.

Friends said Raya would stare into space during conversations or lock himself in his room and listen to CDs for hours.

Once, they said, he fell asleep at a party, and when his friends shook him awake, he screamed at them and reached for a gun that wasn't there.

Relatives said Raya hadn't sought counseling. "We thought it was normal," said another cousin, Marisa Raya, 27. "I mean, how can you not see the things he saw and not be affected in your soul?"

Studies have suggested at least 17 percent of returning Iraq war veterans experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

Witnesses told police the suspect ducked into a home on Caswell Avenue about two blocks from the liquor store. Officers from the Ceres, Modesto, Turlock and Newman police departments as well as the Stanislaus and Merced Sheriff's offices and the California Highway Patrol responded.

Nearly one square mile of the city's roads were closed as a California Highway Patrol helicopter hovered overhead and police officers and SWAT teams took positions around the home.

Police officers shot out street lights to diminish the suspects vision, Applegate said.

At first, residents in the area were told to lock their doors and turn off their lights. Then about 10 p.m., officers began evacuating homes.

At about 11:30 p.m., the suspect was spotted behind the home. Applegate said the suspect "initiated a gunfight."

NEED 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/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

One U.S. Soldier Wounded In Samarra Fighting

January 12, 2005 By Seattle Times news services

Insurgents struck twice in Samarra, a perennial hot spot 80 miles north of Baghdad, killing five Iraqi troops and a civilian, police said.

In one attack, gunmen closed off an intersection near the Razzaq mosque, witnesses said. When a U.S. military convoy approached, a car bomb exploded,

killing an Iraqi soldier and a passer-by. A U.S. soldier also was injured in the blast, the military said.

Lt. General Says Ukrainian Deaths Not An Accident

KIEV, January 12 (Itar-Tass)

A mourning ceremony for eight Ukrainian soldiers, who died in Iraq, has been started in the Borispol airport of Kiev. Their dead bodies were brought to Ukraine by a U.S. warplane on Wednesday.

Eight Ukrainian soldiers died and six were wounded in Iraq on January 9 as a result of a bomb explosion. **Lieutenant General Vladimir Mozharovsky, acting commander of the Ukrainian Ground Troops, believes the bomb explosion was the result of “an action planned in advance.”** The bomb explosion killed as well a Kazakh soldier and injured another four.

Rocket-Propelled Grenade Shot At Japanese Camp; Japan Government Says Mission Is Oil

January 12, 2005 TOKYO (AP)

A rocket-propelled grenade was shot into the Japanese troops' camp in southern Iraq Wednesday but did not explode, the Defense Agency said. There were no injuries or damage, it said.

A large explosion was heard in the early hours of Wednesday. An inspection after daybreak found an unexploded grenade with its fuse still attached in an open area within the camp, **said an agency spokesman on customary condition of anonymity.**

Wednesday's attack follows an unidentified explosion heard the previous day and comes amid concerns that an escalating insurgency across Iraq is threatening Japan's troops.

The pro-U.S. Japanese government argues that the dispatch is needed to help stabilize Iraq, **secure vital Middle East oil flows to Japan**, and insists Samawah is stable.

TROOP NEWS

Sgt. Benderman Makes It Official: Stewart Soldier Refuses To Deploy

January 12, 2005 By Russ Bynum, Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — A Fort Stewart soldier and veteran of the 2003 invasion of Iraq refused to deploy for a second combat tour last week, days after telling commanders he was seeking conscientious objector status.

Sgt. Kevin Benderman, 40, says he became morally opposed to war after seeing it firsthand during his first Iraq tour. **Now he faces a possible court-martial after he failed to deploy last Friday with his unit in the Army's 3rd Infantry Division.**

"I told them that I refused deployment because I just couldn't go back over there," Benderman said Wednesday. "If I'm going to sit up there and tell everyone that I do not believe in war, why would I go back to a war zone?"

Benderman, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle mechanic with nine years in the Army, filed notice with his commanders Dec. 28 that he was preparing a conscientious objector application.

Fort Stewart received Benderman's notice just a week before the 3rd Infantry, which helped lead the 2003 assault on Baghdad, began deploying its 19,000 troops to Iraq for at least year. The division is the first in the Army tapped for a second tour in Iraq since the 2003 invasion.

Lt. Col. Cliff Kent, a Fort Stewart spokesman, said Benderman was being considered absent without leave because he had orders to deploy to Iraq while the Army processed his conscientious objector claim.

