

GI SPECIAL 4J6:



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

Remote Control

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: October 05, 2006
Subject: Remote Control

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

Remote Control

Sandy was humping in his brown and tan camouflaged fatigues with an 80 + pound rucksack, his 16, ammo, helmet, heat, sweat and a television set on his shoulders where his head would be. His whole company had television heads, but sometimes the news would say, all's quiet on the western front "Stay the course" and they knew that was a lie. Touchtone an IED killing and killing and killing ad infinitum. TV heads had an incredible 140,000 plus channels with satellites beaming that "The war is lost" instead of from the fear ridden embedded news that would only say "We are winning slowly" instead of telling the people the truth. Another TV head was in high definition but soon red blood that looked real, "was real" started dripping down the screen on the new blue carpet, his wife began to scream at her husband "To change the channel." The Armchair General grabbed the remote and "changed the channel" only to find another TV head in Germany and a picture of his white amputated legs. His wife was still cleaning up the blood when oozing blood from the mangled legs dripped two big drops of "thick dark news" on the back of her head. Before she noticed, her Armchair General grabbed the remote and "changed channels." A picture on the TV head showed a soldier showing pictures of his wife and kids back home. His wife let out a scream as two military men were knocking on the door. Marie opened it and cried, "It's Sandy, isn't it? Is he still alive?" Her two children stood behind her waiting for the answer.

U.S. Losses Mount In Battle Of Baghdad: “We Have Lost 18 American Service Members In About The Last 96 Hours”

Rumsfeld Gets Another Kill

For the troops of the 172nd, who were deployed to Baghdad two months ago after seeing their year-long tour of duty in Iraq abruptly extended just days before they were due to return home, Rojas' death was a cruel blow.

Oct 6 by Dave Clark, AFP

A single shot rang out and Staff Sergeant Jonathan Rojas dropped lifelessly into the cramped hull of his armoured car, pitching forward as bright red blood spurted from under his helmet.

His team reacted instantly.

Platoon medics piled in through the 17-tonne Stryker's rear door and one of his men stepped up to replace him in the squad leader's open roof hatch and guide the vehicle out of an east Baghdad slum.

"God damn it. He's hit in the head. He's shot in the fucking head" -- "Roger, roger, gotcha" -- "He's got a pulse, got a pulse" -- "Is he breathing?" -- "He's got a gunshot wound to the head. He's got pulse. He's not breathing."

For a fearful moment the crush in the crew compartment seemed like chaos, but Rojas' team was well drilled. Every soldier on board had a job to do as the platoon roared to the nearest US base, fighting to save their sergeant's life.

"He's not breathing" -- "We need to move" -- "Get the ramp up, get the ramp up, get the ramp up" -- "Go, go, go" -- "I need you up on top" -- "I need a weapon" -- "Here, take my weapon. It's got one in the breach, OK?"

"OK. I need immediate fucking dust off at Loyalty, copy?"

The sergeant, a 27-year-old from the industrial town of Hammond, Indiana, left behind a wife and two pit bull terriers.

Rojas' platoon from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team washed the blood from the floor of their troop transport then gathered to salute his body as it was carried onto a Blackhawk chopper under a blue plastic shroud.

Afterwards, they headed back to the streets to continue their mission.

For the troops of the 172nd, who were deployed to Baghdad two months ago after seeing their year-long tour of duty in Iraq abruptly extended just days before they were due to return home, Rojas' death was a cruel blow.

But beyond the close bonds of his unit -- a team of young infantrymen who are already 14-month veterans of a brutal war -- the popular and respected squad leader's death was also part of a stark broader picture.

"As far as US casualties go, this has been a hard week for the US forces," coalition spokesman Major General William Caldwell told reporters Wednesday.

"We have lost 18 American service members in about the last 96 hours."

There was no sign of trouble when the heavily armed squad rolled up outside the Al-Shahama boys' primary school in Obeidi, visiting local institutions and preparing for a possible order to secure the area in the weeks to come.

"We welcome to you, our guests," exclaimed English teacher Amir Shebib, when US Captain Brent Irish sat down to meet staff. "Don't forget there is between us friendship, because you removed Saddam Hussein," Shebib said.

It was a typical conversation, such as US officers are having all over the divided city, trying to build up links with distrustful local communities and discover the realities of local politics.

"There aren't terrorists here, because the people here cooperate with us and each other," said Shebib, all smiles as grinning children waved at the troops.

Back inside the Strykers, the platoon prepared to explore more of the muddy, rubbish-strewn streets of Obeidi, a rundown district where locals said they hadn't seen US troops patrolling in more than a year.

