

GI SPECIAL 4123:



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

How Do You Know The War Is Lost?

When Lunatics Take Command Of
Your Defense:

[In Vietnam, U.S. Imperial Politicians
Built A Silly Fence Across The Country
To Keep Out The Nationalist Army:
Oops, Didn't Work; Bye Bye Vietnam]

[In Iraq, Their Farcical Idiot Successors Are Digging A Silly 60 Miles Trench]

Sept 22, 2006 By Rod Nordland, Newsweek [Excerpts]

Sept. 22, 2006 - At first blush it sounded like a resort to medieval siege warfare. An Iraqi Interior Ministry official announced that the government was going to build trenches around Baghdad, a circumference of 60 miles embracing a metropolis of 5 million people.

Now that the cat's out of the bag, the Iraqi government is expected to announce it officially tomorrow, national-security adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie confirmed here in an interview today.

Reports of the barrier have been greeted skeptically in Baghdad, partly because of the government's initial denials. "They're trying to change Baghdad into a big Green Zone," said Saleh Matleq, the head of the moderate Sunni-dominated National Consensus Front.

"But the violence isn't only from outside Baghdad, it's inside as well."

And Muslim Scholars spokesman Abdul Salam al-Qubeisi, a hard-line Sunni, scoffed that "it may turn out to be a prison for the government troops, and a good benefit for the resistance. Meantime, it's just a big operation to steal Iraqi money."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MND Baghdad Soldier Killed By Roadside Bomb

22 September 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory
RELEASE No. 20060922-03

BAGHDAD: A Multi National Division Baghdad Soldier died at approximately 11:40 p.m. Thursday after the vehicle he was traveling in was struck by an improvised-explosive device in eastern Baghdad.

High Point Family Recalls Son Killed In Iraq

Sep. 22, 2006 Associated Press

HIGH POINT, N.C.: A High Point man whose family said he turned his life around after he joined the Army was killed in Iraq when the vehicle in which he was riding overturned.

Army Spc. Robert Thomas Callahan, 22, died Tuesday after being in Iraq for about a month on a second tour of duty there. He was stationed in the Baghdad region.

His family said Callahan dropped out of Southwest Guilford High School in the 10th grade to be home-schooled. He was arguing with his parents and drinking.

At the age of 18, he joined the Army.

"The thing I'm most proud of is how he blossomed," said his father, David Callahan. "In boot camp, he was talking about quitting. Then, he just turned into a man."

After joining the military, Callahan apologized to his parents for giving them a hard time during his teenage years. He had fallen in love and married in January.

His wife, Kristen Callahan, lives in Syracuse, N.Y., near where he was stationed.

"The Army and Kristen really helped him out a lot," his mother, Robin Minor said. "He was a sweetheart. He had a huge heart, was nice to everybody and never met a stranger."

Callahan was assigned to the Fourth Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, part of the 10th Mountain Division in Fort Drum, N.Y.

During his first tour of duty in Iraq, he was awarded an Army Commendation Medal with valor for saving another soldier's life while under enemy mortar fire.

In addition to his wife and parents, he is survived by a brother, Sean Callahan, a sister, Sarah Callahan, and stepfather, Ben Minor. Callahan's funeral and burial will likely be next week, the family said. They plan to bury him at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Greensboro.

Georgia Soldier Killed In Iraq

09/22/06 Morris News Service

When she was looking at colleges, Ashley Henderson fell in love with Athens, and the University of Georgia quickly became her first choice for school.

"Basically, her only choice," her father, Mark, recalled Friday.

Henderson, 23, was killed Tuesday in Iraq in a suicide attack on her convoy. A member of the 3rd Infantry Division, Ashley Henderson was to return home in about six weeks.

“She was a good leader,” Mark Henderson said of his daughter. “She enjoyed being a leader.”

Ashley Henderson grew up in Louisiana and New Jersey, but enjoyed living in the South.

“She always to come back to the South,” Mark Henderson said. “She fell in love with Athens.”

Even after she moved to Savannah, Ashley Henderson regularly returned to Athens. She rarely missed a University of Georgia football game.

“They were big ‘Dawg fans,” her father said. “She still had a lot of friends around Athens.”

She married Brian Huff about a year ago.

“She was a newlywed, so she was looking forward to coming home and buying a house,” her father said. “After the leave, that’s what she was focusing on - coming home.”

A 2004 graduate of UGA, Henderson was a member of Sigma Kappa sorority. In Iraq, Henderson was working to create that country’s police force.

“She was a happy person, a good leader,” Mark Henderson said. “She was very caring about her soldiers - well respected by them and by her commanding officers. She had a promising career in the Army and whatever else she chose to do later.”

Vancouver Soldier Killed In Iraq



Master Sgt. Robb Needham

September 21, 2006 By DEAN BAKER, Columbian Staff Writer

A career soldier, Army Master Sgt. Robb Gordon Needham of Vancouver, was killed in Iraq Wednesday.

He became at least the sixth soldier with Clark County connections to die in uniform since the war in Iraq began in March 2003.

Needham, 51, was in his 25th year in the Army and on his third tour of duty to Iraq. He was the husband of Catherine "Cait" Needham of Vancouver. She teaches high-school courses at the New Generation Christian School, which is affiliated with Living Hope Church at 10702 N.E. 117th Ave.

The Needhams have two grown children, Dylan and Robi, and two grandchildren.