Kent said the Army has not decided whether to bring charges against him.

"He was AWOL from the unit's movement," Kent said. "Beginning the application process for conscientious objection does not preclude you from deploying."

Benderman has been reassigned to a rear detachment unit at Fort Stewart while his case is processed, Kent said.

Benderman served in Iraq from March to September 2003 with the 4th Infantry Division based at Fort Hood, Texas.

When he later transferred to the 3rd Infantry at Fort Stewart, Benderman said, he was already questioning the morality of the destruction he had witnessed.

"You can sit around your house and discuss this thing in abstract terms, but until you see and experience it for yourself, you just don't know how bad it is," he said. "How is it an honorable thing to teach a kid how to look through the sights of a rifle and kill another human being? War is the ultimate in violence and it is indiscriminate."

Asked why he waited until a week before his unit deployed to file notice of his objector claim, Benderman said, "It takes time for you to make sure that you 100 percent want to do things. This is not something you make a snap judgment on."

Filing an objector claim does not prevent the Army from prosecuting soldiers for disobeying orders.

“Army’s Wheels Are Going To Come Off,” General Says; Running Out Of “Fresh Bodies” COS Says: Military Historian Warns Of Time “Soldiers Were Deserting In Doves, Enlisted Men Were Fragging Their Officers”

[Thanks to Phil G. who sent this in.]

He pledged to do his best to meet the demand of commanders in Iraq for fresh bodies, but added, "I can't promise more than I've got ..."

Jan. 10, 2005 By MARK THOMPSON, Time Magazine

"The Army's wheels are going to come off in the next 24 months," Barry McCaffrey, a retired four-star Army general, said last week.

Army officers also have begun voicing concern that they are soon going to run out of Reserve troops to fight in Iraq, which would place even more strain on active-duty forces.

Under Pentagon policy, reservists and Guard troops can serve no more than 24 months total on a single military operation.

The military has already released some Reserve troops from deployment because they have hit the 24-month ceiling--or offered them a \$1,000 monthly tax-free bonus to waive the rule.

Robert Scales, a retired Army major general and military historian, believes that the recruitment problem is affecting the Reserves and National Guard first because they reflect the mood of the times more quickly.

"Those of us who were in Vietnam in 1969 remember all the pronouncements about how good things were going," Scales says, recalling that Pentagon figures at that time showed retention numbers to be solid.

"But in 1970 the whole thing collapsed, and the Army simply broke." Soldiers were deserting in droves, enlisted men were fragging their officers, and illegal drug use was skyrocketing.

General Peter Schoomaker, the Army Chief of Staff who was plucked from retirement by Rumsfeld in 2003, told Congress in November that he was in danger of running out of troops. "It's going to get harder the longer we go with this, no question about it," he said.

He pledged to do his best to meet the demand of commanders in Iraq for fresh bodies, but added, "I can't promise more than I've got ..."

"How effective is the Guard going to be if its troops don't have much military experience?" says Lawrence Korb, Pentagon personnel chief during the Reagan Administration.

What's more, the military may have to begin promoting soldiers with inadequate experience if senior sergeants flee. "Promoting more rapidly leads to a less effective military," Korb says. "We're going to end up with a less effective force and, in another year, I think we could break it."

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 inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

Big Surprise! It's Official!! NO WMDs In Iraq

[THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: Don't even bother looking for the freedom they supposedly brought by gunpoint.]

January 12, 2005 By Seattle Times news services

The hunt for biological, chemical and nuclear weapons in Iraq has come to an end nearly two years after President Bush ordered U.S. troops to disarm Saddam Hussein. The top CIA weapons hunter is home, and analysts are back at Langley, Va.

In interviews, officials who served with the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) said the violence in Iraq, coupled with a lack of new information, led them to fold up the effort shortly before Christmas.

Comment from JB 1.12.04: Doesn't this just fry you? F'ing criminals, all of them. Why hasn't bush been impeached? What the hell's wrong with the Dems? I just don't get it.

[Reply: Democrats are for the war and for the Empire. You want to stop the war, build a movement at home and in the armed forces against it. The Democrats brought you Vietnam. The movements stopped it. T]

U.S. Tells Turks It Can't Fight Kurds

[New York Times, January 12, 2005] **Gen. Abizaid told the Turkish government that American forces are stretched too thin to help the Turks fight Kurdish guerrillas who have been using northern Iraq as a base for attacks on Turkish troops. [If command can't even fight the Kurds, the Venezuelans or the Iranians could inflict a real ass-whipping.]**

Soldier Who Fought Stop-Loss Back In Iraq

January 11, 2005 By Caryn Rousseau, Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK — Family members say an Arkansas soldier is back in Iraq after suing the Army in a challenge to its policy requiring him to serve a longer term in the war-torn country.