Then the shot rang out.

MORE:

NEVER FORGET WHAT RUMSFELD DID



[<http://www.bringhome172nd.org/stryker/>]

[From: <http://www.bringhome172nd.org/stryker/>]

On July 26th, the men and women of the 172nd Stryker Combat Brigade prepared to end their unit's deployment to Iraq. This unit of 3,800 Americans had endured the fight for a year, distinguishing itself as an essential and effective factor in bringing stability to the North of Iraq. A small number of the brigade had taken the first steps back on U.S. soil, arriving to their base near Fairbanks, Alaska, while many others were already in Kuwait waiting to board homebound planes.

With these successes behind them, their flak vests packed, personal items sent stateside, and their Stryker Armored Vehicles turned over to other newly-arrived units, this battle brigade was able to breathe a sigh of relief and prepare to Go Home.

The following day, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld gave his approval to extend the 172nd Brigade's deployment in Iraq. Instead of greeting their loved ones, the Strykers will help to fight the insurgency in Baghdad.

**LIAR
TRAITOR
SOLDIER-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



August 3, 2006 REUTERS/Joshua Roberts

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Lilburn Soldier Killed In Iraq



Aaron Kincaid

9/28/2006 Reported By: Valerie Hoff, WXIA-TV

Kenneth Kinkaid was a soldier, but to his family he was much more than that.

"He was a role model for today's young men who want to grow up and be a good dad and a good husband and find their way," said Skip Kinkaid, as he remembered his 25-year-old son Aaron.

"He was so full of life. He had the energy of ten people; he had a tremendous sense of humor and a tremendous amount of common sense. He had a love of nature and a love of life."

His father says Aaron Kinkaid took pride in serving his country, although he knew his job was dangerous, and mentioned that in his final email.

"I'll never forget it as long as I live. He said, 'Hi Dad how are you, everything's fine.' Then he said, 'Who am I kidding? I hate seeing guys get blown up. I guess I'm one of the lucky ones, thank God'."

Kinkaid died last Saturday when the Humvee he was driving struck on improvised explosive device in Iraq.

At the Kinkaid home in Acworth, yellow ribbons anticipating a happy homecoming are joined by black symbols of mourning. Flags fly at half staff.

Aaron Kinkaid's father copes with grief and loss. But takes comfort in his memories and stays stoic for his grandchildren.

"For you Abi and Keni, Grandpa wants you to know that you had. You have the greatest Dad in the world," he said.

Aaron Kinkaid is also survived by his mother, Marcia, his wife Rachel, and his brother Marc.

Danish Soldier Killed In Basra Combat

Oct 6 (KUNA)

A soldier, a Dane, serving under the Multi-National Forces in Iraq was killed on his way to hospital after an armed confrontation in Al-Haritha area, north of Basra, southern Iraq, the MNF reported.

The MNF statement said the Dane died as he was being transported to the military field hospital suffering from injuries he sustained in combat between a Danish military patrol and an armed group in Al-Haritha area.

50 Helicopters Down; Armor “Combat Losses” Also Heavy

October 09, 2006 By Matthew Cox, Army Times Staff writer

Congress has agreed to give the Army about \$17 billion to reset equipment, including helicopters, tanks and other vehicles destroyed in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the appropriators' conference report on a Pentagon funding request for next year.

The report identifies \$2.9 billion for specific Army combat losses that include:

\$621 million to replace 18 AH-64 Apache helicopters.

\$511 million to replace 17 CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

\$225 million to replace 15 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

\$700 million for M1 tank losses.

[At a reported cost of \$4 million 300K per tank, that works out to about 160 tanks destroyed.]

\$82 million for Stryker vehicle losses.

[At \$2.8 million each, that works out to about 30 Strykers destroyed.]

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers from Alfa company 1-17 regiment of the 172th brigade patrol a street, in eastern Baghdad, Oct. 3, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Bandic)

TROOP NEWS

She Fights To Stop The War And Prays For Her Son's Safe Return

October 3, 2006, New York Daily News

Elaine Brower was at work yesterday morning when her cell phone rang and she heard her son say two beautiful syllables from Iraq.

"I'm done."

She dared to hope he was completely out of the war zone. "Are you in Kuwait?" she asked.

"No, but we're not going out anymore," he replied. "We're loading up."

"Don't be a hero. Don't volunteer for anything," she said. "Just get in quietly."

"Don't worry," he said.

"What route are you taking?" she asked.

"The shortest one, I hope," he said.

Her son hung up and she could only pray it truly was almost over.