Needham was serving in the Army's 1st battalion, 356th Regiment, 4th Brigade, 91st Division (Training Support), based in Fort Lewis, south of Tacoma.

According to friends, it was not the first time Needham came under fire. In an Aug. 4 e-mail message to church members, Needham wrote: "It has been a very stressful 2 days and nights for the team I'm with. Came under fire last night and sustained four civilian casualties. All (a)live which is a blessing."

Family spokeswoman Shelly Giles said Needham was patrolling in a "top secret" location when he was killed.

The 135 students in the New Generation Christian School were dismissed Wednesday to spend time with their families when word passed that Needham had been killed. Chaplains, teachers and pastors worked with the children and the family through the day and into the evening.

Bishop said the church will honor Needham in six commemorative services at the church this weekend. The services will be Saturday at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Sunday at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Sunday.

In Baghdad Alone, Six Resistance Attacks A Day On U.S. Forces Are Successful

9/22/2006 (AP)

Attacks against the security forces have increased since the Baghdad operation began, from about 36 attacks a day to about 42 attacks a day, said Thurman.

He added that about six of those daily attacks result in injuries to U.S. troops or damage to equipment.

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO
COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS
EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS
TIME, EXCEPT THAT A CROOKED
POLITICIAN WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE
HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE, SO HE WILL
LOOK GOOD FOR THE NOVEMBER
ELECTIONS.**

That is not a good enough reason.



U.S. soldiers at the site of a car bomb explosion, in Baghdad Sept. 19, 2006. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

500 Resistance Soldiers Capture Gulistan District Headquarters

22 Sep 2006 Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA)

The Taliban has seized control of the Gulistan district headquarters in western Farah province of Afghanistan, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) agency reported Friday quoting the district chief.

"I confirm that 500 Taliban entered the district headquarters and took control of it, but I have not joined them," district chief Mohammad Qasim Majboor told the private news agency refuting Taliban claims that he, along with his police chief, had surrendered.

Gulistan police chief Rahmatullah told the Pakistan-based agency that they had called for reinforcement from the provincial capital.

Farah police chief Sayed Agha Saqib was quoted as saying that the government was thinking of ways to retake the headquarters from Taliban without causing harm to the civilian population of Gulistan.

It is the second time that the district headquarters has been taken over this week.

U.S. Military Fuel Convoy Wiped Out; Turkish Mercenary Killed

22 September 2006 Khaleej Times & AP & AFP

KABUL: Resistance fighters in Afghanistan attacked a convoy of oil tankers importing fuel for foreign forces and a construction company, killing a Pakistani worker, an Afghan government official said on Friday.

Guerrillas firing rocket-propelled grenades and rifles attacked the tanker convoy late on Thursday on the main road from the Pakistani border to the eastern city of Jalalabad, said district government chief Hazrat Khan Khaksar.

"The tankers were parked at a petrol pump when they were attacked. A driver's helper was on one of the tankers that caught fire and was killed," Khaksar said.

Three of the tankers that came from Pakistan were bound for a US military base and two were bringing fuel for a road construction company, he said. All five were destroyed.

A Turkish embassy official said a body found in the southern province of Helmand and brought to Kabul late on Thursday had been identified as the kidnapped Turk.

Mustafa Asimi worked for a Turkish firm providing security for the Ankara-based Kolin Insaat construction company.

He was taken prisoner on Aug. 28 in an ambush in Helmand. A Turkish engineer was killed in the ambush.

A Taleban spokesman, Qari Mohammad Yousuf, said on Tuesday the Taleban killed Asimi because the construction company had refused to pull out.

Senior Officer Says British Government Lying About Afghanistan Casualties;

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

Sep 21 AFP & September 22, 2006 Lee Glendinning, The Guardian

The scale of UK casualties in Afghanistan has been under-reported, a British officer serving in the south of the country has claimed, condemning the Ministry of Defence's operation as politically driven.

Major Jon Swift, currently serving in Afghanistan, made the comments in the internal Royal Fusiliers newsletter, which was initially placed on a regimental website before being taken down, the BBC reported.

Maj Swift is based in the Naw Zad outpost in the southern province of Helmand, where UK troops have spent a hot summer fighting a Taliban enemy providing far greater resistance than expected. His 2 platoons and Fire Support Group have provided reinforcements when casualties occurred in the 3 Para Battle group.

According to Swift, soldiers in Afghanistan were often patched up and sent back out into the field without the injury being recorded.

"The scale of casualties has not been properly reported and shows no sign of reducing," the Major said. Swift also alleged: "Political and not military imperatives are being followed in the campaign."

British Air Force In Afghanistan Condemned As "Utterly, Utterly Useless"

9.22.06 AFP

E-mails written by an unidentified major condemned the RAF as "utterly, utterly useless" and underlined that more soldiers and equipment were needed "desperately," Sky News reported.

TROOP NEWS

Pentagon Traitors Want To Send Guard Troops To Iraq More Quickly; Scheming To End Limits On Deployment

If the military cannot deploy enough members of the Guard by following either interpretation of the rules, officials may be forced to propose that Mr. Rumsfeld advise President Bush of the need to sign a new mobilization order that would reset the clock for many Guard members who have already served overseas.

September 22, 2006 By THOM SHANKER and MICHAEL R. GORDON, NY Times & By Peter Grier, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor [Excerpts]

At a recent conference at Fort Benning, Ga., Gen. Dan K. McNeill, the head of the Army's Forces Command, which oversees training and mobilization for all Army forces in the continental United States, suggested that the service needed to make greater use of the National Guard if the United States was to pursue what the Bush administration has described as a "long war" against Islamic terrorists.