Spc. David Qualls of Morrilton and seven other soldiers filed the suit last month, when Qualls was home on leave. His mother-in-law, Betty McElvana of Morrilton, said Monday that he was back in Iraq.

"He seems to be doing OK," McElvana said in a phone interview. "My daughter talks to him over the Internet just about every day. She said that everything was going OK."

Qualls, a truck driver in civilian life, said his income had dropped 80 percent since his deployment and his wife and daughter were taking medication to cope with the stress of his absence.

County Marine Recovering

January 11, 2005 By SHERRI CONER, Daily Journal staff writer, Johnson County, Indiana

Eleven-year-old Amber Bennett covers her ears with a couch pillow when her mother, Yvonne "Dee" Bennett, tells the story of how war a world away in Iraq has affected their New Whiteland family.

On her birthday Nov. 10, Dee Bennett received flowers at work. Her husband, Sgt. Nick Bennett, made sure the bouquet arrived, even though he was serving his country just south of Baghdad on a supply line.

The next day was Veterans Day. Shortly after 1 p.m., Bennett received a phone call at her place of employment.

"A lieutenant announced herself as a Marine liaison with Baghdad hospital," Bennett says. "She was calling for my husband, to let me know he was OK. But he had been injured.

To avoid worrying their children, Chris, 15, Caleb, 13, and Amber, and Nick's parents, Mike and Jean Bennett, who live a few streets away, Dee Bennett attended a choir performance with them that evening and never said a word about the phone call.

Details were sketchy, Bennett says. She had little information about the extent of her husband's injuries. She knew only that he was seriously wounded.

She told Nick's family the news. When the Bennett children walked home from the bus stop that afternoon, their mother, grandparents and pastor waited in the living room to explain what happened.

A few days later, Bennett understood why her middle son seemed relieved when he was told his father had been hurt. As Caleb walked toward the house that day after school, he saw cars parked along the driveway. He was bracing himself to hear that his dad was dead.

Amber Bennett climbs off the couch and disappears down the hallway to her bedroom as her mother tells more of the story.

Early that November day, south of Baghdad, Sgt. Bennett, 35, was standing next to a Humvee preparing for guard duty.

"All of a sudden, he heard a whistle sound," his wife says. "He looked over his shoulder to see what was coming. And he told me later that all he could think was, 'How many pieces am I going to end up in?'"

A missile landed 15 feet behind Sgt. Bennett and skidded across the concrete. Instead of exploding, the missile shattered in several jagged metal pieces.

"It put a big hole in Nick's leg," Bennett says.

Sgt. Bennett, a 1988 graduate of Whiteland Community High School, also suffered severe wounds to his left hand.

"Two hand bones and his wrist bone are missing," Bennett says. "At first, they thought they would have to amputate the pinky and ring finger. The bones were gone."

On Nov. 17, Bennett saw her husband for the first time since the attack. He was flown to National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

"He had just endured a 10-hour flight from Germany," she says. "But he recognized me as soon as he saw me. He was very, very tired and in a lot of pain."

She was emotionally overwhelmed to see the tubes attached to her husband's body on the hospital bed. And she was overwhelmed by how close she'd come to losing him.

He is walking now, with a cane. He is tolerating oral medications instead of intravenous medications. If all goes well, he might return to New Whiteland before the end of the month.

And his sights are set on the three dark-eyed children who anxiously await his return.

"My biggest goal is that I'm OK for my kids," he says. "I concentrate on getting better so I can be with my kids."

He's not thinking about sitting on the family couch again in front of the TV. A favorite meal hasn't crossed his mind either, Sgt. Bennett says.

"It's gonna be nice to finally tuck my kids into bed at night again," he says.

LC Guardsman Injured In Iraq Bombing; "It's Not Over Until They All Come Home."

January 11, 2005 Reported By Pam Dixon, WorldNow

One of the survivors of Monday's roadside bombing in Iraq has been dealt his share of blows the past couple of years. First, in 2003 his then-three year old daughter was diagnosed with Leukemia. About eight months later in May of last year, he was called for active duty in Iraq.