This had been the second combat tour for 24-year-old Marine Sgt. James Brower. The first had been right after 9/11, when he was among the first Marines into Afghanistan.

For too many sleepless nights, Elaine Brower lay clutching a set of black plastic rosary beads her son had found years before at catechism class.

Her prayers seemed answered when he returned from Afghanistan intact. He joined the NYPD, and whatever dangers he faced in the street, he seemed done with war.

Then last year, her son announced he was returning to active duty with the Marines. She flew with him out to California and rented an SUV so she could give some of his comrades a ride to the base. She said she had never met such decent, dedicated and selfless young men.

Her son and his magnificent comrades went off to war, and Elaine Brower returned to the life of a city worker living in Staten Island, married to a retired NYPD lieutenant.

She took out the rosary beads again, and the second wait turned all the more nightmarish when two New York City Marines from her son's unit were killed by a sniper. She went to both funerals and embraced both heart-torn mothers, offering what little comfort she could to women who had suffered what she most feared.

Elaine Brower had supported going into Afghanistan and she hardly had a typical protester's pedigree, but she came to feel the war in Iraq was a mistake that was costing us too many of our very best Americans.

She told her son she had some news when he managed to make one of his periodic phone calls from the war zone last week.

"I got arrested," she said.

She explained that she had joined 16 others in a nonviolent act of civil disobedience outside the United Nations while President Bush addressed the General Assembly. Her son proved anew his devotion to the freedoms he is sworn to protect.

"You were only exercising your First Amendment rights," he told his mother.

Her son ended the conversation by saying he was scheduled to leave Iraq soon. He called again Friday and took a turn at surprising her.

"Ma, I got news to tell you," he said.

"What?" she asked.

"I volunteered to stay another month," he said.

She might have been more stunned by this news than her son had been by the news that she had been arrested. But the cell phone reception was so clear she could hear his fellow Marines in the background.

"I hear them laughing," she told him.

He then told her the wonderful truth: He would be heading home in just a few days.

"I'm going to get an apartment in Brooklyn with my friend here," he said. "We look at Craigslist all the time. There's like, 10 we're going to look at."

He then told her he had to go.

"We got to go on night patrol," he said.

She passed the weekend afraid to be too happy. She kept herself busy by helping to plan an anti-war march on Thursday from the United Nations to Union Square.

Yesterday morning, she was at her desk at the city controller's office when her son called to say he was finally on his way home. "For the next 24 hours I'm just going to pray," she said.

Last night, she got an e-mail from Iraq telling her something her son had not: A Marine in his unit had been killed on Sunday while on a final patrol.

"The day before they're leaving," she said. "That poor family."

She felt sick and guilty, and wondered if the fallen Marine was one of those she had heard laughing in the background.

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 or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

Pro-War Soldier Tells The Truth: "They Didn't Want To Help Us"

“They Wanted All Americans Out Of There”

Oct. 06, 2006 The Associated Press

QUAKERTOWN: A Marine wounded by a roadside bomb two months into a tour in Iraq is back home nursing an injured arm and leg, and wondering if he will go back to the war.

Patrick Kelly, 19, of Richland Township, is recuperating from shrapnel wounds and nerve damage that left him with pins and screws in his right arm and no feeling in his right hand.

Before he went to Iraq, Kelly said, "I didn't think we should be there at all. Now, I think we should finish."

The 2005 Quakertown High School graduate said he joined the Marines because it was the "most challenging" military service. Kelly left for Iraq in July, in time for 115-degree days that made it hard to eat. He lost 30 pounds.

Stationed between Ramadi and Fallujah, Kelly's unit patrolled a dangerous stretch of road the Americans called Route Michigan. The unit sometimes raided houses, and sometimes handed out soccer balls to children, though Kelly said he did not feel they won the support of Iraqi people he met.

"They stare at you. They didn't want to help us. They wanted all Americans out of there," Kelly said. "I didn't trust any of them."

At home, Kelly's wife, Jessica, 21, expecting their first child soon, said she existed "one day at a time," carrying a cell phone wherever she went so she wouldn't miss the calls he was able to make about once a week.

On Sept. 10, part of Kelly's unit was crossing Route Michigan when a bomb went off in a ditch six feet away, flinging him forward and sending shrapnel into his arm and leg. Kelly said he didn't lose consciousness and immediately began feeling his limbs. "I was in shock. I didn't feel any pain," he said.

After two surgeries in Iraq, he was flown to Germany and then back to the United States. He underwent three more surgeries at a hospital in Bethesda, Md., and arrived home this week for a month of recuperation. Doctors say they expect him to make a full recovery.