"If we are going to prosecute this long war, we need relatively unencumbered access to the citizen soldier formations," General McNeill said.

The equivalent of several Guard brigades are deployed today in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sinai, the Horn of Africa and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Sending more Guard units to Iraq is politically sensitive because of complaints from families and employers while the Guard and Reserve were used extensively in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2004.

Restrictions on the use of the Guard are a matter of interpretation. Guard officials said that under President Bush's current mobilization order, its members may not be called up if they have served for 24 consecutive months.

But a conflicting Defense Department policy interprets the order as limiting the call-up of those who have tallied 24 months of total service, regardless of the length of time served consecutively. That view would put more Guard members off-limits for remobilization without a new order from the president.

Legal limits allow them to be sent overseas only two years out of every five.

If the military cannot deploy enough members of the Guard by following either interpretation of the rules, officials may be forced to propose that Mr. Rumsfeld advise President Bush of the need to sign a new mobilization order that would reset the clock for many Guard members who have already served overseas. [Fine. It's about time we had another American Revolution. That should do it.]

Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, the head of the Guard, said his forces would be prepared to meet current requirements and to send more forces if needed.

"Can I sustain that?" General Blum said. "I say the answer is, 'Absolutely' if three things remain, three critical things."

He said Guard members must continue to feel that what they are doing is important and that they have the support of the American people. [Strike one. A majority of the American people think the war on Iraq is a deadly disaster and want it to stop.]

Finally, he said, "We've got to give them some predictability or some kind of certainty so they can balance their civilian life, with their employers and their family, with their military service to the nation." **[Strike two. Sending them back to Iraq more often kills that one.]**

Given the lengthy lead time required for calling up, training, equipping and deploying Guard forces, Pentagon officials said that if more Guard members were mobilized, it would probably be for a rotation that begins in 2008. **[Strike three. By then either the politicians will have ended the war, or our troops will end the politicians.]**

Even so, Pentagon and military officials said that it was unlikely that any decision on a Guard mobilization would be necessary for several months or even into next year, which would place any announcement beyond the November mid-term Congressional elections. [What a pack of cowardly, sneaking rats.]

Combat Brigades Time Away From Bush's Imperial Wars Cut From 24 Months To 14 Months

Sep 21 By ROBERT BURNS AP Military Writer

The Army secretary said combat brigades now get, on average, only 14 months at home for every 12 months at war. The goal is 24 months at home for every 12 months at war, but Harvey said they currently are moving in the wrong direction.

Not long ago, combat brigades were getting 18 months between war tours.

Protestors Storm And Occupy War Profiteer's Headquarters: "The Mainframe Computer Was Disabled With Fire Extinguisher Foam" "Many Of The Files Thrown Out The Window"

9 September 2006 By Goretti Horgan, Socialist Worker [Canada]

On July 2, Joshua Casteel of Iraqi Veterans Against War and Hani Lazim of Iraqi Democrats against the Occupation spoke in Northern Ireland at a packed meeting of the Derry Anti War Coalition.

In the course of the meeting, over 70 people agreed that DAWC needed to think of new ways of exposing Derry's role in the arms trade.

Raytheon, one of the largest arms manufacturers in the world, has a software facility in Derry's "Ulster Science and Technology Park". Despite all the local parties backing Raytheon's presence in the town, there is real anger at the possibility that software developed in Derry contributed to massacres in Lebanon and Gaza.

On Wednesday August 9, at 8:00am, protesters arrived at the building Raytheon shares with a call centre. The police were already there.

At about 8.30am, an employee about to go through the door hesitated for an instant and the anti-war protesters rushed the door. Nine people managed to get in.

Once inside, the protestors barricaded themselves in and went about finding written material, files, etc., and throwing them out the window.

The mainframe computer was disabled with fire extinguisher foam. Many of the files thrown out the window gave the lie to the Company claims that the Derry plant has no connection with the arms trade.

Once the local radio started to report the occupation, others started to arrive to join the protest.

In the course of the day, between 80 and 100 people kept the outside protest going.

Cars going by on the main road showed their support by honking their horns in huge numbers.

Local residents brought coffee, sandwiches and cake.

The police response was, as usual, over the top. After eight hours, they sent in a SWAT team, complete with submachine guns, CS gas and dogs to arrest the nine, who, by then, were sitting playing cards.

Four of the arrested men, Colm Bryce, Kieran Gallagher, Sean Heaton and Eamonn McCann are socialists, the rest republicans.

All nine are now known internationally as the Raytheon Nine.

Although the occupation was entirely non-violent, they were charged with Aggravated Burglary and Unlawful Assembly.

At the bail hearing, the Crown tried to put before the court Eamonn McCann's convictions on public order offences going back to almost 40 years, to the civil rights' struggles of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

However, the judge said that the "vintage" of these made them irrelevant.

Initial bail conditions were draconian and prevented the Nine's involvement in any anti-war activity.

However, following a huge outcry, these have now been lifted.

The campaign to have the charges dropped is gathering strength.

The Raytheon Nine and the Derry Anti War Coalition, of which they are all members, have received a huge level of support from anti-war campaigners and socialists across the world.