James Johnson's injuries may actually be a blessing for his family anxious to have him back. His wife, Heather, says, "James had lacerations on his face and a broken right kneecap." It was 6:30 a.m. Monday when James broke the news to Heather. He called her from an army emergency room to say he was injured in a roadside bombing in Baghdad.

Heather says, "I'm relieved, very relieved. I feel somewhat selfish to know that he's coming home and others are not, but we're going to keep pulling. It's not over until they all come home."

James not only left behind a wife, but a four year old daughter fighting cancer.

Gracie with her cancer now in remission is anxious to see her daddy. Heather asks Gracie, "Are you excited Daddy's coming home?" Gracie says, "Yes, Yes." Heather asks, "What are you going to do when you see him?" Gracie says, "Go fishing with him." Heather asks, "What are you going to tell him?" Gracie says, "I love him."

James' parents, Don and Reba Johnson, are relieved to know their son is coming back to the U.S. for medical treatment and possibly to continue his active duty stateside. **Don says, "He is coming back to the United States. So even in the midst of tragedy, I can't help but be grateful that he's coming home."**

5,000 More Reserves Called Up For The Imperial Slaughterhouse

January 12, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 035-05

This week, the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Coast Guard number remained the same. **The net collective result is 4,936 more reservists mobilized than last week.**

Drug Addicted US Troops Sent To Scotland

09 January 2005 By Liam McDougall, Health Correspondent (sunday herald) limited

A PICTURESQUE Scottish hospital is being used by the US military as a base to treat drug and alcohol addicted troops who have fought in Iraq, the Sunday Herald can reveal.

The US department of defence is sending up to 40 damaged servicemen and women a year – including marines, army and airforce personnel – to Castle Craig rehabilitation clinic to undergo intensive treatment.

The centre has landed a huge contract to treat addicts from the military who have turned to drink and drugs after suffering harrowing ordeals in Iraq.

Peter McCann, chairman of Castle Craig, said: **“We have been getting [US troops] in dribs and drabs, but there have been more coming over recently. I think they are being sent to all the corners of Iraq and are falling to pieces when they get back to base.”**

McCann said troops were coming to the hospital from US bases in the UK, Germany and Turkey to undergo four weeks of intensive counselling and therapy alongside some of the most desperate Scottish drug addicts and alcoholics.

McCann added: “We can have up to about four at any one time, but there’s a continuous stream of them coming in. **There has been a step up in the numbers since Iraq.** We see about 40 a year.

Soldiers suffering psychological disorders are known to have high rates of alcohol and drug abuse and suicide.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Resistance Appeals To U.S. Troops

Jan 12, 2005 By Michael Georgy, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Departing from fiery Islamic slogans, Iraqi guerrillas have launched a propaganda campaign with an English-language video urging U.S. troops to lay down their weapons and seek refuge in mosques and homes.

The video, narrated in fluent English by what sounded like an Iraqi educated in the United States or Britain, also mocked the U.S. president's challenge to rebels in the early days of the insurgency to 'bring it on'.

"George W. Bush; you have asked us to 'bring it on'. And so help me, (we will) like you never expected. Do you have another challenge?," asked the narrator before the video showed explosions around a U.S. military Humvee vehicle.

A masked guerrilla from an unknown group called the Islamic Jihad Army, eschewing past impassioned Arabic-language threats of holy war, told U.S. soldiers: "This is not your war, nor are you fighting for a true cause in Iraq."

"To the American soldiers we say you can also choose to fight tyranny with us. Lay down your weapons and seek refuge in our mosques, churches and homes. We will protect you," he said.

The Islamic Jihad Army video featured familiar scenes of guerrillas blowing up U.S. convoys but also highlighted some of the key issues of the Iraq war, from weapons of mass destruction to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

"We have not crossed the oceans and seas to occupy Britain or the U.S. nor are we responsible for 9/11. These are only a few of these lies that these criminals present to cover their true plans," said the narrator, apparently referring to the Bush administration's assertion of a link between Saddam Hussein and those attacks.

The rebels focused on political issues that divided the United States and its European allies over the war in Iraq while reminding troops of casualties with images of burning trucks.

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.

Occupation Cops And Guards Killed In Mosul, Baquba

January 12, 2005 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) & AP & (Bloomberg)

A car bomb today hit an Iraqi army patrol, killing two soldiers and wounding two in southeastern Mosul, the military said.

In Baquba, one Iraqi police officer was killed and four were wounded when their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb, a U.S. military spokesman said. The attack happened about 6:30 p.m. (10:30 a.m. ET).