The recuperation period is giving Kelly time to reconnect with his family, and contemplate mixed feelings about whether he wants to go back to Iraq.

"Part of me does, and part of me doesn't," Kelly said. "My friends are there."

Injured Soldier Improving;

October 6, 2006 By Mark J. Armstrong, The Daily Times

A former Hill Country resident injured while serving in Iraq showed signs of improvement this week as family members keep vigil at his bedside at the Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

Doctors there removed an oral incubator this week from Sgt. Michael Boothby, 26, with 172nd Striker Brigade out of Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and have reduced the amount of sedative that had kept Boothby unconscious.

Tim Boothby said that his brother has been able to respond to vocal commands, but that those responses are very weak and delayed.

"His wife was leaning over him asking him to smile at her, he managed to curl his upper lip in an effort, in her excitement she leaned down to kiss him and he attempted to pucker his lips to kiss her back," Tim Boothby said.

Tim Boothby said his brother was injured by an improvised explosive device that exploded Sept. 16 along a road outside of Baghdad. Michael Boothby and two other soldiers were wounded.

The other two have since returned to duty, but Michael Boothby was struck by shrapnel in the back of the head, sending bone fragments throughout his brain, according to family members.

"The doctors are still saying it is too early to give an accurate prognosis, but say that these are very good signs and that they are looking forward very hopefully, but warn that it will be a very long and bumpy road to recovery," Tim Boothby said.

Michael Boothby, a Center Point High School graduate, is married and has three children.

"We are all praying for him," said Center Point High School principal Scott Turner.

Michael Boothby's wife and parents have been flown to Maryland to be with him. Benefit accounts have been established at Wells Fargo Bank and at Union State Bank to assist the family with the expenses of travel and lost time at work.

"We, as a family, are asking first and foremost for your prayers for a speedy and full recovery and are trusting God will supply all that is needed in the financial aspect of all of this," said Tim Boothby.

“The Defense Department Is Doing Next To Nothing To Help Get At-Risk Veterans To VA Care”

October 09, 2006 By Rick Maze, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

Dramatic upgrades are needed, veterans groups and lawmakers said, if the government is to establish a truly “seamless” transition between military and veterans’ health care for those injured in combat.

One example involves a 22-year-old Navy Reserve corpsman held for four months in a medical holding company at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

“The corpsman had been hit by a mortar attack in Iraq several months before, leaving him totally blind in his left eye and with vision of 20/200 in his right eye,” Zampieri said.

The injury should have resulted in an immediate consultation with the VA for admission into a rehabilitation center, he said.

But “no one contacted VA,” Zampieri said. “This brave American instead was outprocessed on Sept. 8” with instructions to call the VA for an eye clinic appointment when he got back to Ohio.

The second example involved an Army sergeant first class who was blinded after being shot in the head in Iraq.

“He is still on active duty, with no consultation with (the Veterans Health Administration) for the past four months,” [Thomas Zampieri, government relations director for the Blinded Veterans Association] said.

Some 2,200 service members are in military medical holding companies, he said, and there are likely more blinded veterans who need help.

“These cases should begin to demonstrate our complete lack of confidence in this system,” he said. “These service members deserve better than this.”

Gary Kurpius, national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said that after all the talk over the years about seamless transition, “I am not sure that we can even point to signs of progress.”

Rep. Bob Filner of California, acting ranking Democrat on the veterans’ committee, said he expects more cooperation between the military and VA on helping veterans and their families adjust to and cope with disabilities, especially post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Veterans with PTSD are three times more likely to commit suicide than their cohorts in the general population,” Filner said, adding that the Defense Department “is doing next to nothing to help get at-risk veterans to VA care.”

"This must change," he said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

A Private Moment Away From The Parade



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: October 03, 2006
Subject: A Private Moment Away From The Parade

A Private Moment Away From The Parade

Two Vietnam Veterans have a private moment together after viewing the "Moving Wall" in Albany, Oregon.

This is always out of view from the rest of America who thinks there is some kind of glory in war.

You never see the grief marching in a Veterans Day Parade.

The lies of war are never exposed.

War is always glorified, because it is so horrifying, that it has to be hidden in lies of glorification.

The only glory in war is in the imagination of those who were never there.

The Iraq War is one of the greatest lies in American History.

"Looking For a Few Good Men," to fight in a war that so few are willing to attend.

"Support The Troops," so long as I don't have to defend.

Only the working class and the poor ever go, because the rich and the privileged find a way to legally say no.

Slogans like, "Home of the Brave," and "Land of the Free," are all part of the glorification of war.

It is all lies that make the rich richer and the poor and working class dead.