Noam Chomsky called them "wonderful people" and said: "You're an inspiration to all of us. It's an honour to have even a remote association with what you are doing. "

Messages of support for the Raytheon Nine can be sent to resistderry@aol.com or you can sign the online petition at www.petitionOnline.com/dawc/petition.html.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



Burning fuel pipe-line on the outskirts of Samarra Sept. 22, 2006, after it was blown up by insurgents on Sept. 21, 2006. (AP Photo/Hamid Rashid)

9.22.06 by Jay Deshmukh, AFP & The Associated Press

Two police officers of a bomb detection squad were killed while defusing an explosive device south of Baghdad, police said, adding four others were shot dead in separate attacks in the city of Baquba, northeast of the capital.

A gas pipeline between the Beiji and Dora refineries near Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, was attacked Thursday evening. It was not immediately clear whether it was an act of sabotage, or whether people had been trying to steal fuel from the pipeline.

One civilian was killed and five people, including two policemen, were wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in Latifiya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Two policemen were killed while they were defusing a bomb placed on the side of the road in Iskandariya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas in a car shot and killed one civilian and wounded two policemen in Kirkuk 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Just Stop Murdering Innocent Children”



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: September 22, 2006

Well, here is two more of my cents:

When the anti-war movement has been on the receiving end of bombs and artillery rounds like the Vietnamese and the Iraqi people, they will finally get it.

Sometimes you need to see a few dead faces up close, before you realize that ideology contains a lot of bullshit. You need to go into graves registration and unzip a body bag.

At that point, the answers might become real clear.

I think we should all take a dead child who has been shot in the head, and take them home for awhile. Sit that dead child up in a small chair, and watch cartoons for a few hours.

I guarantee people would have some very clear insights after awhile, as to what direction they need to go.

A thousand signs that read, "Just Stop Murdering Innocent Children," might get some people's attention.

A lot of diversity is for people who have never had blood on their hands and brains in their lap.

Like I said at the beginning, that is my two cents.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71

Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

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.

A 1000 Feet From Now

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: September 22, 2006
Subject: A 1000 Feet From Now by Dennis

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

A 1000 Feet From Now

Billy, a new replacement, is humping around these big bushes,

not knowing if Charlie is around the other side or not.
He comes around a little clearing
and there is his Captain, with two captured bound young Vietnamese.
He has a small black generator with wires hooked to one
of the Vietnamese men and when he cranks, the prisoner's muscles
quivers and waves across his body like the South China Sea.
Billy stops and looks and a grunt who has been there longer,
stops next to him.
Billy says, "They are not supposed to do that, are they?"
The other grunt says, "Just stay here with me and check this out."
The Vietnamese interpreter is on one knee slapping him,
screaming at him to answer questions. Billy said, "I've seen enough."
But the other grunt says, "Wait, here comes the Intelligence helicopter."
Billy says, "It' looks like they're taking them to the rear, let's go."
The other grunt says, "NO, keep your eyes on the helicopter
as it goes up."
When it was about a 1000 feet up, they threw out one
of the Vietnamese and he fell to earth like a sandbag.
Then they turned to the other one in the helicopter
and in Vietnamese asked him, "Do you want to talk now?"
The grunt asked Billy, "Did you see them throw out
one of them?"
"Yes."

Cluster Munitions

From: Don Bacon" smedleybutlersociety@msn.com
To: GI Special
Sent: September 22, 2006 2:14 PM
Subject: Cluster Munitions

From GI Special:

Zionist Cluster Bombs In Lebanon: The Gift That Keeps On Giving

excerpts:

The war in Lebanon has not ended. Every day, some of the million bomblets which were fired by Israeli artillery during the last three days of the conflict kill four people in southern Lebanon and wound many more. The casualty figures will rise sharply in the next month as villagers begin the harvest, picking olives from trees whose leaves and branches hide bombs that explode at the smallest movement.

Lebanon's farmers are caught in a deadly dilemma: to risk the harvest, or to leave the produce on which they depend to rot in the fields.

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

[End excerpts]

If Israelis are foreign terrorists conducting a murderous military occupation then Americans have also been foreign terrorists in:

YUGOSLAVIA:

Despite their acknowledged threat to civilians, cluster bombs have already been used in Operation Allied Force. Both the U.S. and Britain have acknowledged using cluster bombs. . .

Though probably no more than a few hundred air-delivered cluster bombs have been used to date in Yugoslavia, there reportedly already have been civilian casualties. A NATO airstrike involving cluster bombs on an airfield in Nis on May 7 went off target, hitting a hospital complex and adjoining civilian areas. On April 24, five boys were reported to have been killed and two injured when what was evidently a cluster bomb submunition exploded near the village of Doganovic, fifteen kilometers from Urosevac in southern Kosovo. The munition was described as having a yellow-colored jacket, identical to that of the CBU-87 or RBL755 bomblets.

http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/nato2/nato995-01.htm#P65_8106

GULF WAR:

During the 1991 Gulf War, the United States and its allied coalition dropped bombs containing about twenty million submunitions, and also reportedly fired artillery projectiles containing more than thirty million submunitions. These resulted in millions of hazardous duds, each functioning like an indiscriminate antipersonnel landmine. At least eighty U.S. casualties during the war were attributed to cluster munition duds. More than 4,000 civilians have been killed or injured by cluster munition duds since the end of the war. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2003/03/18/usint5409.htm>

AFGHANISTAN:

U.S. military sources have told Human Rights Watch that the Air Force began dropping cluster bombs within a matter of days.