Pipeline Reopened Sunday Blown Up Again

January 12, 2005 Energy Security

January 11 - 2:00am rocket attack on a gas pipeline that runs to Bayji near the Fatha production station. **6:30am attack on an oil pipeline that runs to Bayji in the Zegheitoun area, 35 km southwest of Kirkuk. The pipeline had just been brought online on January 9th.**

Resistance Raid Kills Two Occupation Cops In Baghdad

January 12, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-01-50

Two Iraqi police (IP) officers, serving as an Iraqi police colonel's personal bodyguards, were attacked and killed outside their recently-vacated apartment on Haifa Street.

According to the colonel, there were two vehicles carrying up to 14 insurgents. Six insurgents were seen entering the building after killing the two IP officers, but when the 1-9 Cavalry troops arrived at the scene 30 minutes later, the insurgents had already left the building.

Iraq Resistance Attacks Cuts Exports Of Oil For 5 Months

[Wall Street Journal, January 12, 2005, Pg. B6] Iraq will cut crude oil exports from its southern region by about 10% for the next five months, beginning Feb. 1. **Continuing attacks by insurgents on infrastructure and bad weather conditions** are behind the decision to trim exports. [Yeah, that rain really messes up oil exports.]

Statement To US Labor Against The War From Hassan Jum'aa - Southern Oil Company Trade Union, Basra

From: Ewa Jasiewicz
To: GI Special
Sent: Tuesday, January 11, 2005 10:06 AM
Subject: Statement to US Labor Against The War From Hassan Jum'aa - Southern Oil Company Trade Union, Basra

FROM: General Union of Oil Employees- Basrah
TO: American Labour Against the War
04 December 2004
Subject: Thanks and appreciation

I begin by saying peace be upon you; you who have stood against war and for peace.

In my capacity as president of the union of oil-sector employees in Basrah, and in the name of the executive bureau of the union, we extend to you our immense thanks and gratitude to your militant organisation, which took a serious stand against the war and for peace, because peace is the foundation in this turbulent world.

We put on the record our thanks and great appreciation and may God bless you in doing good and for peace to prevail in the whole world, including our wounded country, the great Iraq; the Iraq of love and fraternity.

From this standpoint we see it as necessary that our work is based on full cooperation and coordination to lay the democratic foundation of trade union work.

We want to express our full confidence in being the link in the cooperation to combine the power of the Iraqi working class with the power of the American working class opposed to war and destruction.

You no doubt are aware that the former regime dissolved the unions using a draconian law (edict number 150, 1987) that changed the status of workers to civil servants, in order to control the working class and its wealth, and to distort its identity.

Since that day the working class hasn't been able to exercise its most basic rights.

On 20 April 2003, after the defeat of the tyrant, activists in the oil sector re-established the oil workers' union and we started, for the first time in Iraq, to elect a union committee in free and democratic manner.

Today, the oil trade union constitutes the greater weight of workers in southern Iraq. The union's executive bureau was formed to represent ten unions formed in the oil companies working in the south. It also includes 30 union committees at work places within Basrah, Misan and Thi Qar.

We stress that we stood against the vile occupation, which has soiled our dignity. We continue to be strongly opposed to the repressive acts of the American, British and multinational forces committed against our people in Iraq's cities, and

the flagrant aggression against our national economy, which has been destroyed by war.

This wounded country's infrastructure has been destroyed and the occupation forces is responsible for the greater part of this destruction.

The occupation forces have not shown any initiative to rebuild the country and they have not allowed the people who want the good of the country to engage in re-construction.

This is because of repressive laws that do not serve the production processes.

There is a simple reason for their non-cooperation in rebuilding the oil production facilities: Iraqi cadres have rejected their presence which made them obstruct the delivery of reconstruction equipment. This is particularly true of KBR company.

Finally, I extend my thanks and appreciation for standing by us for the sake of peace. I pledge that this letter is not the last, but we will be in constant touch.

I would like to tell you that you are welcome in Iraq any time you like.

Peace and God's blessings be upon you.

Hassan Juma'a Awad

President of the General Union of the Oil Sector Employees in Basrah

(Iraq Occupation Focus is currently running a campaign to raise funds for the SOC Union - click the link below for more details:

<http://www.iraqoccupationfocus.org.uk/socu.htm>)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**Imperial Arrogance Out Of Control;
Iraqis Have The Right To Violent
Resistance**

Their society long predates Rome, not to speak of the Norman Conquest and the Virginia and Massachusetts Bay settlements. It is Western folly to deny that the

Iraqis' capacity for shaping their political existence depends today on terms they choose for themselves, even if violence is part of their choice.