Years after I came back from Vietnam, I heard the expression, "Welcome Home."

This statement is a cover-up for all the lies and deceits of the Vietnam War.

The only thing I have left is my truth.

If that truth can keep a teenager from joining the military, or if my truth can help an Iraq Veteran with his or her " Post Traumatic Stress," then my life has meaning.

I can live with that any day.

I did not serve in Vietnam for the cause of freedom, I served Big Business in America for the cause of Profit.

If that statement can help save a teenager's life, or if it can help heal another veteran's soul, then I will die a free man.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
October 3, 2006

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)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

“Bush Put Those Soldiers There - The Ones Being Killed - The Ones Killing And Raping. They Didn't Need To Be There”

[Thanks to JF, who sent this in.]

October 5, 2006 by Bill C. Davis, Common Dreams [Excerpt]

The Foley scandal is worth one day of news and lots of therapy for everyone involved.

The attention that needs to be paid is to the war. Why it happened? Who let it happen? Who lied to make it happen?

The Foley scandal sadly creates fodder for comics; the war creates fodder out of our young citizens and the Iraqi people. Only Bush knows how to make jokes out of that. ("No WMD's there." as he looks under a drape.)

They're looking for guidance from Bush as to how to investigate this scandal. They look for a comment from him. "Dismayed." "Disgusted."

Two American soldiers were dragged through an Iraqi street and set on fire in retaliation for the rape of a 14 year old Iraqi girl and the murder of her family by American soldiers from the same company.

Bush put those soldiers there - the ones being killed - the ones killing and raping - they didn't need to be there.

He's disgusted by the Foley scandal?

As the instant messenger for this war, he's relinquished his right to be disgusted.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

TROPHY SOLDIERS TO BE USED LATER; (EXCEPT THE GENTLE HEROES LEFT BEHIND)

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in.]

New York Times
October 5, 2006
Behind the Victory Money Lies Vietnam
By THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON, Oct. 4: The mystery over who championed legislation authorizing \$20 million in spending for a celebration of United States success in Iraq and Afghanistan was resolved on Wednesday.

The office of the Republican whip, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, acknowledged that he had pushed the bill out of lingering anger that Vietnam veterans had to “sneak back” home after that war and out of a desire that this generation of troops be thanked.

Mr. McConnell sponsored language in last year’s military spending bill, which authorized up to \$20 million for a “commemoration of success” in Washington saluting the end of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. No money was set aside or used because fighting continues.

The senator wrote language for the new budget bill that rolls over the authorization into 2007.

“People came home from Vietnam and had to sneak back in and they were spit upon,” said Don Stewart, communications director for the senator’s office. For Iraq and Afghanistan, he said, Mr. McConnell felt the troops should be able to “attend ceremonies, get awards.”

If you are able, save them a place inside of you
and save one backward glance when you are leaving
for the places they can no longer go.
Be not ashamed to say you loved them,
though you may or may not have always.
Take what they have left and what they have taught you
with their dying and keep it with your own.
And in that time when men decide and feel safe
to call the war insane, take one moment to embrace
those gentle heroes you left behind.

This poem written by Major Michael Davis O'Donnell, on January 1, 1970 in Dak
To, 2 months before his death.

Major O'Donnell was a helicopter commander with the 170th Aviation Company, 17th
Aviation Group, 52nd Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade. He and his crew were
shot down on 24 March, 1970 while performing an extraction operation.

Major O'Donnell's remains were never found.

[And Don Stewart repeats the stupid old lie about spitting. The only Vietnam
veterans spit on were members of Vietnam Veterans Against The War, try it again,
AGAINST The War, spit on by pro-war assholes during an action they organized in
New Jersey as part of their effort to bring about immediate withdrawal of all U.S.
forces from Vietnam.

[Like Major O'Donnell, U.S. forces in Vietnam overwhelmingly hated the war and
the politicians who sent them to die for the Empire, and their rebellion against
command and the politicians made it impossible for the war to go on. T]

OCCUPATION REPORT

***Good News For The Iraqi
Resistance!!***

**U.S. Occupation Commands'
Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even
More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops**



Foreign occupation troops from U.S. Alfa company 1-17 regiment of the 172th brigade trash the bedroom of an Iraqi citizens' home in eastern Baghdad, Oct. 3, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Bandic)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence and tear them up, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

“There Are An Increasing Number Of Neighborhoods They No Longer Dare To Visit”

10.5.06 By TERRY MCCARTHY, ABC News

How bad is bad? After six weeks away from Iraq and returning to Baghdad, I find the city appears much worse than when I left.