During the first week of the campaign, it is believed that Air Force B-1 bombers dropped 50 CBU-87 cluster bombs in some five missions. CBU-87 cluster bomb use has continued after the first week, and it is believed that other airplanes joined B-1s in dropping cluster bombs on both fixed and mobile targets. . .

United Nations officials have stated that on October 22 U.S. cluster bomb submunitions landed on the village of Shaker Qala, near the city of Herat in western Afghanistan,

killing nine civilians and injuring fourteen. The head of the United Nations Mine Action Program in Afghanistan (U.N. MAPA) noted that villagers are afraid to leave their homes after encountering the yellow soda can-like objects characteristic of CBU-87 submunitions that were left scattered in the village after an air strike on a nearby military camp.

He called upon the United States to provide information on the types of ordnance dropped on Shaker Qala and elsewhere. . .On October 25, the U.S. for the first time publicly acknowledged using cluster bombs. In response to a media question, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers said, "Yes, we have used cluster bomb units.. There have not been a great number of them used, but they have been used." <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounders/arms/cluster-bck1031.htm>

IRAQ:

U.S. ground forces, particularly the Army, also used cluster munitions near populated areas, with predictable loss of civilian life. After roughly a quarter of the civilian deaths in the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia were caused by the use of cluster bombs in populated areas, the U.S. Air Force substantially curtailed the practice.

But the U.S. Army apparently never absorbed this lesson.

In responding to Iraqi attacks as they advanced through Iraq, Army troops regularly used cluster munitions in populated areas, causing substantial loss of life. Such disregard for civilian life is incompatible with a genuinely humanitarian intervention.

<http://hrw.org/wr2k4/3.htm>

“In The Present Equation A Few More Million Barrels Of Oil Won’t Matter A Damn”

[Part 3: Conclusion]

In fact it has turned out that primitive accumulation is an incomplete and recurring process, essential to capitalism’s continuing life. Dispossession is crucial to this, and its forms recur and reconstitute themselves endlessly. Hence the periodic movement of capitalism outwards, to geographies and polities it can plunder almost unopposed. (Or so it hoped, in the case of Iraq.)

21 April 2005 London Review Of Books: Retort [Excerpts]

This essay was written by Iain Boal, T.J. Clark, Joseph Matthews and Michael Watts. *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War*, which deals with many aspects of post-September 11 global politics, is due from Verso this summer.

Retort, a 'gathering of antagonists to capital and empire', is based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Any response to the question of scarcity has to begin with oil statistics, on which there is no consensus – and sometimes no data.

There is disagreement among the oil majors and their organisations (the International Energy Agency, the American Petroleum Institute) about when global oil production is likely to peak – in 2010? 2025? 2045? – and about an imagined production fail-safe point beyond which US security might be endangered. The US Geological Survey believes Hubbert's Peak is decades away; Royal Dutch-Shell believes it is the other side of 2030; and the US Energy Information Administration places the zenith somewhere between 2021 and 2112.

For the next half-century, according to the MIT economist Morris Adelman, 'oil available to the markets is for all intents and purposes infinite.'

New technological advances are already resulting in hugely better recovery rates. Deep-water drilling has exposed previously inaccessible fields (in the Gulf of Mexico, the Bight of Benin, Angola and Brazil), and the map of energy reserves will continue to be redrafted. If the conversion of Canadian tar sands into usable hydrocarbons can be made efficient, that alone may fundamentally refigure the geopolitics of petroleum: in time, Canada's reserves could exceed those of Saudi Arabia. Ottawa would be a safer bet as a swing producer than Riyadh or Baghdad.

Even in the energy industry as now constituted, gas (liquefied natural gas) is the new panacea; and the geography of gas reserves is not isomorphic with the geopolitical map of oil security.

Finally, there is the vast rearrangement of the energy landscape – studiously ignored by the Cheney Task Force – made possible by new conservation technologies, which could shift the frontier of oil exhaustion decisively. Sheikh Yamani is fond of saying that 'the Stone Age did not end for lack of stone': the Oil Age will come to an end long before the world runs out of oil.

It is untenable, then, to suggest that absolute scarcity propelled the events of 2003.

Price didn't have much to do with it either.

Over the past three decades, the ratio of proven reserves to current production has risen by a quarter, yet in real terms prices have doubled. During the 1970s prices soared, but the oil crisis of 1973-74 had nothing to do with shortage: there was no shortage. By the 1980s, excess consumption had taken hold, yet prices fell by 71 per cent between 1980

and 1986. Over the last fifteen years, the fluctuations of price in relation to excess demand (in other words, to economic expansion) are utterly baffling.

Since 1960, world consumption has typically been 2 to 3 per cent above or below world output.

How can such relatively insignificant discrepancies explain dramatic real-price fluctuations of tens or sometimes hundreds of per cent a year? And why are prices sometimes so sensitive to the discrepancies, and at other times completely resistant to them?

The answer to these questions is that oil is a key item of market currency, and therefore subject to constantly shifting expectations and perceptions, speculation and gambling – as well as the pressure of ‘external circumstances’.

However plentiful supplies have been, since 1960 continual wars and rearmament in the Middle East have generated an atmosphere of crisis. Prices magically return to ‘acceptable levels’ as the conflicts dissipate. Although wars and regional instability produce high prices, the link is in no simple sense causal. The oil industry has long built such things into its business calculus: the so-called price consensus typically incorporates a ‘peacetime base’, an ‘embargo effect’ and ‘war premiums’.