January 7, 2005 William Pfaff, The Observer

The avowed coalition goal is to pacify or stabilise by force this society of 23 million people. **According to such polls or public opinion assessments as have been possible, the vast majority of these people wants the occupation terminated.** The Americans resorting to what amounted to mass intimidation of the Iraqi population through the destruction administered to Falluja last month was a signal of desperation.

The suggestion that whatever their gratitude for liberation from Saddam Hussein's despotism, Iraqis might reject American-led military occupation and alliance on simple nationalist grounds, believing that national autonomy is an essential element in freedom, was unacceptable to allied planners. This is why the coalition persistently argues, against the evidence, that the problem is merely foreign terrorists, 'jihadists' and 'regime remnants'.

The coalition argument's most pernicious fallacy is the claim that the United States and its allies must remain in Iraq in order to create stability, and are capable of doing so.

The notion that having destroyed order the coalition can now restore it is discredited by the fact that the insurgency has gone on now for a year and a half, and continues.

It also rests on an arrogant and condescending assumption that the Iraqis are incapable of taking responsibility for themselves.

The communities that make up present-day Iraq have co-existed for more than three millennia. In the Islamic era, the Shia population has resisted assimilation to the Persian civilization of Iran, whose form of Shiite religion actually derives from Iraq. It has maintained its attachment to the Mesopotamian origin it shares with the Sunni Arabs of Iraq, as well as with the Iraqi Kurds, who also are mostly Sunni. (Modern Iraq has a more balanced Moslem identity than commonly assumed.)

Iraq's people exist in a continuity of society and institutions that has lasted since the origins of Mediterranean language and civilization.

Their society long predates Rome, not to speak of the Norman Conquest and the Virginia and Massachusetts Bay settlements. It is Western folly to deny that the Iraqis' capacity for shaping their political existence depends today on terms they choose for themselves, even if violence is part of their choice.

A Bit Of History

By Bill Bonner: Bill Bonner is the founder and president of Agora Publishing and lead editor of *The Daily Reckoning*.

The Crusades of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries were doomed from the beginning.

The crusaders had the will and the weapons to kick Arab butts; what they lacked was a reason for doing so. Christianity was already firmly rooted in the Holy Lands...as it had been for more than 1,000 years, even though Jerusalem had fallen to the caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab in February of 638.

Amin Maalouf, in a delightful little book, *The Crusades from the Arab Point of View*, tells us how it happened:

"That day, Omar made his entry into the city on his famous white camel while the Greek patriarch of the holy city came out to meet him. The caliph began by assuring him that the lives of the citizens and their property would be respected. He then asked to visit the city's sacred Christian sites. While they were in the church of Qyama, the Saint Sepulchre, the Moslem hour of prayer came around. Omar asked his host where he could spread his prayer rug and prostrate himself. The patriarch invited him to do so right where he was, but the caliph replied: 'If I do it, the Muslims will proclaim the place sacred, saying, 'Omar prayed here.' Taking his rug, he went outside to pray."

Jerusalem was taken, again, in July of 1099, by the crusaders. This time Christians were the victors, and the handover much less gracious.

"The population of the holy city was cut down," reported the Arab chronicler of the time, Ibn al-Athir. "The Franks (what the Arabs called the crusaders) massacred Muslims for a week. In the mosque al-Aqsa, they killed more than 70,000 people. The Jews were packed into their synagogue and the Franks burned them alive. They also destroyed holy monuments and the tomb of Abraham - peace be with him!"

"Christians were not spared either," adds Maalouf.

"One of the first measures taken by the Franks was to expel from the Saint Sepulchre the Eastern priests - the Greeks, Georgians, Copts, Armenians, Syrians - who officiated over the old traditions and whom all previous conquerors had respected.

But the dignitaries of the Christian community resisted.

They refused to reveal where they had hidden the true cross upon which Christ died. For these men, religious devotion to the relics was doubled by a fierce patriotism. Were they not, in effect, the fellow citizens of Jesus himself?

But the invaders were not impressed. Arresting the priests who guarded the cross, and putting them to torture in order to get their secrets, the crusaders managed to take from the Christians of the city their most precious relics."

This was only the beginning.

Soon, the Franks were drawn into the internecine killings and intramural murders that afflicted the area.