Last week, according to a U.S. military spokesman, Baghdad experienced more attacks from car bombs and improvised explosive devices than at any other time this year. In the last five days, 14 U.S. soldiers have died in Baghdad, numbers that haven't been seen in the city since the 2003 invasion.

ABC's local Iraqi staff tell us there are an increasing number of neighborhoods they no longer dare to visit.

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

“Of The 35,000 Detained In Iraq, Only 638, Or Roughly 2 Percent, Were Ever Tried For Any Crime”

October 2, 2006 By Larisa Alexandrovna, AlterNet [Excerpts]

I reported last November that since the start of U.S. aggressions in Afghanistan and Iraq, roughly 70 thousand men, women, and children had been detained and in many cases tortured.

Of the 35,000 detained in Iraq, only 638, or roughly 2 percent, were ever tried for any crime. The rest were either quietly let go or died in custody.

A document leaked to me a year ago from sources with a conscience at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) indicated that this total of 35,000 does not even represent the full count of people detained, nor does it address every single U.S. facility around the world or the additional extraordinary renditions we have engaged in.

Does anyone actually think that any Republican who voted for the pro-torture, pro-rape, pro-mutilation bill has actually looked at the numbers, or better still, talked to the living victims?

Somehow I think that the closest these dilettantes got to the horror of it all was the lemon chicken lunch they sat down to while visiting the "public" area of Gitmo.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist said recently, "Well, Alan, I think it really does reflect that we are in an age and an era post-9/11, where we're talking about a new sort of opponent, a new sort of the war criminal, somebody who right now we call then enemy combatants, but the sort of people like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who's down in Guantanamo Bay now, who allegedly and likely did mastermind the plot that killed 3,000 Americans."

According to Mr. Frist's second brilliant public diagnosis (the first being, of course. Terri Schiavo), the people detained, or "the opponents," are either guilty of plotting to kill Americans or have already done so in the past. Senator Frist can tell this just from judging them by their appearance.

Mr. Frist, are you really going to tell the American people that 638 convictions were worth the detainment, torture, rape, and in some cases murder of roughly 35,000 people in Iraq alone?

Remember, these numbers are a year old and only a fraction of the total.

And if our intention is to save 3,000 American lives, something this administration has already failed to do, from another possible 9/11, then why did we send to their deaths an additional 3,000 American soldiers in order to secure only 638 convictions -- even assuming that number is a credible representation and that they were convicted on evidence, not confessions via torture?

What does this accomplish and how can it possibly be justified?

And if we are, in general, aiming at saving lives, then why did we kill roughly 100,000 Iraqis and thousands upon thousands of Afghans in order to secure 638 possibly dubious convictions?

Again, why are Mr. Frist's "opponents" innocent people he has never met, never talked to, never heard of? What does this accomplish?

Every member of Congress who voted to violate basic human decency and leave something as sacrosanct as the Geneva Conventions up to executive interpretation, even after the executive has already broken both domestic and international law, is first and foremost a criminal accomplice in every act of murder, rape and torture committed under the banner of the American flag.

Members of Congress who voted to support this act of violence -- premeditated, organized and systemic -- are accessories after the fact and enablers of crimes against humanity, period. The right wing has won no moral victory nor any legal battle.

The world must know that the citizens of this nation do not support what their government is doing in its name, not for 638 convictions -- even if they are legitimate -- not for greed, not for power, not for any reason.

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

“History Refutes The Idea, Popular Among Some On The Left, That The U.S. Supports Israel Because Of The Pro-Israel Lobby In Washington”

In fact, U.S. political and economic elites back Israel because they see this as a way of promoting their own interests.

By PHIL GASPER, September–October 2006 International Socialist Review [Excerpts]

Phil Gasper teaches at Notre Dame de Namur University in California. He is editor of *The Communist Manifesto: A Roadmap to History's Most Important Political Document* (Haymarket Books, 2005), a contributor to *The Struggle for Palestine* (Haymarket Books, 2002), and *The Encyclopedia of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Lynne Reinner, forthcoming).

Israel's brutal attacks on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and on Lebanon have resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths, hundreds of thousands of refugees, and billions of dollars of damage to vital infrastructure.

In both cases the Olmert government used attacks on Israeli military targets and the seizure of Israeli soldiers as a pretext to launch its well-planned offensives, with the aim of destroying Hamas—the elected government of the Palestinian Authority—and Hezbollah, the radical Lebanese Shiite organization.

And in both cases, Israel was fulfilling its longstanding role as Washington's watchdog in the region—pursuing its own plans for regional dominance while simultaneously attacking threats to U.S. control of the wider Middle East, with scant regard for the cost in Arab lives.