Might relative scarcity; the concrete threat of supply disruption; plausibly provide the grounds for invasion?

Real oil prices fell steadily through the 1990s, and in the wake of world recession were as low as they had been for thirty years. OPEC, as expected, responded (along with Mexico) by cutting output. Saudi Arabia cut its quota by a million barrels, and prices reacted accordingly (amid some agitation among traders regarding the ascension of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, and deteriorating US-Iraq relations).

Rising oil prices in 2000, and the bursting of the Wall Street high-technology bubble, doubtless fed the perception that oil was scarce and economic recovery might be compromised.

But rising oil prices are the reality over the long term, and they were rising on a historically low base. To suggest that here was a trend that ‘Americans could barely accommodate’, as Stephen Pelletière put it in *Iraq and the International Oil System* (2001), is nonsense.

It isn’t plausible to argue that the invasion of Iraq was triggered by short-term capacity problems or supply disruptions (the nightmare of bin Laden rocketing oil-tankers in the Straits of Hormuz).

But the resumption of large-scale oil production in Iraq was not a structural imperative for the long-term stability of the world oil system, either.

Even assuming that the Bush oilmen saw their national and corporate interests undercut by the oil situation worldwide; that the state and the companies were unable or unwilling to compromise on higher but stable prices; that the US administration was incensed by Saddam’s switch, in 2000, from dollars to euros in payments received under the UN Oil

for Food programme; and that French and Russian contracts in Iraq were perceived by the supermajors as undercutting their operations, or their global acquisition strategy: even assuming all this, why would the companies or the Bush cabinet believe that it required an invasion to put things right?

The crude art of cutting deals with petro-sharks and oligarchs was tried and tested. Rumsfeld had dealt adeptly with Saddam and his oilmen twenty years earlier. And Cheney, at the helm of Halliburton, had overseen the sale of \$22 million of services and parts to Saddam through a subsidiary (Dresser) as part of the Oil for Food programme. It was all working swimmingly.

Why tamper with it?

The first Gulf War had been a struggle over oil supplies.

Saddam was furious that Kuwait and UAE, under US pressure, were producing over quota to keep prices low. His obvious oil-profits motive elicited widespread condemnation in the Arab world and provided a broad multilateral basis for the American military response.

What was on offer to the industry in 2003, on the other hand, was unilateral adventurism in the face of a global Muslim insurgency, and the prospect of enraging the most numerous generation of young Arabs and Muslims in history.

It risked over 20 per cent of the world's oil supply, the entire Gulf strategy, the wider set of US interests in the region, the radical destabilisation of the entire Muslim world, the active promotion of the jihadi struggle, and blowback of a wholly unpredictable and uncontrollable sort.

Why do it?

To answer this question we must return to OPEC and the new oil regime it helped launch. Oil prices declined throughout the 1960s, as the unrelenting search for reserves, new upstream technologies, and fresh infusions of oil from Russia combined to create massive excess capacity. With new actors on the scene, old-style collusion was less and less feasible.

Against this backdrop, OPEC's politicisation of the oil market can be understood not as a threat to the major oil-consuming states, but as a new and more sophisticated convergence of interest between companies, the US government and suppliers.

A higher price regime was good for the majors (their profits soared during the 1970s, and their ability to check the power of independents was enhanced), good for Washington (it promised a slowdown in the Japanese and European economies), good for Britain (because of North Sea oil and its majors), and good for the Cold War (since it boosted the US military presence in the Middle East).

Sheikh Yamani articulated OPEC's mission rather well: 'at all costs to avoid any disastrous clash of interests which would shake the foundations of the whole oil industry'.

OPEC's politicisation of the oil sector took place in conjunction with the commercialisation of the arms industry.

In the 1950s, 95 per cent of US armament exports had been provided as foreign aid. By 2000, the figure had fallen to a quarter. According to the Congressional Research Service, the US maintained a substantial lead in weapon sales in 2003 (\$14.5 billion, 57 per cent of the total); Russia ranked a distant second.

The arms trade had been largely privatised, and the ubiquitous 'contractors' provided everything from air-conditioned tents to morticians. Following a wave of mergers and consolidations in the 1990s (overseen and promoted by the Defense Department), the largest 20 US contractors had been reduced to four: Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon.

Their sales now account for \$150 billion, and they control a vast proportion of state contracts. Net profit in the sector, as a share of the total net profit of the Fortune 500, doubled (to 10 per cent) between 1965 and 1985.

This extraordinary growth could not be sustained even by US levels of military Keynesianism: it required foreign purchases and, specifically, Third World buyers.

The establishment of OPEC, and the redistribution of global income that followed, was the key to the rise of the armaments industry – the shift from aid to trade.

In 1963, the Middle East accounted for 9.9 per cent of global arms imports; in the decade following 1974, the figure was 36 per cent (roughly \$45 billion per year). Almost half was provided by US suppliers.

The energy conflicts across the region were both the cause and consequence of oil-fuelled militarisation. The Weapon-dollar-Petro-dollar Coalition, a term coined by Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler in *The Global Political Economy of Israel* (2002), was sustained by high oil prices and energy conflicts but the arrangement was structurally unstable.

Excessively high oil prices encouraged the use of energy alternatives and non-OPEC oil; and militarisation, should conflicts escalate, could compromise at any moment the easy complicity of oil companies with the OPEC countries.