After a few years, their leaders spoke Arab and had been afflicted by all the ailments of their enemies. By the 12th century, one of the crusader Kings of Jerusalem even came down with one of the worst maladies of all - leprosy. His fingers nose and other parts fell off the poor ruler until he finally died.

Crusaders would make an alliance with the Eastern Orthodox emperor one day, to fight one of the various Muslim warlords, viziers, caliphs, pashas, or Seljuks in the region.

The next, they would side with the Muslims, and turn on the Eastern Empire.

A particularly blockheaded crusader was Renaud de Chatillon, known as 'brins Arnat' to the Arab chroniclers, to whom the Arabs refer whenever they want to prove that the crusaders were wicked barbarians.

Renaud maneuvered the Eastern Emperor, Manuel, son of John Comnene, into paying him tribute.

Then, on the pretext that Manuel was late in his payments, Renaud decided to have revenge for something. He launched a punitive raid against Cyprus - a Christian island under the rule of the Eastern Empire, and demanded money from the patriarch of Antioch to pay for the expedition. Naturally, the Patriarch resisted. But Renaud had ways of getting people to cooperate; he tortured the priest, and then covered his wounds with honey. The patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Antioch was then chained down and left in the sun; for a whole day, insects feasted on him.

Even a good man yields to the proper persuasion. Renaud got his money and the campaign against Cyprus was on. Amin Maalouf describes what happened next:

"A flotilla disembarked [Renaud's troops] on the coast of Cyprus where they easily crushed the little Byzantine garrison. Cyprus never recovered from what happened to it next. From North to South, all cultivated fields were systematically destroyed, all the herds were massacred, the palaces, churches and the convents were pillaged; everything that could not be carried off was burned. The women were raped. Old people and children had their throats cut. Rich men were taken as hostages and the poor were beheaded. Before leaving with all their booty, Renaud ordered all the priests and Greek monks to assemble. He had their noses cut off and sent them to Constantinople."

OCCUPATION REPORT

Iraq's Power Supply Sinks To Record Low

BAGHDAD, Jan 12 (AFP)

Iraq's national electricity supply has fallen well below its level of before the 2003 invasion, a US army commander told reporters Wednesday.

Power plants now generate only 3,500-3,600 megawatts daily, far less than the 4,400 megawatts of electricity under Saddam Hussein's rule on the eve of the invasion, said Major General Thomas Bostwick, commander of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The anemic electricity supply has fallen since mid-December when Bostwick said power generation was at 4,100 megawatts.

Bostwick blamed the shortfall on sabotage and the deterioration of Iraq's electricity infrastructure under Saddam's rule.

The US and Iraqi authorities hope the repairs will be completed before June when the temperatures soar, he said.

About 1,000 megawatts of power has been lost due to scheduled infrastructure maintenance, another 1,400 megawatts has been lost due to unexpected problems with aging equipment and another 600 megawatts was lost to sabotage, primarily attacks on fuel supplies.

Most of the country has less than three hours of power per day.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Vatican Wants U.S. To Finish Job In Iraq

[THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: VATICAN PLAN FOR IRAQ:

- 1. Crush the resistance**
- 2. Blow up the mosques**
- 3. Convert the heathens]**

Jan 11, By VICTOR L. SIMPSON, Associated Press Writer

ROME - **The U.S. ambassador to the Vatican said Tuesday that officials in the Holy See want the United States to remain in Iraq and pacify the country** despite Pope John Paul II's opposition to the war.

War Profiteers At It Again

[Bloomberg.com, January 11, 2005] **The Defense Contract Audit Agency has found that Boeing Co. overcharged the Air Force by \$10.3 million on a \$792 million contract to upgrade NATO surveillance aircraft.**

BUSH PROPOSES DIVIDING IRAQ INTO RED, BLUE STATES Hopes To Split Nation In Two By Jan. 30 Deadline

January 10, 2005 The Borowitz Report

With little more than two weeks until the Iraqi elections, President George W. Bush today proposed splitting the strife-torn nation into a series of red and blue states "in recognition of the deep hatreds that divide the Iraqi people."

While many in diplomatic circles had expected the U.S. to attempt to smooth over the differences between Iraqis in the run-up to the election, Mr. Bush said that he instead hoped to split the nation in two, with each half "hating the other's guts."

Using a map of Iraq and a pointer, Mr. Bush showed reporters how Iraq would be carved up, with a wide swath of red states in the middle of the country bordered by two narrow slivers of blue states.

Mr. Bush said that, effective immediately, the red states would be populated by Iraqis "who love freedom" while the blue states would contain "insurgents, terrorists, and Iraqis who favor gay marriage."