Israel's role as a U.S. watchdog was spelled out in the influential Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz in 1951, only three years after the Jewish state was created:

“Israel is to become the watchdog. There is no fear that Israel will undertake any aggressive policy towards the Arab states when this would explicitly contradict the wishes of the U.S. and Britain. But, if for any reasons the Western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighboring states whose discourtesy to the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible.”

Recent events fit this pattern.

The Bush administration has openly backed the Israeli attacks. It cheered on the assault on Gaza and the months of siege and assassinations that preceded it. After Israel expanded its war into Lebanon, Washington refused to call for a ceasefire and instead speeded up delivery of jet fuel and precision-guided bombs to the Israelis.

The Washington Post reported, “For the United States, the broader goal is to strangle the axis of Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria and Iran, which the Bush administration believes is pooling resources to change the strategic playing field in the Middle East, U.S. officials say.” According to a former senior administration official, Bush wanted to take the “opportunity to really grind down Hezbollah ... even if there are other serious consequences that will have to be managed.”

Israel's role as a protector of imperialist interests has its roots in the ideology of the Zionist movement that created it. From its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, Zionism promoted its goal of a Jewish state as a way of securing the interests of the world's major powers.

Theodore Herzl, the movement's founder, wrote that such a state in the Middle East would be “a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism.”

In other words, the proposed state would be part of the system of colonial domination.

Herzl compared himself to Cecil Rhodes, the most prominent representative of British imperialism in southern Africa.

The Second World War brought the barbarity of the Nazi Holocaust in Europe. Zionism, which had previously only been accepted by a minority, became the majority view among Jews. The war also greatly weakened Britain, which was forced to withdraw from Palestine. With the support of the major postwar powers in the United Nations, including the U.S. and the USSR, both of which were trying to expand their influence in the region, the Zionists declared their own state.

But Israel was born on the basis of its own enormous crime against humanity-brutal massacres and the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinian Arabs in 1948, which resulted in the destruction of hundreds of Arab villages.

Israel also learned the lesson in 1948 of portraying its own aggression as acts of self-defense against hostile neighbors.

But it was only after Israel had launched its attack on the Palestinians that other Arab countries mobilized a token force, largely in an effort to mollify their own populations rather than as a serious military threat.

The Arab states did nothing to reverse the expulsion of Palestinians and by the time the 1948 War ended, the Zionists were in control of 78 percent of historic Palestine.

In his diary, Moshe Sharett, Israeli prime minister in the 1950s, admitted that the Israeli political and military leadership never believed in any Arab danger to Israel.

Rather, Israel sought to maneuver the Arab states into military confrontations that the Zionist leadership was certain of winning so Israel could destabilize Arab regimes and occupy more territory.

When Israel was created, there was some concern in the U.S. that it might be drawn into the Soviet orbit, but it soon gravitated towards the wealthier Western powers. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Israel was closest to France, fighting its own bloody colonial wars in Vietnam and Algeria at the time. But with the rise of Arab nationalism in opposition to Western domination of the region, the U.S. began to regard Israel as a crucial ally. A 1958 National Security Council document argued that Washington should “support Israel as the only strong pro-West power left in the Near East.”

The 1967 Six Day War, in which Israel easily defeated its Arab neighbors and conquered more Arab territory, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, was the turning point for the United States. By the early 1970s, U.S. economic and military aid to Israel had skyrocketed, amounting since then on a conservative estimate to almost \$100 billion.

About one-third of the entire U.S. foreign aid budget goes to an economically advanced country of only six million people.

As a result, Israel has the highest per capita military expenditure in the world and possesses the most advanced military technology. It is also the only nuclear power in the Middle East.

The value of this investment was explained by right-wing Democratic senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson in 1973, who pointed out that Israel had “served to inhibit and contain those irresponsible and radical elements in certain Arab states, who, were they free to do so, would pose a grave threat indeed to our principle sources of petroleum in the Persian Gulf.”

Former U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig reportedly called Israel “the largest American aircraft carrier in the world.”

More recently, the Israeli analyst Yoram Ettinger has argued, “Without Israel, the U.S. would have been forced to deploy tens of thousands of American troops in the eastern Mediterranean Basin, at a cost of billions of dollars a year.”

Instead, the U.S. has backed Israel's repression of the Palestinians and its frequent attacks on its neighbors, including the 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon, which killed 20,000.

But Israel has not only defended the interests of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

As Lance Selfa notes, over the past half century "every pro-U.S. repressive dictatorship in the world has received some kind of overt or covert Israeli aid," including apartheid South Africa, every murderous military regime in Latin America, and the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia during its genocidal occupation of East Timor.