Nitzan and Bichler argue that the middle ground was found in an oil price determined by 'tension without war', which enabled corporate profitability in the oil industry to stay ahead of all other major manufacturing sectors.

But when profits fell into what the industry called a 'danger zone', the oilmen turned hawkish and energy conflicts ensued.

The price collapse of the 1980s proved to be a major crisis for the new order, compounded by the fact that the Iraq-Iran War – an obvious source of profit – contributed to an oil glut through 'distress sales'.

(In 1986 George Bush Sr, then vice president, went to Riyadh to ask Saudi Arabia to lower its output, in order to increase prices and restimulate the oil-weapons trade.)

Furthermore, the arms trade during the Reagan era remained subject to foreign policy constraints, as a consequence of which Russia captured 30 per cent of the Middle East arms market. The Gulf War and the subsequent defence treaties corrected the disequilibrium, but the 1990s were far less welcoming. Oil prices tumbled, oil-producing states (often under neo-liberal pressures) faced domestic austerity, and Arab-Israeli tensions briefly subsided. A wave of mergers in the oil and armaments industries provided breathing space, but their share of the Fortune 500 fell to 5 per cent.

The precise calibration of the oil/war nexus articulated by Nitzan and Bichler is, in the end, too perfunctory. They point in the right direction, but the dialectic of oil and armaments extends much further, embracing not only military and oil-service industries, but construction giants (between 1994 and 2002, the Pentagon concluded 3016 contracts, valued at \$300 billion, with 12 private military/service/construction companies), the global engineering and industrial design sector, and financial services organisations and banks.

For the latter, the dollar-denominated oil surpluses of the ‘low absorbers’ (such as Kuwait, UAE and Saudi Arabia) are the raw materials for offshore banking, hedge funds and speculative capital movements.

The invasion of Iraq was about Chevron and Texaco, but it was also about Bechtel, Kellogg, Brown and Root, Chase Manhattan, Enron, Global Crossing, BCCI and DynCorp. ‘Oil, Guns and Money’ is the way Midnight Notes gloss the intersection of work, energy and war in *Midnight Oil: Work, Energy, War 1973-92* (1992).

But even this characterisation may be too sanitary, occluding the ‘black economy’ with which the likes of Enron and Halliburton are more and more obviously entangled.

Drugs, oil theft and money laundering are the main activities in this capitalist ghost world; Russia, Nigeria, Colombia and Mexico the chief way stations. In quantitative terms, these circuits of capital and power are difficult to determine; but they run, almost certainly, to trillions of dollars.

To put the matter in a way that does not deny the significance of oil but locates it in a larger capitalist landscape: American empire cannot forgo oil – its control is a geopolitical priority – but strategic and corporate oil interests cannot, in themselves, credibly account for an imperial mission of the sort we have witnessed over the last two years.

Rather, what the Iraq adventure represents is less a war for oil than a radical, punitive restructuring of the conditions necessary for expanded profitability – it paves the way, in short, for new rounds of American-led dispossession and capital accumulation.

This was a neo-liberal putsch, made in the name of globalisation and free-market democracy.

It was intended as the prototype of a new form of military neo-liberalism.

Oil was especially visible at this moment of extra-economic imposition because, as it turned out, oil revenues were key to the planning and financing of the military exercise itself, and to the reconstruction of the Iraqi 'emerging market'.

'Military neo-liberalism' is the formula appropriate to the current capitalist moment, and to the politics of oil.

Neo-liberalism has its origins in the 1970s, and in the challenges confronting US economic hegemony as a result of a crisis of overaccumulation. Faced with growing competition from Western Europe, Japan and East Asia, the US under Richard Nixon dismantled international financial barriers in order to 'liberate the American state from succumbing to its economic weaknesses and . . . strengthen the political power of the American state', as Peter Gowan puts it in *The Global Gamble* (1999).

At the heart of neo-liberalism's strategy was an assault on the state-centred development of postcolonial nations: markets were to be forced open, capital and financial flows freed up, state properties sold at knockdown prices, and assets devalued and transferred in crises of neo-liberalism's own making. What has proved so extraordinary is not its missionary zeal, but rather its hyper-nationalism: the US's insistence on its own image as a global norm.

The 2002 National Security Strategy was its creed, and 'full spectrum dominance' its commandment.

But something has clearly shifted over the last ten years.

Even as recently as the late 1990s, there was confidence that the new world of capital penetration would come about essentially by means of agreement between governments and corporations, 'fiscal discipline', fine-tuning of subsidy and bail-out, and non-stop pressure from US creditors.

What constellation of forces put all this in question is still open to debate. But it happened – precipitately.

Cracks began to appear within the World Bank establishment: Western Europe fought with the Washington consensus, and the South often refused to take its bitter medicine.

The grotesqueries of Third World indebtedness and First World subsidies to corporate agriculture became more widely recognised. The back-slapping and mutual congratulation of the Uruguay Round descended into the fiasco of Seattle, and then Doha and Cancún. At Cancún, an in-house insurgency of 20 nations refused to endorse the massive US-EU subsidies to North Atlantic agriculture and the WTO rules crafted to prevent the South from protecting itself.

This is the proper frame for understanding what has happened in Iraq. It is only as part of this neo-liberal firmament, in which a dominant capitalist core has begun to find it harder and harder to benefit from 'consensual' market expansion or corporate mergers and asset transfers, that the preference for the military option makes sense.

Marx had no illusions about the role of force in his own time.