"I'm a uniter," Mr. Bush said, "but I'm also a pretty darn good divider."

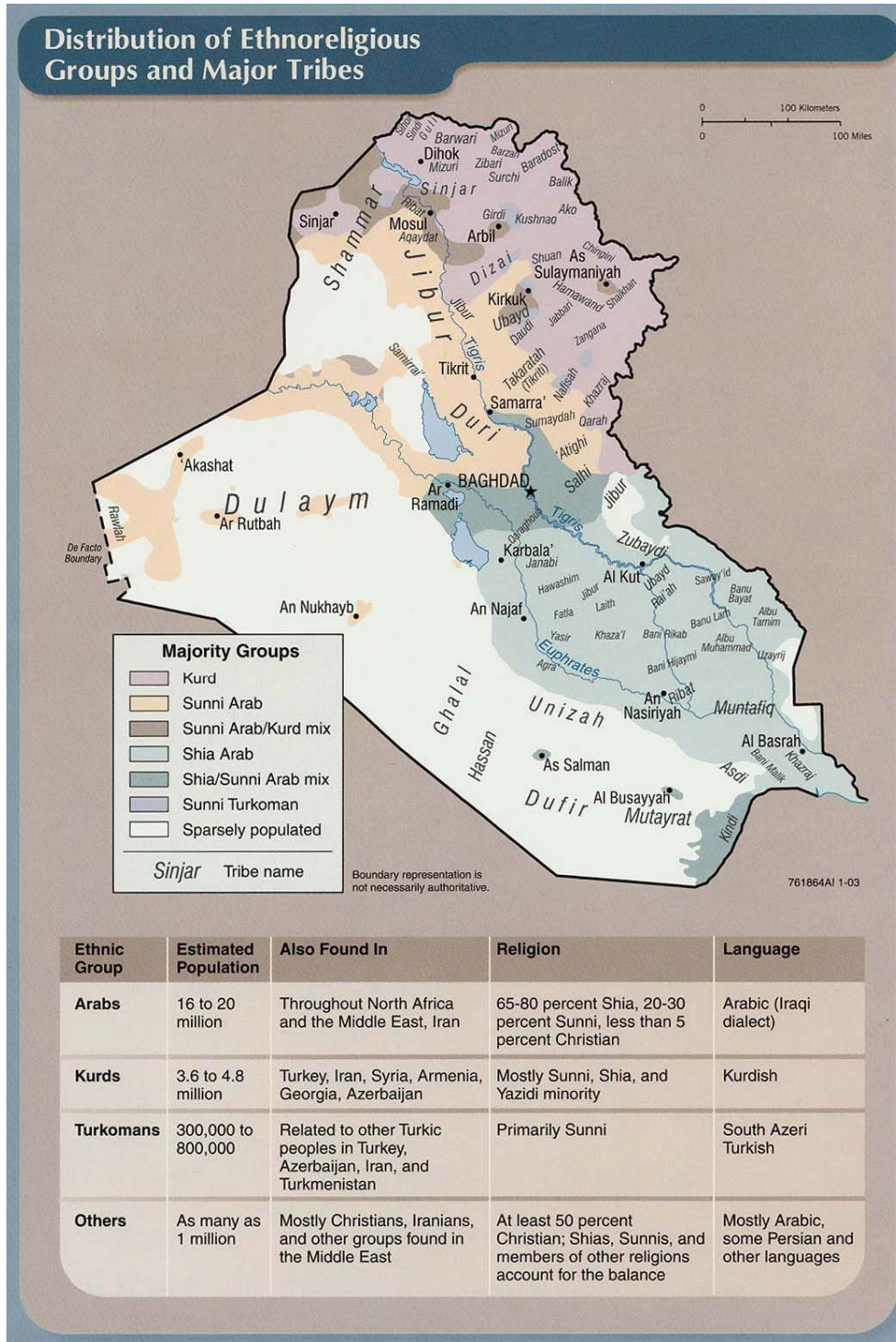
Elsewhere, Vice President Dick Cheney blasted the United Nations' handling of Iraq's oil-for-food program, alleging that the organization accepted bribes and kickbacks that were rightfully Halliburton's.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Returning Soldiers Hit By High Rate Of Malaria

[Washington Post, January 12, 2005, Pg. 11] **A high malaria rate among GIs returning from Afghanistan prompted a call for doctors to check repatriated military personnel for the disease.**

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