Washington "funnels weapons and aid through Israel when it wants to evade congressional bans on aid to repressive regimes."

This history refutes the idea, popular among some on the Left, that the U.S. supports Israel because of the pro-Israel lobby in Washington.

In fact, U.S. political and economic elites back Israel because they see this as a way of promoting their own interests.

[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."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush On Foley Scandal: "We Must Crack Down On Illegal Immigration Of 16-Year-Old Boys With Hot Bodies" President Attempts To Change Terms Of Debate

10.5.05 The Borowitz Report

In an attempt to change the terms of the debate over the Mark Foley scandal, President George W. Bush said today that the Foley matter "only reaffirms my belief that we must crack down on illegal immigration."

Mr. Bush's decision to link the Foley scandal with the issue of illegal immigration struck some in Washington as unorthodox, but the president remained resolute that America's

immigration crisis, and not the behavior of Mr. Foley, was the true root cause of the scandal.

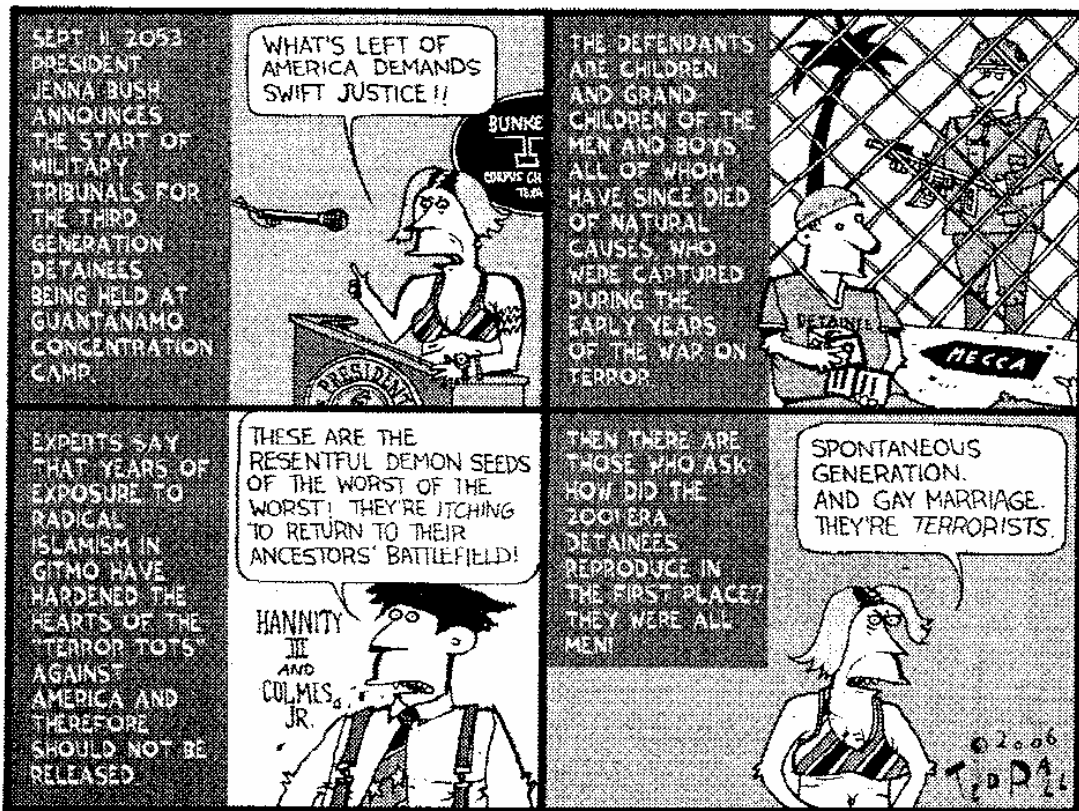
"The question we need to be asking ourselves is not if Mark Foley behaved improperly," Mr. Bush said. "The question we need to ask is, were these congressional pages in our country legally?"

Mr. Bush said he would ask Congress to appropriate \$84 million to investigate the legal status of all congressional pages at once: "What we may be seeing is an orchestrated attempt by 16-year-old boys with hot bodies to swarm into our country and tempt our lawmakers."

Minutes after the president's remarks, which Mr. Bush made at a Boys Club of America luncheon in Washington, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert praised the president for "pointing the finger at the true culprits in this case."

"It's not hard for a bunch of scheming young men with hot bodies to corrupt an older man through no fault of his own," Mr. Hastert says.

"As a former high school wrestling coach, I speak from experience."



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