But he did seem to believe that the age of violent expropriation was at an end. It was capitalism's strength that it had internalised coercion, so to speak, and that henceforward the 'silent compulsions of economic relations' would be enough to compel the worker to 'sell the whole of his active life'. We are not the first to think Marx too sanguine in this prognosis.

In fact it has turned out that primitive accumulation is an incomplete and recurring process, essential to capitalism's continuing life. Dispossession is crucial to this, and its forms recur and reconstitute themselves endlessly. Hence the periodic movement of capitalism outwards, to geographies and polities it can plunder almost unopposed. (Or so it hoped, in the case of Iraq.)

Will military neo-liberalism endure?

With the US deficit rolling along at \$600 billion annually, and the national debt rising to \$2.5 trillion, the cost-benefit balance of the strategy looks dubious.

And, two years after the tanks rolled across the Euphrates floodplain, the occupation and its Vichy surrogate barely have control of Baghdad.

With unemployment running at perhaps 50 per cent, the Mahdi army steadily draws new support from the ranks of the urban unemployed in the slums of Sadr City and Basra, now twice dispossessed: once by Saddam, once by Bush.

Even the lustre of the privatised contract economy has tarnished.

Of the \$18.4 billion in reconstruction funds allocated by the US Congress in October 2003, less than 9 per cent had been spent a year later – and untold amounts of that was spent on 'security'. During the same period, more than a hundred criminal investigations of contractors were launched, and cases opened on hundreds of allegations of fraud and 'waste'.

So much for the Great Iraqi Oil Robbery.

As Rumsfeld has admitted: 'We lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror.'

However you calculate it, in the present equation a few more million barrels of oil won't matter a damn.

OCCUPATION REPORT

The Caption Below Is Not A Satire:



An Iraqi soldier frisks Iraqi police as they prepare for a parade. (AFP/Essam Al-Sudani) [So, do you suppose resistance soldiers have to frisk each other when they go into action against the Occupation?]

Collaborator Troops Won't Go Fight In Baghdad: They Got It Right: *They Want To Stay Home*

9/22/2006 (AP)

The U.S. military needs roughly 3,000 more Iraqi forces to join the battle in Baghdad, but requests for the troops have not been met because Iraqi soldiers are reluctant to leave their home regions, the commander of U.S. forces in Baghdad said Friday.

Maj. Gen. James Thurman told Pentagon reporters that while the U.S. has 15,000 troops in Baghdad, which military leaders say is the priority battlefield in Iraq, there are only about 9,000 Iraqi soldiers there.

That is just a fraction of the 128,000 Iraqi Army troops that the U.S. says are now trained and equipped.

Iraqi soldiers generally join battalions in their geographic regions, and Thurman said that "due to the distance, (they) did not want to travel into Baghdad."

Occupation Command Orders Another Stupid Attack On Sadr Movement



Iraqis demand the release of Salah al-Obeidi, a close colleague of Moqtada al-Sadr, and three other Sadr supporters who were arrested by US and Iraqi forces, in front of Obeidi's house in the holy city of Najaf. (AFP/Qassem Zein)

9.22.06 by Jay Deshmukh, AFP

On Thursday, Salah al-Obeidi, a top aide of radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and three members of his movement were arrested in Najaf by security forces.

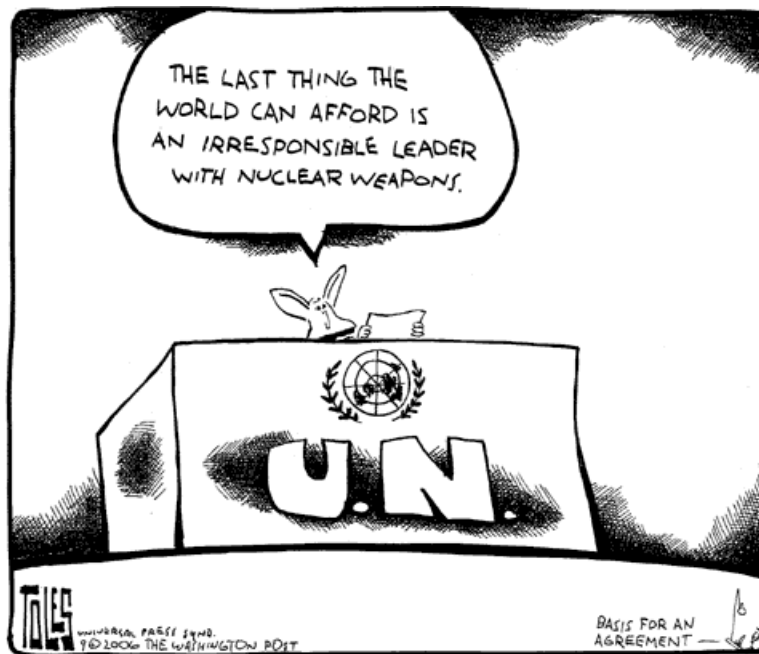
In his Friday sermon in southern Shiite town of Kufa, Sadr said Obeidi's arrest was a "aggression against Islam" and demanded "expulsion of the occupiers" (coalition forces) from Iraq.

The cleric, whose Mahdi Army militia fought a bloody rebellion with US troops in the summer of 2004, said he will now fight the "occupiers politically and peacefully."

"I want this time a peaceful war against them. I don't want any drop of blood to be shed."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

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CLASS WAR REPORTS



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

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